

**EAST LYME BOARD OF FINANCE
SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES
BUDGET REVIEWS – FY 2021-2022
Monday, APRIL 12th, 2021
Via Zoom Meetings**

Members in Attendance:

Camille Alberti, Chairperson
Ann Cicchiello, Vice-Chairperson
John Birmingham
Peter DeRosa
Anne Santoro
Richard Steel

FILED

Apr 19 2021 AT 10:40 AM/PM

Carrie Thielm

EAST LYME TOWN CLERK

Also In Attendance:

Mark Nickerson, First Selectman
Anna Johnson, Finance Director
Joe Bragaw, Public Works Director
Mike Finkelstein, EL Chief of Police
Lt. Mike Macek, ELPD
Lt. Jezierski, ELPD
Jim Barone, Niantic Fire Chief
Chris Taylor, Flanders Fire Chief
John Way, Fire Marshal

Absent:

No One

A. Call Special Meeting to Order

Chairman Alberti called this Special Meeting of the East Lyme Board of Finance to order at 6:31 PM. She introduced the members and said that this was a budget review meeting.

B. New Business

a. Budget Reviews – FY 2021 - 2022

♦ IT (109) – Joe Bragaw, Director of Public Works

Mr. Bragaw explained that last year they created additional dollars for the Star Computer contract. The copier maintenance went up a bit because of the copiers that are needed for the Public Safety building. He said that the biggest projected change was in line 221 – for the public safety building where it went from \$104,275 to \$165,998. He said that the description of services was accurate.

Ms. Cicchiello asked about the Star contract and if they just pay for what they use.

Mr. Bragaw said that was correct. He added that they do like to have managers notified of the need so that they are not just called out for something that could have waited. 25% is used by General Govt.

Ms. Cicchiello asked about the Police system and if it is like the Town's.

Chief Finkelstein said that it is their system and that if issues occur they have to have it fixed. It is not just one system – but rather a bunch of platforms and they are very fragile systems. Star is only called in on weekends for crucial systems that have to be operational 24/7.

Mr. DeRosa noted that the hourly rate was going from \$81 to \$100 with Star; he asked if other towns were using Star also.

Mr. Bragaw said that he did not know what vendors the other towns use.

Ms. Santoro asked about copier maintenance and if all the copiers are leased.

Mr. Bragaw said that they are all leased.

Ms. Santoro asked Mr. Bragaw what he would like to see IT look like.

Mr. Bragaw said that in the future they could be in for an IT Director and that he has spoken with the BOE on this and if they also use the same vendor and could possibly work together.

Mr. Bragaw explained that there is the technology upgrade on the capital budget for them.

♦ **Emergency Management (214) – Chief Finkelstein, ELPD**

Chief Finkelstein said that this is a lean budget; Ms. Wilson is the only staff person. Radio maintenance is for all of the departments that have radios.

There is one capital item – the Mostowy Tower which has the microwave links around the town. They are looking to replace this as the life span is expiring.

Ms. Cicchiello asked what transportation allowance was.

Chief Finkelstein said that it pays for mileage for the staff person when she has to use her car to work events.

Mr. Birmingham asked about the phones.

Chief Finkelstein said that Verizon is for the cell phones and Frontier is for the in-house phones which will change in the near future.

♦ **Public Safety – Dispatch (215) – Chief Finkelstein ELPD**

Chief Finkelstein said that there is a constant with staffing. They are six (6) FT dispatchers and are faced at times to have them filling in shifts. He said that he would like to project a more reasonable budget to be able to reflect what they are actually spending. There is a reduction to the PT line and an increase in the Overtime line.

Ms. Cicchiello asked how long it takes to train someone.

Lt. Jezierski said 40 hours plus the coverage for the person who is doing the training.

Mr. DeRosa asked if having people out on medical is impacting the budget this year and if that is something that my change.

Chief Finkelstein said that it has impacted them for the past two (2) years.

Mr. Steel asked about the trends on the number of calls.

Chief Finkelstein said that 2020 showed a 7% increase over 2019 – so the calls have not slowed down.

Ms. Alberti asked about the Overtime figure and how they came up with the \$95,000 figure.

Chief Finkelstein said that he used the YTD as of November.

Ms. Cicchiello asked if there were more calls due to Covid.

Chief Finkelstein said that ALL calls have gone up across the board. He noted that there are no capital items as they will have all new equipment.

♦ **Police (216) – Chief Finkelstein ELPD**

Chief Finkelstein said that they have 24 FT officers plus the Chief and one (1) PT officer. He is looking towards long-term staffing. The 18,225 calls for service represent a 7% increase. Criminal activity has increased in all venues for our area and others. Technology is in the forefront of what is being done.

Dan Price from the Police Commission presented a six (6) year plan saying that they would like to hire two (2) officers a year each year for the next six (6) years for a total of 12. He showed comparisons of EL for staffing with respect to other towns indicating that we were in the bottom.

Ms. Alberti said that they are not including Towns that are part of the State Trooper system –

Chief Finkelstein said that was correct; adding that Montville is the only one with the State Trooper. He noted that we do more with less. He noted that psych testing is required every five (5) years which is about \$4,080/year for five (5) officers each year.

Regarding Capital items – Chief Finkelstein said that the police vehicles are self-funded from extra duty work that the officers do for contractors working in the roadways. There is the Waterford/EL Boot engine – as they have to replace the engine.

Lt. Macek explained the funding from the Homeland Security Grant saying that they are hoping to meet the criteria so that if they do get it then the two (2) towns would be required to spend 25% or approximately \$8000 on the engine.

Mr. Birmingham asked if they could save anything on the line item (513) for parade duty.

Ms. Alberti and Ms. Johnson said that anything left over would go back to the general fund.

Ms. Cicchiello asked that they be sent a listing of the unfunded mandates and costs associated with them. She also asked for the impact of the accountability bill. And – she asked if the increase in crime gets put in the paper.

Chief Finkelstein said yes it does get put in the paper however lately they have not been listing everything.

Mr. DeRosa asked about the addition of police officers on overtime.

Chief Finkelstein said that it is not discretionary – it is based on the necessary shift coverage.

Ms. Santoro asked about the body cameras and the grant reimbursement providing limited dollars.

Lt. Jezierski said that the grant is going in now and that the reimbursement is 30% - so they will see.

Ms. Santoro asked what the status of the canine officer was.

Chief Finkelstein said that they purchased the canine and that he is in the second week of an eight week training program.

Mr. Steel asked out of the 18,000+ calls how many resulted in arrests.

Chief Finkelstein said very few – around 181 of them resulted in arrests.

Mr. Steel asked what police departments had lower staffing than EL.

Mr. Price noted E. Hampton, Portland, Suffield, and Plainfield –

Mr. Steel asked in terms of funding how we compare to the others.

Chief Finkelstein said that he does not have that information – perhaps SECOG would have it.

Mr. Steel said that some police departments are hiring in social workers and asked if any thought was given to some for ours.

Chief Finkelstein said that he would question the social worker part versus the psychological part. The State provides psychiatric thru mobilized outreach. There is room for growth in society for these types of resources.

Mr. Price added that police work encompasses a vast variety of things.

Ms. Alberti asked for the crime increase percentages –

Chief Finkelstein said: 56% - increase in crimes against persons; 11% increase in property crimes; 20% decrease in motor vehicle calls and 71% increase in crimes against society.

Ms. Alberti asked what the calls involve.

Chief Finkelstein said that it could be anything – neighbor disputes, scam calls received etc.

Ms. Alberti asked about the 7% increase over the previous year.

Chief Finkelstein said that he is going by the FBI statistics.

Ms. Alberti said that she would like to see all the data for the numbers that correspond with the % increase. She also asked if an officer had been added mid-year and wasn't he supposed to be responsible for traffic.

Chief Finkelstein said that he has not been able to work traffic yet as they have been down an officer and short.

* Animal Control (226) – Mike Finkelstein, Chief of Police

Chief Finkelstein said that this is a lean budget with increases driven by contract for staffing. This is shared with the Town of Waterford and they now share a facility with New London which is working out very well. They have one (1) FT person and one (1) PT person.

(Note: A short break was taken here)

♦ **Niantic Fire Department (217) – Jim Barone, Chief**

Chief Barone explained that the salaries are contractual and that some of the older firefighters have retired. There is only a 1% increase. For capital items they are looking for \$28,920 for turnout gear; SCBA and hoses. They also have a 30-year old truck that needs to be replaced. The cost is approximately \$680,000 and once it is ordered they are probably 1-1/2 years away from getting it.

Ms. Alberti noted that the increase in capital may seem significant because they reduced the turnout gear last year from 4 sets to 2 sets and it was anticipated that it would come back into the budget this year.

♦ **Flanders Fire Department (218) – Chris Taylor, Chief**

Chief Taylor said that there are two (2) big increases – Overtime and telephones. The phones were purchase but the warranty is up so it is \$1000/year.

For the capital items there is five (5) SCBA; four (4) sets of fire gear and fire hoses.
There were no questions.

♦ **Fire Marshal – (224) – John Way, Fire Marshal**

Mr. Way said that the budget is pretty flat and the same as last year.

The \$10,000 in Capital is the acquisition on the vehicle purchase from last year.

The Knox boxes are for emergency entry for them so that they can get in without breaking doors, etc.
There were no questions.

♦ **First Selectman (101) – Mark Nickerson, First Selectman**

Mr. Nickerson said that his budget introduces a PT union floater at 20 hrs per week at \$24.52/hr. This person would cover for people who are out in the various departments on an as-needed basis; i.e. extended illness, vacations, busy times in the tax or town clerk's offices during tax or dog license times, etc.

Mr. Birmingham asked what the revenue is from.

Ms. Johnson said that it comes from the town docks and fishing leases.

Ms. Cicchiello asked how many hours per week the floater would work.

Mr. Nickerson said that it would be 20 hours per week.

Ms. Cicchiello asked if there would be benefits.

Mr. Nickerson said no – no benefits, paid leave or time off or health benefits.

Ms. Cicchiello asked what other things were considered rather than adding another person.

Mr. Nickerson said that there have been people who have not been replaced and no other considerations were given.

Ms. Cicchiello asked if they could use temps.

Mr. Nickerson said that he would not use them as the people would have to be bonded, etc.

♦ **Judge of Probate (111)**

Ms. Alberti noted that this actually went down a little bit.

There were no questions.

♦ **Services to the Community (115) – Mark Nickerson, First Selectman**

Mr. Nickerson explained that many were cut last year or willingly took cuts last year; this year they are adding back those amounts and they also have one new arts item added – SE CT Cultural Coalition (\$500). He said that the new item included advertising, marketing, tourism, the arts, etc.

Ms. Johnson added that they also recently aided the Planning Commission with their POCD update.

Ms. Cicchiello noted that they are a 501c3

Mr. DeRosa noted that line 905 should be UCFS as they were merged some time ago.

♦ **Finance Department (118) – Anna Johnson, Finance Director**

Ms. Johnson explained that the increases are contractual.

There were no questions.

♦ **Board of Finance (126) – Camille Alberti, Board Chair**

Ms. Alberti explained the budget noting that the Auditor is a three (3) year contract with the option to renew for an additional two (2) years.

There were no questions.

C. Board Comments

Ms. Alberti called for Board Comments.

There were no comments from the Board.

D. Adjournment

****MOTION (1)**

Mr. Birmingham moved to adjourn this Special Meeting of the East Lyme Board of Finance at 9:04 PM.

Ms. Cicchiello seconded the motion.

Vote: 6 – 0 – 0. Motion passed.

Respectfully submitted,

Karen Zmitruk,

Recording Secretary