

# Town of Candia Municipal Budget Committee

## Approved Meeting Minutes

**Meeting Date:** October 28, 2020  
**Location:** Town Office Building  
Zoom Meeting ID# 81929126885  
**Attendees:** Lynn Chivers  
Dick Snow (attended via Zoom)  
Jodi Hedstrom  
Susan Gill  
Katrina Niles  
Bob Stout  
Sue Young  
Todd Keating  
Stephanie Helmig  
Kaycee Vitale

Chairman Chivers opened the meeting at 7:00 PM

Pledge of Allegiance

### **Approval of the Minutes from October 14, 2020**

- Bob Stout motioned to approve minutes
- Susan Gil seconds the motion
- Motion passed 8 approve-1 abstain (Stephanie Helmig)

### **Questions from Last Meeting**

### **Questions for the Selectman on the Proposed Budget**

### **Budget Committee to Review Budget from Selectman's Meeting and Formulate Questions**

### **Animal Control**

- What is the reason for the increase in hours?
  - Answer was provided in a supplemental memo to the Municipal Budget Committee. Summary of memo states that the current Animal Control Officer (ACO) is more readily available to take calls, going out on more calls, logging her own calls and actions, and a fluctuating environment in dog licensing. The current budget is based on 4 hours a week and the budget needed to be based on 5 hours a week resulting in the increase
    - Stephanie Helmig asked if the current ACO was spending more time going house to house?
      - Police Chief McGillen stated that was a last resort, there are calls and emails before going out to meet with someone. This ACO is doing more of the clerical work that Karen used to do for the previous ACO. She is available a lot more and doing a lot more work than previous ACO's and it is appreciated by the Police Department. The original budget was \$5000.
        - Chairman Chivers said that it was \$4965 and the Selectman reduced it to \$4028.
    - Stephanie Helmig asked if anyone knew how much money we made off of dog licensing?
      - Bob Stout referred to the revenue report that was provided two weeks ago and noted that between the fines and licenses it is about \$4700.
        - Chief McGillen noted that in 2004 \$4400 was approved for the ACO.
    - Jodi Hedstrom ask the Selectman why they decreased the budget?



## Police

- Are the lines for new officer and 2 part time officers. Are these replacements or new positions? How many officers are there now, full or part time?
  - The lines are for the new/replacement full-time position and two part time positions, although if a suitable part time officer candidate arises, {the department} would be willing to hire them. Currently there are 7 full time officers including the police chief and 1 part time officer working. The department has 4 part time officers on the department roster.
    - Chairman Chivers asked for clarification because of the way it was worded and the line item on the budget says \$45,000 for potential new officer. What does that mean? Is this an officer that replaces somebody or a brand-new officer?
      - Chief McGillen answered that it is replacing someone from 5-6 years ago. It was a position we had and never got filled.
    - Chairman Chivers asked if we were then going to have 7 full time officers and two part time?
      - Chief McGillen answered yes. He said that if a suitable person came up, he would make three part time officers work within his budget. Some officers do not work as much as they say they are going to work so we hire another person for those hours.
        - Todd Keating said that it would be easier to think of the budget in as part time hours wages instead of people, since three people can fill a 30-hour position. Then we can just look at it as a bucket of hours instead of bodies.
          - Selectman Young suggested that Donna could adjust how that line is read.
    - Stephanie Helmig asked if there was a town requirement for the amount of Police Officers we need to have?
      - Chief McGillen said that there is a Federal formula for the suggested number of officers.
      - Selectman Young said that speaking on behalf of the Selectman, if anyone is willing to be an officer in this day and age, we have urged him to hire them if they are qualified. People have been really complaining about the speeding throughout the town and hopefully we will be getting some radar out in the community. Discussion ensued. Refer to audio for further information.
  - Why so much for gasoline when we have only spent \$4595 as of the end of August?
    - Year to date we have spent approximately \$5746.00 and have three months left. We are averaging between \$500-\$600 a month. When gas prices were higher, we were going as high as \$855.00 a month.

## Tax Collector

- Why are the deputy tax collector wages going up so much?
  - Since March 2020, the Covid-19 virus and the closing of the Town Office to the public, the office has been working without a Deputy. It is anticipated that the Town Office will be training a new person for the Deputy position as the current deputy is considered “high risk” and should not be exposed to the virus unnecessarily. A new Deputy would require going through training and certification, which comes with a fee, and being paid while at that training.
    - Donna Becker noted that the extra \$20,000 that you are seeing was a mistake on her part, that was supposed to go to a different department. It has been modified on the new budget. The \$9144.00 is correct.

## Town Building Expenses

- We would like a detailed itemized list of how the requested \$11,640 for the Smyth Building plans to be spent. Mainly a detailed explanation of the \$7500 in the building maintenance line.
  - Carla Penfield answered that there is interior work that needs to be done. We have to refinish and rebuild the window sills inside. There is also a wall that has peeling paint that needs repair.
    - Stephanie Helmig asked about the warrant article for last year for the Smyth Building.
      - Chairman Chivers said it was about \$3500 a year and asked if we will be doing the same this year?
        - Carla answered that we did not do it last year but there will be on this year as we spent some money out of the account. What we keep in mind is that we have a slate roof that we have repaired once since we have had the building. The concern is if we have a major issue with that slate roof it is very expensive to repair. We are thinking of maintaining the savings account for that purpose and currently we have about \$11,000 in it right now.
    - Chairman Chivers asked what happened with the \$6000 for boiler from last year?
      - Carla answered that this year with the virus outbreak we stopped meeting and doing our projects. We submitted a note to encumber the \$7500 from the maintenance line this year toward the purchase of a new furnace. We will take that \$7500 and combine with money in 2021 maintenance line. Our furnace is 70 years old.
        - Stephanie Helmig asked if you could encumber funds without a purchase order?
          - Chairman Chivers said you have to have a contract. She then asked Carla if they have contract?
            - Carla said that they have an estimate but no contract.
              - Chairman Chivers said that the contract can say that it is pending approval by the votes and that would be sufficient.

## Town Officers Expenses

- What is the projected salary for the town administrator? What will that person's responsibilities be?
  - The salary has been budgeted for \$70,000. A really rough estimate of taxes and benefits could add \$26,450 for a potential total of \$96,450.
    - Chairman Chivers asked if there was an explanation of what the job will entail?
      - Selectman Young answered that basically the person will oversee the receipt, investigation, and response to citizens' complaints in various departments, scheduling appointments for the board of selectman, prepares the agenda for selectman meetings, prepares the town budget for the budget committee, go over purchases for the town, keeps abreast of state and federal grants and programs. Public thanks went to Donna for keeping up on that in addition to her other duties. A continued list can be heard on the audio. It is anticipated that this person would help with HR duties as well so we reduced the budget by \$15,000 to accommodate for that. They would need a bachelor's degree in public administration and at least 5 years' experience in municipal management.

- Todd Keating asked what do neighboring towns pay their Town Administrators?
  - Selectman Young did not have an answer for that. Discussion ensued, refer to audio for details about which towns currently have Town Administrators.
- Stephanie Helmig asked if we create a 40-hour position, does that make someone else's position part time?
  - Selectman Chivers said that we have not considered cutting someone back to part time.
  - Todd Keating said that there seems to be a pie of work and everyone is saying that they need more help because they are overworked. The administrator would come and take a little off of everyone's plate. I don't think that we are clear on what is the work that will be affected by everyone's position and is there a cost savings to justify spending \$100,000 on a new position.
    - Selectman Chivers said that we have 10 people giving 110% every week and other work is just not getting done or it is getting done later.
    - Donna Becker noted that for herself, there has been work added to her this year and even working 40 hours, she is struggling to keep up. There are things not getting done or being kept current. Her hope is that a Town Administrator would take HR off her plate and things such as the grants to allow time to do the other work that is being left behind. Discussion ensued on how a Town Administrator could support the Town Offices.

### **General Questions on the Budget**

- Bob Stout asked the Selectman about the operating budget. 2 weeks ago, we were concerned about a 9% increase in the operating budget and we do not have the school budget yet. Have you given some thought to worst case scenario when we get the school budget and the town operating budget gets rejected? Have you come up with a plan on going back to the department managers to see where they can cut 1-4% of their budget?
  - Selectman Young answered that we did do a little bit of that on Monday but we decided to come to the Budget Committee to allow for your opinions on what should be done, but we will go back and do whatever we need to do.
  - Bob Stout asked when we are getting the school budget?
    - Stephanie Helmig answered on November 13<sup>th</sup>.
    - Selectman Young noted it is hard to do a preliminary budget without the school and the warrant articles present.
      - Selectman Boyd Chivers said that when you look at this budget with the proposed articles for this year, compared to last years budget, the tax payers would be paying less in taxes in 2021 than in 2020. This is because the votes approved a ~~\$650,000~~, \$350,000 Fire Truck in the warrant articles last year. The net result is that in 2021 the total expenditures will go down when you add the 2021 operating budget to the 2021 warrant articles.
  - Bob Stout said that when we look at the budget and we consistently have lines that are either 0 or very low number, there are opportunities for department managers to make cuts to get the budget to a reasonable number for the voters. An almost 10% increase on the town and if we come in with an increase from the school, it will be a tough nut for the voters and we would want to know how we are managing those numbers. So, my question to you is; would you be able to execute a 4-5% cut without hurting town services if you went back and looked at each line with the department heads?
    - Selectman Boyd Chivers said that 4% is almost \$120,000
    - Todd Keating noted that if we approve that Town Administrator it is there for the future. So, the budget will not go down over time. Now the budget year over year includes that \$100,000 if approved. To base this budget off of this year's

workload, and then to have that position on the books going forward, is something bigger to consider. I hear that everyone is overworked but 9% in these times seems excessive.

- Selectman Young agreed and respectfully disagreed with Boyd about the fire truck. She assumed that the tax payers approved it last year with the notion that they would not have to pay for it again this year. I do not think you can compare last year's warrant articles to what will be presented to the tax payers this year. We cannot keep raising that total bottom line. When we got done paying for the recycling center at \$479,000 a year you would think that the total expenses would go down but they have not. I agree 9% is high but I will defend what the Selectman voted on; however, I think it is unfair to the voters to compare year to year warrant articles when the overall budget should go down when we finish paying for large items.
- Todd Keating said that last meeting we spoke about clarity with the voters so they can see how much their tax rate will increase when they vote yes on the budgets and warrant articles.
  - Selectman Young said she believes that we have to be very transparent around that and it should be brought down to very simple terms for voters.
- Carla Penfield said that when the taxpayers see this budget, they will vote no. My question is what will the Select board do in managing this budget if you get the default budget?
  - Selectman Young said that a wise thing to do would be to take this budget down so we do not chance a no vote from the taxpayers.
    - Stephanie Helmig asked what the default budget would be?
      - Chairman Chivers answered that the default budget is the same budget as last year, taking out one-time payments, and including contractual obligations.
    - Bob Stout answered Carla saying that it is the role of the budget committee to ask these questions so the budget that is presented to the tax payers is what the town needs and the tax payers would vote for.
    - Chairman Chivers also noted that they can go line by line but they do not have to. They can just go to the select board with a recommended percentage reduction and ask them to figure it out.
      - Bob Stout said that he thinks that the best thing to do would be going back to the department heads first to see if there are areas that can be cut. You hate to just cut the bottom line because you might lose something you really need.
        - Chairman Chivers said but on the other hand, even if we lose what we think what we need, once the taxpayers vote on a bottom line, they can move the money wherever they want.
      - Boyd noted that for just the Town Operating budget the increase would be \$.53/thousand increase in the tax rate. Discussion ensued. Refer to audio for details on how the taxes would increase and how that should be presented to the voters before the town vote.
      - Rudy Cartier noted that he was in favor of what Selectman Boyd Chivers was presenting. This is not just the town budget; this is just the operating budget. If you want to look at what the town is spending you do need to look at the warrant articles. A corporation has an operating budget and a capital budget and the two together represent the total budget for the corporation. To say that there is a 9% increase, that is just on the operating budget. When you are selling this budget to the taxpayers you have to let us know everything so we make an informed decision. You are right, the taxpayers will not accept a 9% increase unless you explain the entire budgeting system to the town so they can make an educated and informed decision.
        - Bob Stout noted that he agrees but we are here tonight to just do a vote on this when we do not even have those other two pieces.

Discussion ensued on the budget committee calendar and when things are due and when the final vote on the budget is due.

### Questions for the School from last Meeting

- **What is the difference between Kindergarten last year and Kindergarten this year?**
  - Stephanie Helmig answered that two students withdrew and three students moved out.
- **What goes into the rental of equipment line?**
  - Stephanie Helmig asked that there were two purchase orders in that line in error and that needs to be adjusted.
- **Can we please have a high school enrollment report?**
  - Stephanie Helmig asked if the board received the report via email and they had.
- **How are we handling Zoom? Which line item is it reflected in?**
  - Stephanie Helmig said that Zoom was paid for out of the grant that was received in the spring and that is why it is not reflected in the budget.
- **Why are there no transportation costs as of October 1<sup>st</sup>?**
  - Stephanie Helmig answered October 1<sup>st</sup> there was no invoice for transportation, it was received on October 6<sup>th</sup> so that will show on the next report.
- **Special Education has encumbered \$37,560 with nothing budgeted, what is causing that?**
  - Stephanie Helmig answered that a student required a paraprofessional and the money will be moved to the salary for paraprofessionals line and be taken from the Special Education line.

### Chairman Chivers closed the meeting to public comments and Budget Committee resumed to vote on preliminary budget

- Bob Stout made a motion to hold off on voting on the preliminary town operating budget until we receive the school budget on the 13<sup>th</sup> of November.
- Selectman Young seconded the motion for discussion
  - Discussion ensued
    - 5 in favor (Chairman Chivers, Bob Stout, Katrina Niles, Susan Gill, Dick Snow)
    - 4 opposed (Selectman Young, Todd Keating, Stephanie Helmig, Jodi Hedstrom)
    - Motion passes
- The Budget Committee will review the budget in conjunction with the School Board budget on Thursday November 19<sup>th</sup>.

Bob Stout moves to adjourn the meeting  
Todd Keating seconds the motion  
All in favor  
Meeting was adjourned at 8:31 pm

Respectfully Submitted by: Kaycee Vitale, Administrative Assistant