

Town of Candia Municipal Budget Committee

Approved Meeting Minutes

Meeting Date: October 27, 2021
Location: Town Office Building
Zoom Meeting ID# 870 1668 7030
Attendees: Lynn Chivers
Stephanie Helmig
Jodi Hedstrom
Susan Gill
Katrina Niles
Bob Stout
Sue Young
Todd Keating
Kaycee Vitale
Absent: Dick Snow

Chairman Chivers opened the meeting at 7:00 PM

Pledge of Allegiance

Approval of the Minutes from October 13, 2021

- Selectman Young changed “Selectman Young said that it will come out of the budget because Severino has offered to do it this year at no cost” to “Selectman Young said that it will come out of the budget because Severino has offered to do it this year.”
- Susan Gill motioned to approve minutes with amendments
- Selectman Young seconds the motion
- Dick Snow absent from vote, Stephanie Helmig abstains
- Motion passed 7 approve-1 absent-1 abstain

Questions from Last Meeting

- **School**
 - *Selectman Young asked how the money moved from the school trust funds is accounted for?*
 - Stephanie Helmig answered the money is held with the trustees of trust funds. When the district adds or removes money those transactions are recorded in a fund separate from the general fund called the capital reserve fund.
 - Selectman Young asked if the school took out \$200 from the capital reserve fund, then we would not see that it has been spent?
 - Stephanie Helmig said that it is recorded in the government wide financial statements.
- **Questions for Selectman**
 - *Please explain the land use project management line for \$5,000. Do we have a person to fill the position? How did we arrive at that amount?*
 - Boyd Chivers said that the \$5000 was put in for somebody to either assist the Land Use office in prosecuting code violations or helping with the zoning ordinances. The money is there in case we can find someone to do this on a contract basis.
 - Chairman Chivers asked do we have anyone contracted now?
 - Boyd Chivers answered no but what we would do is if we spent any money with our lawyer, we would charge that line.
 - Selectman Young said all charges for a lawyer should go under legal.
 - *Why are we giving \$10,000 to the planning board for master plan implementation? Will the \$5,000 budgeted this year be needed and if so, how?*
 - The Budget Committee read the following summarized response from Rudy Cartier: As you noted, the current year line item for Master Plan Implementation and Planning is \$10,000, not \$5,000. We have contracted with Stantec Engineering to develop our Geographic Information System for a cost of approximately \$9,000. This will be the foundation for eventually consolidating all current maps such as wetlands, zoning, roadway and culvert data, conservation maps, cemetery, etc. This will allow public

access without the need for town staff involvement. Billing for this project will be based on work done monthly. We anticipate adding data points in 2022 as well as future years. We also have proposals for updating the Capital Improvement Plan and updating the Cost of Municipal Services Report.

- Selectman Young reminded the board that when we level funded the budget last year we went through the budget and took chunks out. This is one of the lines we took money from.
 - Chairman Chivers said that if you look at last year, Master Plan implantation budget for 2021 of \$10,000.
 - Selectman Young said at some point the Board added it back in and I think it came from computers.
 - Brien Brock said that during the budget process last year that was reduced and when the Planning Board found out they pushed for it to go back to \$10,000. We had already committed to Stantec to do some work and it was going to be \$9,000.
 - Bob Stout said that when we removed \$106,000 last year, and asked the Board to make the adjustments, \$5000 came out of that line.
 - *What work are we planning with the \$1200 property maintenance exterior and the \$5100 building maintenance and improvement at the Smyth Building? Are you still planning to have a warrant article this year and if so, what amount?*
 - Chairman Chivers read aloud the following statement:
We are planning a warrant article for \$3500. The exterior is our usually mowing, shoveling, sanding, and clearing the poison ivy out of the juniper hedge. The building maintenance will start to address worn gutters and downspouts.
 - Selectman Young reminded the Budget Committee that \$4000 in the budget for the Smyth Memorial Building is non negotiable as it is contracted to Jesse Remington for maintenance.
 - Jodi Hedstrom said she thought that part of the deal was that Jesse Remington was maintaining the building?
 - Brien Brock answered no, the building still belongs to the Town of Candia so it is our responsibility to maintain it. Basically, we are a landlord.
 - *Please explain about the changes with the phones and how they are charged back to the departments.*
 - Chairman Chivers read aloud the following statement:
Consolidated Communications provide our phone service. The Fire Department and Recycle Center each receive their own monthly bills and the phones in the Town Office Building come in on 1 bill. A couple of years ago, we upgraded our phone system and at the time, the plan was to include the Fire Department and Recycle Center in the new system. In anticipation of all the phones being on 1 bill, I (Donna) started paying all the Consolidated bills out of the Town Officer's budget. The Fire Department and Recycle did not end up being put on our system so we are moving those 2 department's bills to their respective budgets. The bill for the departments located in the Town Office Building continue to come in on 1 bill, therefore, we will continue to pay the bill out of the Town Officer's budget. We do not charge back to these other departments.
 - Dean Young said that he does not understand why his line increased by \$1200.
 - Chairman Chivers said we would need to check with Donna.
 - Dean Young said that he only has 1 phone in his department and the \$2400 budgeted is too much.
 - Bob Stout looks like you have been under \$1250 for the past 3 years so maybe the increase is unnecessary.
 - Please explain the need for the additional expense of a town administrator.
 - The Budget Committee read the following summarized statement to themselves before asking questions:
The town of Candia is an enterprise similar to a small business with over 30 full time and part time employees and a dozen stipend recipients. The town is a conduit for its own revenue.....with well over 13 million dollars in property taxes are assessed, received,

and disbursed each year. In addition, revenue has exceeded \$406,000 so far this calendar year. Administration demands accountability for each dollar, regardless of the source. Our municipal government is a team without a leader upon whom our employees can rely for continuity and consistency. There is little in the way of consistent standards by which our department heads are evaluated.

- Bob Stout stated that he is in favor of a Town Administrator for many of the reasons that were stated in the letter. His asked if the Town Administrator, instead of giving straight COLA increases for employees, would change the system and look at merit raises or holding back raises for employees if they do not meet a certain standard?
 - Brien Brock answered that he believes that would be a part of the Town Administrators assessment. It is something that the Board is looking for advice on because ultimately it will be the Boards responsibility to either agree with the administrator and make that happen or not. For the record, the Board has hired someone that will be starting November 8th. It is Andria Hansen, a previous selectman's assistant for the Town of Candia.
 - Boyd Chivers answered that the personnel policy makes that distinction for merit increases when performance exceeds certain benchmarks.
 - Refer to audio on discussion of merit raises and cola in reference to the town administrator.
- Stephanie Helmig asked in addition to the Town Administrator, are you also putting in for a full-time finance and a part time employee?
 - Brien Brock answered that the line includes hiring a Town Administrator but reducing the Selectman's assistant from a full-time job to 25 hours. Donna will still be the full-time finance associate.
 - Katrina Niles asked if the part time position had been hired already?
 - Brien Brock answered that the part time employee has not been determined yet. There are options within the town employees but it is currently not filled.
- Jodi Hedstrom asked logistically, where will the Town Administrator sit?
 - Brien Brock answered that we will be moving the welfare agent to a smaller office, Donna and Jessica will be moving upstairs, and we will reconfigure this office for the Town Administrator and Linda.
- Todd Keating asked Brien, next year when we are sitting here, what are we going to see different from what Andrea brings in? Do you have any measurables that the Board can say the Town Administrator provided to bring the Town to the next level so we can evaluate if it was a good spend or bad spend?
 - Brien Brock answered that he definitely believes that there will be some grants that we are just not aware of or have the expertise to apply for. There will also be efficiency in the office and that will reflect if not in savings, then productivity. There are a ton of positive things that will be reflected at this time next year.
 - Russ Dan said that we have spoked to another Town Administrators in other towns and grant work is definitely something that is a part of their job.
 - Brien Brock said that with the large items coming before the town this year, this position is more important than ever to research possible grants. It would not take many to offset her salary.
 - Selectman Young said she is in complete support of the Town Administrator even though she had questions on it in the past. This is not something she would cut out because of Andrea's experience and expertise.
- Todd Keating said that he hears what the board is saying but he is reminded that we have about 4200 residents and the expenditures that are coming, we went from the 15th century to the 22nd century in 1 year.

- Boyd Chivers said that even if you had 400 people, you would still have the departments to maintain and the same reports that need to be filed. You wouldn't have less staff to do the same jobs as a town of 4200.
 - Todd Keating responded that he totally understands that we do not have scale here but the expenses that are chasing down the taxpayers of Candia are going up substantially year after year.
 - Boyd Chivers said you cannot run a town any leaner than we run Candia right now.
 - Refer to audio for more discussion.
 - Jodi Hedstrom said that she does not think that Todd is saying that the town does not need to progress. He is saying that we have run so lean for so long. Now we have a default budget that is going to look like a more favorable option because we have run so lean for so long and have not put away money for necessary things.
 - Selectman Young respectfully disagreed that we are running really lean. We do not have commercial properties. We do not have the income or property assessment that Auburn has so we have to keep a lid on it. As far as what the school does and doesn't do, we will be voting on this in the next couple weeks.

Review Changes to the Budget Since Last Meeting

- Chairman Chivers noted that there have been some changes to the budget since the last meeting and she would like to review them before a preliminary vote.
 - Jodi Hedstrom said that she knows we do not have Healthcare but do we have a rough estimate?
 - Chairman Chivers said we do not know what it is and we are not estimating.
- Ambulance during the last meeting was at \$1. Now the ambulance is back in the budget for \$223,000.
 - Jodi Hedstrom said she thought that was coming out of the grant?
 - Selectman Young said that it is only for 1 year so we put it back in the budget to be transparent.
 - Chairman Chivers said we can be honest and transparent but still not include it in that line because it will affect the bottom line of the budget. Her thoughts were to put something in the boy scout package that explains the issue, why we need our own ambulance service, explains how the ARPA funds can pay for it the first year, that we expect revenue from the ambulance, and how the second year the town will have it in the budget to cover the difference of revenue vs. expenditures. She went on to say that this way it is completely transparent and explaining exactly what we are doing. It is her belief that if we leave it in, then we almost guarantee a vote for the default budget.
 - Selectman Young said why not keep it in there and explain what it is because people may not read the blurb. Because in 2 years when their taxes jump, about \$0.75/thousand, and we may have a different board and budget committee, so the taxpayers are not shocked. She would like to leave it in so people do not get upset.
 - Chairman Chivers said if we leave it in, we will get a default budget because she believes most people will go in and vote, see that one budget is \$400,000 less and pick that option. Refer to audio for more discussion.
 - Todd Keating asked if the \$223,000 would be covered in full next year?
 - There will be about \$30,000 left over from this years ARPA funds and \$207,000 in ARPA funds for next year that will pay for the Ambulance line.
 - Todd Keating said that if it is truly not in the 2022 budget, then we should not be showing it in the budget for 2022. Dean can explain the income next year and get to a more realistic number to put into the budgets for

future years. Refer to audio for details including what Dean is doing with surrounding ambulances to get us through.

- Russ Dan said that that if something does come out in the Boy Scout packets, it should be done in conjunction with the Fire Department and the Budget committee to show support.
- Selectman Young asked Dean Young about some end of year expenses for the ambulance and how would that get paid?
 - Dean Young said that they had money left over in dispatch, because we did not enter into a contract with Londonderry this year so payroll and expenses would come out of that. We want the Ambulance to be up and running by the 1st of November.
- Bob Stout noted that there are a lot of zero spend items year after year. Even though our budget is small, if you add up all the zero spends over the last two years, it is a fair amount of money.
 - Selectman Young said that the board of selectman did request that all the departments try to limit their spending to only 2-3% increase.
 - Todd Keating said that to Bob's point, you should not make last year's budget this year's budget because it shows no thought put into what is actually done in your department. Maybe the Town Administrator could review that annually to see what the trend is before it comes to the Budget Committee.
 - Bob Stout said he went back two years and saw a lot of zero spends. He understands that it is late now but it may be worth a look because if we can get the operating budget down, we may gain support in the other larger items.
 - Todd Keating said that if we could get two years' worth on excel, Susan Gill could get that information for us pretty quickly.
 - Bob Stout asked the Board of Selectman, with the Building Inspector's revenues being up this year, did we look at the expenses for next year because they will not reflect the same activity as this year?
 - Selectman Young said that this year was huge because of the 57 homes that were built this year but as you can see, his building permits dropped.
- Chairman Chivers said that at the last meeting we talked about Cemetery and Selectman Young said they were going to get money from the trust fund and we would only see a 2% increase.
 - Selectman Young said that she believes that is still true. There has not been a meeting scheduled yet but they are planning on going to the Trustee of the Trust funds and get money that way.
 - Chairman Chivers asked how much could we reduce the \$72,000 budgeted?
 - Selectman Young answered she thinks it will go to \$65,000 at the most. She does not want to speak for her as she is just the liaison.
- Chairman Chivers noted that Asphalt maintenance went down and \$18,000 for sand stockpile was taken out because that will be done this year. Chairman Chivers asked if Jeff expects to use all the \$200,000 in asphalt maintenance?
 - Jeff Wuebbolt said he plans on using it all.
 - Bob Stout asked how Asphalt maintenance line works? Is it similar to Winter payroll?
 - Jeff Wuebbolt answered that it is actually paid per ton in place. So, the paving company gets a set rate per ton they put in place.
 - Bob Stout asked how do you get paid for the work you are doing during summertime?
 - Jeff Wuebbolt answered that depending on what I am doing I pay myself out of the line it belongs.
 - Todd Keating asked if there was a warrant article for any major road projects for 2022?
 - Jeff Wuebbolt answered yes. In 2022, his plan is to put in for Tower Hill reconstruction and also a ware coat for Adam's Rd and Healey Rd. The two warrant articles would be \$250,000 and \$100,000 respectively.
 - Todd Keating offered the feedback that Jeff should put something together showing that the investment in the warrant articles would be a future cost savings due to reduced maintenance etc.
- Chairman Chivers said the in the Police Department, the bottom line is less because the cruiser had been taken out, equipment was reduced to \$5,000, and booking area improvements were reduced to \$1.
- Chairman Chivers said that the Town Officers expense is down, mostly because of software.
 - Selectman Young asked why it was put so high in last year's budget?

- Brien Brock said that was the total cost of the upgrade but not all was completed this year. This will be the budget to complete for next year.
 - Chairman Chivers read a note from Donna stating that, “In 2021 we budgeted for our current software license/support renewals for accounting, payroll, and the tax collector and the cost of new software for accounting, tax collector, and building department. For 2022 we will not need to renew our current accounting and tax collector software. The cost of the tax collector software has been moved to the tax collector’s budget. We are also not taking on any IT related projects in 2022.”
- Chairman Chivers said if we take out the ambulance the bottom line is \$3,152,855 which is a 5.16% increase. Hopefully we can take out another \$7,000 in cemetery to reduce the line further. We will not vote on anything tonight until we get the information from Susan Gill on the zero spend lines and solid information from the cemetery.
- Chairman Chivers asked the Budget Committee if we all agree to leave the ambulance at \$1, reduce some of the zero spend lines, and take out around \$7,000 from the cemetery?
 - Jodi Hedstrom said she has to disagree with reducing the zero-line items because it is a waste of time. We should just come up with a bottom line.
 - Susan Gill said that what she proposed we should do is look at the bottom line first to see year over year, how much is budgeted vs. how much is spent. For those that have a definite delta between the two, then go back and look at the individual line items. If at the bottom line they are spending their whole budget, then it is indicative that they are just not moving the money appropriately. Refer to audio for more discussion.
 - Selectman Young voted no as she is part of the Selectboard and they put the budget together but the rest of the Budget Committee is in agreement to wait until the November 10th meeting to do a preliminary vote on the budget.
 - Selectman Young provided a sheet to Budget Committee members that showed various trust funds that could be used to help lower the budget as well. Refer to audio for details.

Update on the Safety Facilities Committee

- Brien Brock gave an update on the Safety Facilities Committee. There is a final on the plot plan layout of the actual building. It is only the PD and not the common room that will eventually tie to the Fire Department. They took that out for now for cost savings because it is not really needed at this point. The site has been worked on. Brien spoke with Lisa and he is working on scheduling the appropriate meetings with the planning board sometime in March. Hopefully, by the next meeting, we will have final numbers on the cost of the building. The plan will be to move forward to ask to purchase the land for this year.
 - Todd Keating asked how is the community participation at the meetings?
 - Brien Brock said that at the community event last Thursday there were about 120 people total and mainly the response we got was supportive but the main question was around what will my tax bill look like.

Katrina Niles moves to adjourn the meeting
 Selectman Young seconds the motion
 All in favor
 Meeting was adjourned at 8:30 pm

Submitted by: Kaycee Vitale, Administrative Assistant