



OFFICE OF SELECTMEN

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BUDGET PUBLIC HEARING MINUTES FEBRUARY 11, 2016

Chairman Harris opened the public hearing at 7:00 p.m. Notice of the hearing was posted in two places in Town and a postcard was mailed to all residents.

ALSO PRESENT: Selectmen Gina Paight and Jane Pitt, Police Chief Chris Lyons, Ed Goodrich, Rob Harris, Greg and Ellen Orkins (Town Clerk), Brian Tarr (Road Agent), Mr. and Mrs. Spafford, Kristen Hebert, Chris Wood, Dick Butler, John and Cathy Northcott, Fire Chief John Manning, Phyllis Manning, Dick Hill. At 7:15 p.m. Elaina Waibel, Andre Jaeger and Laina Barakat arrived. At 7:20 p.m. Marge Shepardson arrived.

Mrs. Harris began by stating that increases for health insurance, retirement and a 2% COLA were throughout the budget. She then went through the budget, department by department, and gave a brief explanation why the line had changed from last year. In the Water Dept. it was noted that an additional \$5,000 would be added to the budget for mapping the water lines in town. Once completed, the Town will be able to apply for grants for the water system.

Mrs. Harris explained a change in how the charitable donations to non-profit organizations would be handled this year. As in previous years, there are four charitable, non-profit organizations that have requested funds from the Town for services given to Marlborough residents: Home Healthcare, Southwestern Community Services, Monadnock Family Services and The Community Kitchen. For many years, the requested amounts from Home Healthcare and Southwestern Community Services have been included in the operating budget under "Health Agencies" and "Welfare Assistance," respectively. The other two agencies were in separate warrant articles.

Mrs. Harris stated that this year each non-profit, charitable organization will have its own warrant article. The Selectmen are looking for input from the residents in regards to giving to these organizations, e.g. do the residents support using town funds for charitable contributions; would funding the United Way be a better route to assure funds are used for town residents and given only to organizations needing the financial support, etc.

Fire Chief John Manning asked the Selectmen about the funds requested for paving at the Fire Department. Mrs. Harris responded that the paving was overlooked and could

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be added as a warrant article. Mrs. Paight asked the estimated cost of the paving. Chief Manning said the estimate was for \$15,000. It was noted that this warrant article would be added to the budget.

Mr. Spafford asked about the difference between property assessment and revaluation. Ms. Pitt explained the yearly assessing vs. the requirement that each town reassess all parcels in a 5 year cycle. Mr. Jaeger asked who the current assessors were. Mrs. Harris said the current assessors, Commerford, Neider and Perkins, had worked with the town for the last four years.

Marge Shepardson asked about the actual cost of street lighting for 2015. Mrs. Harris provided that amount. Mrs. Shepardson asked if the Selectmen had plans to remove additional street lights this year. Mrs. Harris noted that residents near street lights marked for deletion have not been in favor of the light removal. The Selectmen can look into this further.

Dick Butler asked for clarification on the number of employees at the Recycling Center. Mrs. Harris explained that one employee was currently out of work due to a health issue so we have hired a temporary worker in his place. Staffing numbers at the RTC remain the same.

Mrs. Harris asked if there were any questions about the non-profit donations. Mr. Orkins asked where the funding for these organizations would come from if the Town did not approve the warrant articles. Mrs. Harris explained that these organizations received funding from state and federal sources, as well as the United Way. Mrs. Shepardson reported that Cheshire County also provides funding. Ms. Pitt explained that the Selectmen felt each organization should be in a separate warrant article and not included in the operating budget.

Mrs. Orkins spoke in favor of the donations and was concerned that residents who requested assistance from these organizations would be refused if the Town did not fund the requests. Mrs. Harris said that the residents would not be cut from services. Mrs. Harris spoke about the possibility of giving funds to the United Way to be dispersed to Marlborough residents only. She had a list of organizations funded by the United Way which served Marlborough residents. Currently only four of these organizations requested funds. Mrs. Shepardson added that the organizations received private, state and county funds. She confirmed that not all towns give the requested amounts. She said she was in favor of continuing to give to these organizations.

John Manning spoke to the SWCS request. He said that the majority of towns do make contributions and that no person would ever be cut off from services either way. He reported that the funds received from towns were used as "gap funding" which allows assistance to those who are in need, but are just outside the income limits to qualify for help. Mrs. Harris explained it is a balancing act to keep taxes affordable for families in Marlborough and still provide funding for these organizations.

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Mr. Jaeger asked why the 2016 warrant articles were almost double those from 2015. Ms. Pitt explained the addition of the charitable donations from the operating budget as discussed earlier, as well as the new highway truck and cemetery retaining wall articles.

Mr. Butler asked for clarification of the non-profit organizations that had been previously included in the operating budget. Mrs. Harris answered the question. Mr. Butler also noted that the budget line for the Heritage Commission was incorrectly written as Heritage Fund. Mrs. Harris noted the correction. Mr. Jaeger asked what the Heritage Commission was. Mr. Butler gave a brief explanation of the Heritage Commission.

Mrs. Harris adjourned the public hearing at 7:45 p.m.

Submitted by,

Gina Paight

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