

State of Rhode Island

County of Washington

In Hopkinton on the eleventh day of March 2019 A.D. the Town Council held a Budget Workshop that was called to order by Town Council President Frank Landolfi at 6:30 P.M. in the Town Hall Meeting Room, 1 Town House Road, Hopkinton, RI 02833.

PRESENT: Frank Landolfi, Scott Bill Hirst, Barbara Capalbo, Sylvia Thompson, Sharon Davis; Town Manager William McGarry; Town Clerk Elizabeth Cook-Martin; Finance Director Brian Rosso.

The Budget Workshop opened with a moment of silent meditation and salute to the Flag to discuss the proposed FY 19/20 budget.

GRANTS & CONTRIBUTIONS:

Wood River Health Services

Alison Croke and David Henley were in attendance. Ms. Croke stated that they have requested level funding. Wood River Health Services is growing and they have signed a lease to open an expansion facility in Westerly. They have made some renovations to their existing facility and are looking at additional renovations such as adding additional parking for employees. This budget shall remain level funded.

Ashaway Free Library

Council President Landolfi indicated that Ashaway Free Library was looking for an additional \$2,000. Heather Field was present and indicated that the community room that they have added is nearing completion. They can now assist with things like voter registration; health care or free health screenings. Councilor Capalbo indicated that she was in favor of increasing both library budgets an additional \$2,000. Councilor Hirst indicated that he was open to an increase as well, but was worried about the increase in the cap. Council President Landolfi indicated that he could not justify adding more funds to the non-profits and increasing the budget any further. At this time this budget shall remain level funded.

Langworthy Public Library

Margaret Victoria was present and indicated that they have a landscape architect attempting to work on plans to put in additional parking. She indicated that the Langworthy Library and Ashaway Free Library attempt to work together in order to save costs. This budget was to remain level funded.

Hope Valley Ambulance

Richard Kenney was present and indicated that they did not meet the budget last year. Due to a federal ruling a few years ago regarding volunteers versus paid people, their payroll budget has gone up by \$20,000 this last year and the ease of getting volunteers has been much more difficult. As of last year's budget they are almost \$30,000 behind due to the overage on the payroll, with a shortfall on the building income by \$10,000. They are now putting some controls in place to manage overtime pay and lower expenses. Councilor Capalbo wished to add \$2,000 to their contribution. Council President Landolfi wished to level fund the budget at this time but continue the discussion of adding an additional amount to Wednesday's meeting.

Ashaway Ambulance

Eric Perrin stated that in 2018 they went on 512 runs; required mutual aid 35 times; provided mutual aid 53 times; and, had two crews out simultaneously 16 times. They lost one full time employee and hired six per diem people trying to fill in at least half of the second shift. They have more volunteer drivers than EMTs. Their hope is to bring in more EMTs. In 2018, they replaced some equipment. They just purchased a 2011 ambulance for \$40,000 and recently sold their 2001 ambulance. Mr. Perrin stated that the RI Department of Health is continually imposing new unfunded mandates, the most recent of which being a requirement to have an IV heat pack in every ambulance at a cost of \$410 each or they would not pass inspection. Ashaway Ambulance is currently applying for grants to assist in different projects. Council President Landolfi stated that they have not received any financial reporting for the last three quarters which had been mandated the prior year and he also questioned why they did not have a subscription drive this year. Mr. Perrin indicated he was not aware the Town had not been receiving the quarterly reporting and would address this oversight. Mr. Perrin indicated that because they had received money from the Ashaway Fire

District they didn't want to double charge taxpayers so they gave every resident a subscription at no additional cost. Councilor Capalbo questioned if they planned on asking the Ashaway Fire District for another \$50,000 this year and Mr. Perrin indicated that he believed they would because that was the only way they could cover paying EMTs on all shifts. There is not enough money coming in from runs to support three shifts. Mr. Perrin believed that Ashaway Fire District was the only fire district in the area that is liable for EMS. Town Manager McGarry asked Mr. Perrin how they obtained the \$40,000 to pay for the new ambulance and he indicated that he had taken out a loan. Councilor Capalbo felt it might be time for the two ambulance associations and fire departments to consider merging. Council President Landolfi asked if Ashaway Ambulance had hired a full time EMT for their second shift with the \$50,000 that the Fire District gave them and Mr. Perrin stated no, the EMT was not full time. He went on to state that they are using that money for that individual as well as obtaining coverage for the weekend shifts. Council President Landolfi advised that they should consider merging to which Mr. Perrin implied they were not interested in doing. Town Manager McGarry asked how many paid personnel were on second shift and Mr. Perrin answered one EMT who was on seven days a week. Council President Landolfi wished to level fund the budget at this time but indicated that they would continue the discussion to Wednesday's meeting.

Community Education 2000 Foundation

Christopher Philips indicated that the Community Education 2000 Foundation was made up of all volunteers and was now 20 years old. They are an organization that provides scholarships to students and in 2018 they awarded thirty-two \$1,900 scholarships and plan to do the same in 2019. Their board is made up of twelve people (four people from each town) who award the scholarships to the Chariho district. Councilor Hirst didn't believe this foundation should be supported by taxpayer money and felt they should hold fundraisers to obtain this money. He believed that when they first came before the Town Council in 2000 or 2001 asking for a contribution it had been indicated that this would be a one-time deal. Councilor Capalbo agreed with Councilor Hirst, though she felt the scholarships were a good idea for students but not for teachers

though they may be good for the teachers, grants for teachers that take them out of the classrooms and then they must be replaced by substitute teachers. She also indicated that their fundraising expense was 20% of their total income, which was extremely high. Council President Landolfi was in favor of the organization even if they funded them only \$500. Councilor Thompson stated that she was not in favor of this and felt it did not belong in the Town budget.

Neighbors Helping Neighbors RI

Mary Gail Smith, a Board member, was present and stated that they were asking for a \$1,000 contribution. Their group was made up of South County families who performed home repairs at no cost. They were all volunteers with no paid staff; no office; and, they work remotely. Ms. Smith indicated that last year they received 75 applications for help. They feel that they are preventing homelessness and are attempting to keep people in their homes. Of the 75 applications they received last year, they were able to do 35 projects, six of which were in Hopkinton and ranged from painting to installing a new roof. Most of the people they assist are elderly, women and people with disabilities. Their costs consist of building supplies and liability insurance. Councilor Thompson advised that recently a Norwegian Spruce had fallen on an elderly man's home and left sixteen holes in his roof. She asked if Neighbors Helping Neighbors would have been able to assist in this matter and Ms. Smith indicated absolutely. Ms. Smith handed out some brochures and advised that they had a website for more information. Councilor Hirst was not in favor of this, though he felt it was a very worthy group. Councilor Capalbo was also not interested in adding to the budget but felt they should speak with the Town Planner about obtaining a grant. Mr. Tefft indicated that possibly sending out a request to various business owners may assist them in obtaining contributions. Council President Landolfi wished to finalize this matter at Wednesday's meeting.

General Government, continued.

Finance Director Rosso stated that the health care rates have gone down 2.8% and dental went down 8.9%. The net assessed values went up about \$500,000 from the previous tax roll which brought in approximately \$10,000 in revenue. We saved about \$48,000 in health care.

Joe Moreau asked if there would be a vote on the proposal to add \$50 into the Public Welfare's budget either tonight or on Wednesday and Town Clerk Cook-Martin indicated that it would be discussed but there would be no vote taken. Luther Davis wondered if a letter should be sent to Chariho asking how much their health insurance decreased since the Town's healthcare had decreased. Mr. Rosso indicated that the school self-insures and we use The Trust. We are in a pool with Richmond and Charlestown.

CIP/Debt Service, continued.

No discussion was held regarding the CIP/Debt Service budget.

Warrant Items, Other Departments and Budgetary Matters

No discussion was held regarding these matters.

The workshop was closed at 8:30 PM.

Elizabeth J. Cook-Martin

Town Clerk

Marita D. Breault

Deputy Town Clerk