

Town of Candia Municipal Budget Committee Public Hearing on Town Budget Approved Meeting Minutes

Meeting Date: December 8th, 2021
Location: Town Office Building
Zoom Meeting ID# 85256692685
Attendees: Lynn Chivers
Dick Snow
Sue Young
Susan Gill
Bob Stout
Todd Keating
Jodi Hedstrom
Stephanie Helmig
Kaycee Vitale
Absent: Katrina Niles

Chairman Chivers opened the meeting at 7:02 PM

Pledge of Allegiance

Approval of the Minutes from December 2, 2021

- Jodi Hedstrom motions to approve the minutes
- Selectman Young seconds the motion
- Motion passes 8 approve-0 oppose-1 absent

Public Hearing on Town Budget

Chairman Chivers opened the meeting for public comment

Selectman Young asked if we had the default budget?

- Chairman Chivers said that she asked Donna for the default budget and she has not gotten an answer. She presumed we don't have it yet.
 - Selectman Young said that we have all the figures and she is not sure how we can vote on this budget without the default.
 - Chairman Chivers said we do not need to vote tonight as this is just a public hearing.

Jodi Hedstrom said that based on Donna's email they added \$60,000 in part to add salary back to make people full time again. She asked if that was correct.

- Chairman Chivers directed everyone to the Town Officers Expense, the Office Wages line. It now says \$97,350 and the budget we voted on was \$77,000.
 - Jodi Hedstrom asked if the Selectboard put that money back into the budget?
 - Selectman Young said we did just the opposite, we saw the email tonight for the first time saying the position went from part time to full time. This adds about \$40,000 to the budget. The board voted to keep that position part time in order to get the town administrator. It was not supported by the Selectman.
 - Boyd Chivers agreed with Selectman Young.
- Stephanie Helmig asked for clarification on the number and hours of the town office staff
 - Chairman Chivers said that Donna is full time, Linda is full time, and Jessica is part time.
 - Stephanie Helmig asked if one of the full-time was supposed to go to part-time?
 - Selectman Young said yes. This adjustment will affect salary and benefits. She also noted that these are not people they are positions and she believes that it will impact the benefits about \$27,000. Refer to audio for discussion

- Carla Penfield asked if the Smyth Building has the money they requested back in the budget?
- Bob Stout said that we heard you and you made a really good case. We just have not formally voted to put it back in the budget.
 - Carla Penfield asked if that would be voted on tonight?
 - Bob Stout said yes.
- Selectman Young made a motion to add \$7460 back into the Smyth Building Maintenance line.
 - Todd Keating seconds the motion
 - 7 in favor (Todd Keating, Selectman Young, Susan Gill, Lynn Chivers, Bob Stout, Stephanie Helmig, Jodi Hedstrom)
 - 1 opposed (Dick Snow)
 - 1 absent (Katrina Niles)
 - Motion passes 7 in favor-1 opposed-1 absent

Carla Penfield asked when does the budget committee come up with the final number for the budget?

- Chairman Chivers said that we have a supplemental meeting on January 12th and that is when we see all the warrant articles. That will also be when we come up with our final number.
 - Carla Penfield asked if right now, with everything that is in the budget, what is your recommended budget?
 - Chairman Chivers said that we do not know what we are going to do about the office wages but we are going to add in \$7460 to put into your line.
 - Todd Keating noted that Carla Penfield did a great job presenting her case to the budget committee and hopes she comes more often.

Dean Young reminded the board that a couple of months ago they discussed the phone line item which he thought was a mistake. He believed they added too much to the budget because he pays his bill and he knows how much it is every month. He went to Donna, and discovered that the town has been paying his Consolidated Communications bill every month and now instead of coming out of the town officers expense budget, they have decided to put it back to the departments to pay out of their budget. He is asking for the \$1200 to be put back into the budget.

- Dick Snow made a motion to add \$1200 back into the Fire Telephone budget line.
 - Bob Stout seconds the motion
 - 8 in favor (Todd Keating, Selectman Young, Susan Gill, Lynn Chivers, Bob Stout, Stephanie Helmig, Jodi Hedstrom, Dick Snow)
 - 0 opposed
 - 1 absent (Katrina Niles)
 - Motion passes 8 in favor-0 opposed-1 absent

Todd Keating noted that he has opposed the Town Administrator position in the past. He said that one thing that will offset the position is the fact that they Town Administrator will be applying for grants so we can see some return on that position investment. He asked is there a way to see what we have for grants today, so when we are sitting here next year, we can see what the increase in grants are in 2022 to offset the position.

- Selectman Young said that the Town has no grants so far in 2022 except for what the fire department does separately.
 - Todd Keating said he just wanted that on the record that in 2021 we had \$0 in new grants now and compare that to the new grants in 2022 as part of the justification of having a town administrator. Discussion ensued. Refer to audio for discussion.
- Carla Penfield asked what are the number of ladies we have in the town office, how many are full-time and how many are part-time, and what are we supposed to be seeing for next year in regards to full-time and part-time positions?
 - Selectman Young answered there is now 3 full-time; the town administrator, a finance director, and a selectman's assistant. There is also a part time associate that works 12 hours a week. We did not budget for the town administrator last year.
 - Carla Penfield said that at the meeting last year, when the town administrator was discussed, she thought that one of the full-time positions would be cut back leaving the town administrator, one full-time associate, and one part time.
 - Selectman Young said that she is correct. She said she is in shock with the new budget for the salaries.
 - Stephanie Helmig asked if there is a full time Selectman's assistant?

- Selectman Young said, yes, now there is. That position was going to be cut because we have a town administrator. Discussion ensued. Refer to audio for details.
 - Todd Keating asked for clarification. What was the headcount in 2020?
 - Selectman Young said that we had a full-time selectman's assistant, a full-time finance, and a part-time associate.
 - Todd Keating said so in 2020 you had 2.5 and now you have 3.5?
 - Stephanie Helmig said that she thought that they were supposed to go to 2 full-time and 2 part-time

Stephanie Helmig asked what is the cost per month of the ambulance that we currently have on loan until December 31st?

- Dean Young answered that Stewarts is letting us use that for \$1 and we can renew that. They saw the need we had and are allowing the \$1 loan to continue. If you saw a couple months ago there was a red ambulance outside the station, it came out of Hampton, it had some serious exhaust manifold problems. We sent it back and it is now at the Ford dealership being fixed and if it is fixed correctly and the price is right, we will probably purchase that ambulance.
- Carla Penfield asked if there is money in the budget next year for people to staff the ambulance?
 - Chairman Chivers said that we are using ARPA money to pay the employees and the other costs associated with the ambulance for next year. She directed everyone to the very beginning of the budget, it shows that we reduced the ambulance to \$1 in each line because we are using the ARPA funds.
 - Carla Penfield said that is for 2022, in 2023 will we see that money in our budget?
 - Chairman Chivers said yes but we will have a better idea on the cost and offsetting income.
 - Carla Penfield said that this will be a bookkeeping issue. You have to show the public what your total cost is and then fit in here how much they are going to collect for that service.
 - Chairman Chivers said that we want the public to be clear on what is happening. We have a plan to inform the public of what we are doing. What we do not want to happen is to have the ambulance in the budget, which is a big increase in the budget, and then get our default budget and then we do not have an ambulance for our townspeople. Discussion ensued. Refer to audio for more details.
- Dick Snow said that the ambulance this year has two components to it. The ARPA funds basically gives you the ability to operate for one year. If that revolving fund warrant article is written to say that if this article passes, any money left from the ARPA funds can go into the revolving fund. That would ensure that the people would know how much it was going to cost and whether they could vote that revolving fund. If they do not vote for the revolving fund, it will have to be a part of the operating budget next year. You want that revolving fund to get voted for.
 - Dean Young said that there are two ways we are going to make the public aware. We are going to put it in the town report and we will have a flyer in the package that the boy scouts deliver. Discussion ensued, refer to audio for details.
 - Selectman Young said that she hopes that everyone knows that this budget is up 6.7% and if the following year the taxes, if our town assessment does not go up at all, will increase about \$.50/thousand. She does not think that the selectman wants to make that clear and she is not sure about this committee. She said that the public needs to be informed that this is not a sustaining operation. She was told that 50% can actually come back to the town.
 - Bob Stout asked Dean Young if he still was going to use a company to do the billing?
 - Dean Young said yes, he reminded the committee that he wants to be a kinder and gentler ambulance. We are servicing our people. We will go after all the money we can but not operate like some for profit ambulance services.

Chairman Chivers closed the meeting to public comment at 7:40 p.m.

Further Discussion on the Budget

Chairman Chivers said we are giving Dean back money and we are giving the Smyth building back money. The only issue we have left to talk about is the wages. Refer to audio for details.

- Jodi Hedstrom made a motion to reduce the budget by \$21,907 in the town wages and FICA lines.
 - Selectman Young seconds the motion
 - 7 in favor (Todd Keating, Susan Gill, Lynn Chivers, Bob Stout, Stephanie Helmig, Jodi Hedstrom, Dick Snow)
 - 0 opposed
 - 1 abstain (Selectman Young)
 - 1 absent (Katrina Niles)
 - Motion passes 8 in favor-0 opposed-1 abstain-1 absent
- Jodi Hedstrom made a preliminary recommendation for the operating budget to be \$3,168,175.
 - Susan Gill seconds the motion
 - 7 in favor (Todd Keating, Susan Gill, Lynn Chivers, Bob Stout, Stephanie Helmig, Jodi Hedstrom, Dick Snow)
 - 0 opposed
 - 1 abstain (Selectman Young)
 - 1 absent (Katrina Niles)
 - Motion passes 8 in favor-0 opposed-1 abstain-1 absent

Other Business

Jodi Hedstrom has submitted her resignation to the budget committee. She will finish out the budget season. There will be a Budget Committee opening for a 2-year term. There are also 2 3-year terms that are open this year. The Budget Committee accepts the resignation with deep regret.

Jodi Hedstrom makes a motion to suspend the meeting until January 12th

Selectman Young Seconds

All in favor

Meeting to Continue; 8:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by: Kaycee Vitale, Administrative Assistant