

State of Rhode Island

County of Washington

In Hopkinton on the twenty sixth day of February 2018 A.D. a budget workshop was held in the Town Hall Meeting Room, 1 Town House Road, Hopkinton, RI 02832 beginning at 6:30 P.M to discuss the proposed FY 18/19 budget.

PRESENT: Frank Landolfi, Thomas Buck, Barbara Capalbo, David Husband, Sylvia Thompson. Town Manager William McGarry; Town Clerk Elizabeth Cook-Martin. Also present: Finance Director Brian Rosso.

#### EMA/Public Welfare

EMA Director Ron MacDonald was present. The EMA Budget expenses and revenues were reviewed. Mr. MacDonald confirmed his department receives grants from the State which off-set and reimburses 50% of his salary and he occasionally he receives grants from the RI Department of Health for specific purposes. There were no changes to the EMA Budget.

There were no changes to the Public Welfare Budget.

#### Education

The Education Budget was reviewed. Councilor Husband asked about Education Revenue line item 3224 Debt Service Reimbursement. Mr. Rosso explained in the agreement for the new RYSE School Building if any of the towns paid over one third, that it be reimbursed. The Town has to pay it out then be reimbursed; that was how the agreement was written; they will be reimbursing the Town in July. The Town pays the Chariho School District by automatic bank transfer on the first of the month and the Town collects the State Aid at mid-to-end of the month. The figures for the Chariho Regional School District listed in the Town's budget are the latest figures from Chariho. The next step for the Chariho budget is the District Financial Meeting on 03/06/18; the School Committee will adopt a budget shortly after that. Councilor Thompson asked if the School Committee could chose not to reimburse the Towns, 1/3, 1/3, 1/3. It was believed that this was spelled out contractually. A copy of this was requested. Council President Landolfi noted Education expense was up about \$473,000.00 and State Aid has been reduced by about \$44,000.00; the Council would have to wait to see if

Categorical Transportation Aid is restored. Councilor Thompson commented on a component that might be in the State Aid formula regarding the Town's growth; our Town grew in value by 4% so she asked if it will hurt the Town relative to the State Aid formula. Mr. Rosso will have to look into this matter. Councilor Thompson suggested preparing for it next year. Councilor Buck noted it may be related to census population figures. Council President Landolfi added the Town has a statistical revaluation every 3 years and full revaluation every 10 years.

Police/Dispatchers/CIP

Chief David Palmer was present. The Police Department Budget was reviewed and discussed at length and revisions were made. Councilor Buck asked about the stipends. Chief Palmer explained the stipend comprises \$750.00 for cell phone and \$750.00 for uniform cleaning per officer for a total of \$1,500.00 which is budgeted in line item #5425. There was some discussion on the cell phone stipend amount which may differ. Mr. Rosso noted the stipend is in the contract and did not change from the previous contract. He will have to research the cell phone stipend amount. Also per contract, officers receive up to \$400.00 reimbursement to maintain their uniforms and equipment in the standards of the department. Chief Palmer commented that the shirts cost \$108.00, so the \$400.00 reimbursement is to ensure officers keep their uniforms in good order. Councilor Buck noted there is another line item #5440 Uniforms in the budget. Chief Palmer explained the stipend is for uniform cleaning; the other line item is for replacing uniform items such as the shirts, holsters, etc. and it also covers uniforms for new officers going through the academy. The cost to equip an officer attending the Academy with an Academy uniform and complete Hopkinton uniform is estimated to be \$1,500.00 to \$2,000.00. The name of line item #5440 Uniforms will be renamed Uniform Replacement. Councilor Husband questioned line item #4010 Full Time Wages; that it did not appear from the previous years' actuals that it came close to the budget request this year of \$900,668. Mr. Rosso noted it is calculated based on tenure in the contract plus, since he has been here there has been some employee turnover every year. He noted it is difficult one and a half years in advance who will still be on staff for the entire fiscal year and there is always going to be some sort of turnover so it is

not an exact science. He assumes there will be a new hire at step one, then he breaks down everybody's tenure: what step they are, then factor in everyone's anniversary date, so he has a spreadsheet that calculates everybody's pay and when it's going to change, how many weeks they will be at one step, how many weeks at the next step. Councilor Capalbo noted line item #4130 Pension went down this year. Mr. Rosso explained the calculation for this is done at the State level. Councilor Buck commented that this was always funded higher than others. Mr. Rosso agreed: town employee pensions were at 2%-3%; police pension went from 39.101% to 29.7%. It was underfunded at the State level which is why it is such a high percentage. Councilor Husband questioned line item #4060 Patrol Overtime and Council President Landolfi asked why it ran so high. Chief Palmer noted there was a 3% raise across the board so every extra overtime hour is 3% extra; with one person gone, there may be salary savings but overtime goes up. He has to cover a two man shift at night and there is one less person to do that; he is in the recruiting process for a new officer now. Chief Palmer noted that there may be another officer leaving who has applied to the State Police. Council President Landolfi would like the Council to consider level funding this line item. The matter was discussed further and line item #4060 Patrol Overtime was reduced to \$96,000.00. Council President Landolfi noted line item #5090 Education Reimbursement had increased. Chief Palmer determined that 13 law enforcement courses would be taken by officers in the next fiscal year; there is a State Law that mandates reimbursement. Line item #5060 Contract Services has been reduced this year because the Town is purchasing a new Fingerprint Scanner so the monthly maintenance fee won't have to be paid the first year but it will have to be paid the following year. Mr. Rosso noted the cost of detail disbursement software has been added in to this line item. Line item #5140 Gas-Cruisers was reduced to \$38,000.00. Revenues: line item #3401 Detail Income: Cruiser & Admin Fees was increased to \$55,000.00 as there has been an increase in details and after review of the previous years' actuals. Mr. Rosso noted Detail income: Cruiser & Admin Fees is a pass through.

Capital Improvement Plan

There are three projects for the Police Department in the CIP: \$68,820 for Police Vehicle Replacement Project which includes the second leasing installment of \$28,134.00 and funding for a new high end front line cruiser for \$40,686.00. Council President Landolfi did not support placing any funding in the CIP for a new vehicle this year with two having been purchased last year. Councilor Capalbo noted they might have to include it next year. Councilor Buck felt the cost for the SUV was too high. He questioned who determines the condition of the car. Chief Palmer responded he tries to predict what would be needed down the road; what car would reach the 125,000 miles limit in the police contract and one car has 101,000 miles. There were two other vehicles with approximately 84,000 miles and projecting them out, in two years they will be at the limit. He reported the cars approved for last years' CIP were just received. Based on his projections, he noted he may need three vehicles next year if none were acquired in the next fiscal year. Councilor Buck asked why not a less expensive vehicle such as a Crown Victoria or a Dodge Interceptor. It was noted the Crown Victoria is no longer produced. Chief Palmer reported that it only saved about \$2,000.00 per vehicle and that patrolmen were having trouble seeing out the back window of the Interceptor because they were a lot smaller. He added that sedans must also traverse over the Town's dirt roads and the SUV's were better designed and equipped for that purpose. Councilor Husband asked if they were just as good a chase vehicle. Chief Palmer indicated he was not concerned so much about the chase capability as with the computer and other equipment they are all compatible; he is more concerned about the durability of the vehicle and they are more durable with less maintenance required. Councilor Buck questioned who takes the police vehicles home. Chief Palmer responded himself, the Captain and two detectives. Councilor Buck noted that is an additional benefit that is not part of their salary; it is an added bonus and did the Town send them an IRS form. Councilor Buck questioned the need for the two detectives to take the vehicles home. Chief Palmer noted one detective lives close-by and keeps his detective equipment and his computer with him, so he is called often and comes directly to work; the other detective lives near URI, closer to the courthouse so he is called often as well for duties related to court, so there is a benefit to having them take

the vehicles home. After discussion, the CIP was revised to remove the purchase/lease of vehicles for the Police Department in FY 18/19. It will have to be dealt with next year. Another project is to re-roof back half of the Police Station Roof; \$30,000.00 has been budgeted for this project. The front half had already been done; the funding for that came out of the Public Works Department Repair and Maintenance Building line item the last fiscal year. The third project is \$20,287.00 for a new 3M Gemalto Cogent Fingerprint Scanner.

#### Dispatchers Budget

Chief Palmer was present. The Dispatchers Budget was reviewed. Councilor Husband commented that one of these years, three towns will get together and there will be universal dispatch for all three towns. He noted we have four dispatchers but we are not Cranston or Warwick, at some point it will consolidate. Councilor Buck noted that when Westerly built their new police station, there was discussion on this. Councilor Capalbo felt it made sense for the area from Route 95 and the beach. Councilor Husband was not interested in having someone lose a job but it would make sense to consolidate; it would be a great savings. Councilor Thompson stated that Westerly performs the dispatch for Ashaway Ambulance and Hope Valley Ambulance and Councilor Buck added the area fire departments. Councilor Capalbo questioned the increase in line item #4110 Health/Dental Insurance had increased and this was because one dispatcher went from a Health-Dental Insurance Buy-Back to a Family Plan, line item #4120 Health-Dental Insurance Buy-Back is reduced as a result. Councilor Husband commented on line item #4015 Dispatchers Wages, that over the course of three years shows a 16% increase and line item #4020 Part Time Wages are up 33% over the course of three years. Mr. McGarry stated it was a four year contract for the dispatchers; the first year had a zero increase in wages, zero in the second year, a 2% increase in year three and 3% in year four, so that would be a total of 5%. Mr. Rosso added there were step increases as longevity has been eliminated and there was a third shift premium; \$1.25 per hour. Councilor Husband compared previous fiscal years' budget to actual figures which seem to reflect being over budget. Mr. Rosso explained there were a number of variables that factored into wage calculations; minimum new hire, one year step, five year step, ten year step and

fifteen year step so every year there are step increases. One example was that one dispatcher went from \$20.12 to \$22.27 in one year. Councilor Husband noted in other departments the wage figures budgeted, were more close to the actual expenditure; they were over budget for the dispatchers. Councilor Capalbo felt this cannot be arbitrarily changed; it would have to be done through contract negotiations. Councilor Buck disagreed; that the figures could be calculated should be closer based on how many individuals, their hourly pay, etc. and that would be the figure. Mr. Rosso agreed and that is how he has it all figured on his spread sheet but there were other factors involved; there were employees covering shifts for other employees as well as other variables that came into play such as different pay rates or an individual out on FMLA or someone out on un-paid leave or sick time so other people are making up that shift. So you are still paying the person out on sick leave as well as the person filling in. Chief Palmer added the person scheduled to fill in that shift for the person on long-term illness is separate and will not be reflected in the wages; each shift must be covered. Councilor Husband noted there were 21 shifts with four dispatchers working five-day shifts so that is 20 shifts so who works the other remaining shift. Mr. Rosso responded a permanent part time person and two other part time people fill in. The person out on sick leave has 1,000 hours on the books so that person can be out the entire year plus the Town has to pay the individuals who fill in; vacation time comes into play as well as so some individuals who fill in have a higher pay rate, so there were a lot of factors involved. There were no changes to the Dispatchers Budget.

Councilor Buck asked if the Chief was still holding comp time to 30 hours. Chief Palmer responded he tried to keep it to 20 hours, occasionally it will go higher than 30 hours and when that occurs he informs them that they have to reduce it; he regularly monitors comp time. The average comp time is 12-14 hours.

#### Animal Control

Chief Palmer was present. The Animal Control Budget was reviewed. Councilor Thompson questioned the status of employment of the Animal Control Officer. Mr. McGarry noted she is still employed as an Animal Control Officer; being carried as on leave without pay, still getting credit for accrued time, like vacation

time, as she is still considered an employee, which is enough to pay her union dues, but other than that the Town is not paying her. He noted she could still come back, so the position will be left open, he did not anticipate that happening but there is funding in the budget in that event. There are no part time wages factored in the budget as the shelter is closed. Councilor Husband asked about the arrangement with Westerly. Mr. McGarry explained they receive a set amount per animal per day plus medical expenses and they also deduct the adoption fee from that which offsets the expense. He reported he received a bill for the last six months from July 1 through December 31 for \$2,500.00 and that included taking care of all the animals that were being shipped there from Hopkinton. He explained our police officers respond initially to calls but if it was something they could not handle, the Westerly ACO will step in for us. Councilor Capalbo confirmed it was a comfortable and efficient working arrangement for all our departments. Chief Palmer noted there were other individuals picking up the slack; Westerly ACO Arthur Smith has been very helpful and Captain Mark Carrier has been dealing with the lion share of it. There are no concerns with the welfare of the animals being cared for in Westerly. Mr. McGarry indicated there are no plans at this point to re-open the animal shelter; that decision would ultimately be up to the Town Council. No changes were made to the Animal Control Budget.

#### Recreation/CIP

Recreation Director Mary Sawyer was present. Council President Landolfi noted Mrs. Sawyer has provided documentation on the playground and the information for the additional hours for Amy Collins and has found the revenue or expense reductions to offset it and he thanked her for this. She explained the increase in line item #4020 Part Time Wages was due to an increase by six hours per week for Program & Event Coordinator Amy Collins resulting in a \$6,200.00 increase; this would be off-set by an increase of \$5,000.00 in revenue under the Summer Day Camp/After School Camp revenue line item #3400 and she has cut \$1,200.00 from the Non-Employee Compensation expense line item #4040. In FY 18/19 the Summer Day Camp hours will be increased and the tuition fees will also increase. The Recreation Department will offer additional After School Programs as well.

Councilor Capalbo questioned the difference between the Toddler Program and Day Care. Mrs. Sawyer explained Mrs. Collins will resume the Toddler Program which is a day camp for 3 and 4 year old children, with parental involvement, an interactive program that offers crafts, activities and snacks. It is not a day care program. Councilor Husband asked if non-residents paid more for programs than non-residents. Mrs. Sawyer responded yes, a higher fee for programs for non-residents over what Hopkinton residents pay for programs for an example the basketball program they charge \$58.00 for residents and \$63.00 for non-residents, \$5.00 more for non-residents. Tuition for the Summer Camp: \$150.00 a week, or \$35.00 a day, for residents and non-residents pay an additional \$30.00 a week, 20% more for Summer Day Camp for non-residents. Councilor Husband asked if the year to date revenue figures were accurate and Mrs. Sawyer responded the after school program brings in a good deal of revenue; \$800.00 to \$900.00 a week so an additional \$20,000.00 to \$25,000.00 should be added in. Councilor Capalbo asked about Winter Basketball Revenue and Mrs. Sawyer indicated that this amount would be more like \$17,000.00 at this point in time. Councilor Capalbo commented on the Budget to Actuals which are less than anticipated and that the expense amount was less. Mrs. Sawyer explained school enrollment has been going down a bit and for whatever reason, kids aren't trying out for league sports, so with that and in review of the actuals, these were taken into consideration in making a decision, which is the reason behind lowering it. Councilor Capalbo asked about line item #3400 Special Camps Revenue. Mrs. Sawyer explained in March she will post pre-registration for the Hoop Academy which will bring in \$3,000.00-\$4,000.00 which starts in July but a deposit is due in this fiscal year, then they will hold three Soccer Programs, the Field Hockey Camp and Volleyball Camp were planned. Some of the expenses under the Special Camps include the Holiday Stroll, these expenses are factored in on the expense side; no revenue is received for that event, it is a community event and for HopArts they pay for a police officer and absorb the cost of the bus. Councilor Husband expressed concern with over expecting expenses and revenues. Mr. Rosso noted they review the programs annually but it was very difficult to predict who would be applying for programs in any given year or which program would or would not

be popular, which program would have more participants and he noted the importance of Mrs. Sawyers input. Mrs. Sawyer noted they now have a gazebo and commented they received \$5,900.00 in grants this year, Senate, House and Department of Elderly Affairs. One thing she would like to see have happen is to have electricity hooked up to the pre-wired gazebo so that she can schedule performing artists there; but the difficulty with that is how to sell tickets, which presents a manpower issue. Councilor Husband asked about any traction there might be with having a farmers market there. Mrs. Sawyer reported she had Kim Whewell investigate and she contacted RIDEM who referred them to Farm Fresh RI, and learned Farm Fresh RI is not open to running or operating any farmers markets in the area; but they do have resources they can assist with signage and technical help. She reported several months ago a resident came in to inquire about starting a market; he lives here but lived in New York previously and has experience in running markets there. This potential activity brings up various questions, such as: are there markets nearby, are they struggling, will you be competing with them, how many vendors will be involved, how many customers to expect, is there electricity, running water, who would be available to facilitate that easily during the summer months and who will organize all of the vendors and keep track of their various licenses during the market season. Council President Landolfi volunteered Councilor Husband. Mrs. Sawyer stated there had been a community garden project that an Eagle Scout did some years back; they put in raised beds, a rain barrel, but no one came to plant anything because most people in Hopkinton have a garden, there are roadside vegetable stands. She stated she would love to have a farmers market but would need a volunteer to manage it. There were no changes to the Recreation Department Budget.

#### Capital Improvement Plan

The Recreation Department has one CIP Project. Mrs. Sawyer reported timing is very good for this project and gives a year to plan with a round of grants expected in 2019. \$48,472.00 is allocated for Crandall Field Improvements. An estimated \$243,000.00 in funding will be needed to replace the relocate the playground at Crandall Field. The Town intends to apply for a RIDEM grant for the project in 2019, an 80/20 match; \$194,000.00 RIDEM Grant, \$49,000.00 Town funds. Cost

estimates have been received from Crossman Engineering and Little Tykes; the playground will be relocated to the location of the old tennis court; one tennis court that has been refurbished will remain on site. \$50,000.00 had been estimated for FY 18/19 for construction. Councilor Capalbo noted the importance of providing for the handicapped and elderly as well. Councilor Buck noted it would be nice to have coin operated lights on the tennis courts as was once there. Councilor Husband recommended the Trust approve the playground. Mrs. Sawyer reported the playground would have a tree fort style. After further discussion, this amount was reduced to \$30,000.00; approximately \$20,000.00 is already held in reserve; added together this would give the Town the required grant match amount.

#### Town Manager

Town Manager William McGarry was present. The Town Manager Budget was reviewed. He noted he learned recently that his assistant will be leaving July 1, 2018; her husband is in the military and is being reassigned. This position is 29 hours per week and he anticipates advertising the vacancy sometime next month. A new hire will start at a lower rate, his assistant now has earned step raises, a new hire will not initially need step raises. Line item #4040 will be adjusted accordingly. Council President Landolfi asked about line item #4000 Town Manager Comp Time Stipend. Mr. McGarry explained it was related to 550 hours of comp time he had built up a few years back. He had scaled the comp time back to 300 hours and then the Council allowed him to receive the value of this comp time distributed over the course of three years. This will be the last year this line item will appear in the budget. No changes were made to the Town Manager Budget.

#### Finance/Debt Service/CIP

##### Finance Budget

Finance Director Brian Rosso was present. The Finance Director Budget was reviewed. Councilor Husband questioned the increase in line item #4110 Health and Dental insurance line item. Mr. Rosso noted he had married this past year and they were expecting, so the increase was as a result of going from a single plan to a family plan. Councilor Landolfi asked if the increase to Contract

Services line item #5060 was for the software upgrade. Mr. Rosso indicated yes, one of the annual goals is to improve the payroll system and this would cover an enhancement called “time and attendance” to the Paychex module that will further automate the payroll system and allow Department Head’s to input the hours directly through Paychex and send over to them electronically vs. how it is done now through an excel spreadsheet, then his office must manually input the data into Paychex. This involves a one-time start-up fee of \$600.00 and is also listed in the Capital Improvement Plan under the GIS/IT project. He noted he believed next year might be the last year they will have to pay for the 1094C and 1095C Affordable Care Act reporting, which they pay a little over \$2,000.00 a year for and he will consider taking that over to save money but it is a manpower issue. No changes were made to the Finance Director Budget.

#### Debt Service

Mr. Rosso reported he will need to update the Debt Service Budget page to include the Street Light Loan. Councilor Capalbo reported that she had received calls from residents who have indicated they were very happy with them. Council President Landolfi asked Mr. Rosso to address the Land Trust bond. Mr. Rosso noted there was \$1 million dollars the Land Trust spent with money the Town let them borrow; there is another \$1million dollars that the Land Trust is authorized to spend and are in the process of purchasing a \$500,000.00 property so he included interest on the BAN in line item #5221 for \$1,500.00 which is the interest portion only, this can be rolled over up to three years. If they spend the other \$500,000.00 that’s been authorized before the three years is up, we will go out to bond for the \$1million dollars to pay the Town back and the other \$1million dollars which will be a hit to the debt service budget of around \$125,000.00 and interest rates are going up. Councilor Husband asked if the Town should be setting aside funds to prepare. Mr. Rosso did not believe so as the Town would not be accruing any interest in a short term debt instrument. Councilor Thompson confirmed that the Land Trust goes out and spends money to buy property and maintain property but the Town is on the hook to borrow the money. Council President Landolfi noted that is one of his pet peeves during referendum when people vote on open space. Everyone wants open space but

people don't understand the implications that it has to be paid for through debt service through the tax rolls. Councilor Capalbo noted that also happens at the State level with Open Space and Recreation bonds and everyone votes for them.

Other Departments, Agencies and Budgetary Matters

The next budget workshop is scheduled for March 8, 2018.

The workshop was closed at 8:30 PM.

Elizabeth J. Cook-Martin

Town Clerk