

Town of Cromwell, CT  
Board of Finance  
Special Meeting  
Monday, April 6, 2015  
Town Hall at 7:00 p.m.

RECEIVED FOR FILING  
4/10 2015 at 8:40 A.M.  
TOWN CLERK'S OFFICE  
CROMWELL, CONN.

*Darlene A. DiProto*  
TOWN CLERK

**Minutes and Record of Vote**

**Present:** Chairman John Henehan, Julius Neto, Amanda Drew, Joseph Corlis, Ed Widders, Bob Milardo, Alternate Dan Delisle and Alternate Dan Kelly

**Others Present:** Finance Director Marianne Sylvester, Acting Town Manager Chief Anthony Salvatore, Superintendent Dr. Paula Talty, members of the Board of Education, and Town Staff.

**A. Call to Order:** Chairman Henehan called the Special Meeting of the Board of Finance to order at 7:35 p.m.

**B. Seating of Alternates** – None

**C. Discussion and decisions on the 2015-2016 Town Council's proposed budget, including Debt Service**

Motion made by Julius Neto and seconded by Ed Widders to discuss and vote on 2015-2016 proposed budget. Additional motion made to discuss and approve proposed budget for the 2015-2016 Board of Education Budget.

Budget Line #2 Town Clerk

A motion was made by Julius Neto and seconded by Joe Corlis to approve \$225,120 for line item 2 Town Clerk. All in Favor – Motion Passed

The Board extended their best wishes to Town Clerk Darlene DiProto and thanked her for a job well done.

Darlene advised members that she was able to reduce the budget by \$8,000 due to a State Grant received.

Budget Line #3 Election Department

A motion was made by Julius Neto and seconded by Joseph Corlis to approve \$71,466 for line item #3 Election Department. All in Favor – Motion Passed

Dan Delisle and other members of the Board thanked Registrars Linda Duren and Bonnie Anderson for their hard work at election time especially with all the changes that occurred to the voting process.

The proposed budget is taking into consideration the variables that could happen (primaries, etc). No other questions were asked.

#### Budget Line #7 Building Inspection

A motion was made by Julius Neto and seconded by Joseph Corlis to approve \$212,897 for line item # 7 Building Inspection. All in Favor – Motion Passed

Ed Wenners asked about whether or not the TPC is picking up the cost to hire a licensed electrician to inspect electrical work at the tournament. David Jolly/Chief Building Inspector answered that the TPC was willing to pay, however, Mr. Jolley decided not to require this. It was decided to keep the funding in the budget for contractual services in case it is needed.

#### Budget Line #10 Assessor's Office

A motion was made by Bob Milardo and seconded by Julius Neto to approve \$221,964 for line item #10 Assessor's Office. All in Favor – Motion Passed

Shawna Baron, Tax Assessor advised that not much changed with the budget. The increase of \$4,000 is for contractual wage increases.

#### Budget Line #21 Board of Assess. Appeals

Motion made by Bob Milardo and seconded by Julius Neto to approve \$1,250 for line item #21 Board of Assessment Appeals. All in Favor – Motion Passed

Dan Delisle asked how the amount to pay members was determined and why. Bob Milardo informed the Board that this was included in the Charter years ago. It was included to prevent funds being paid and having it look like it was a bribe. The Charter has never been updated.

#### Budget Line #22 Comm. Support the Disable

Motion made by Julius Neto and seconded by Joseph Corlis to approve \$100 for line item #22 Comm. Support the Disable. All in Favor – Motion Passed

#### Budget Line #42 Youth Services

Motion made by Julius Neto and seconded by Joseph Corlis to approve \$106,540 for line item #42 Youth Services. All in Favor – Motion Passed

John Henehan inquired about the \$18,000 for Part-Time Wages and asked what it was for. Director Sue Schein advised that the \$18,000 is for one (1) permanent part-time staff person.

#### Budget Line #43 Recreation Department

Motion made by Amanda Drew and seconded by Joseph Corlis to approve \$264,928 for line item #43 Recreation Department. All in Favor – Motion Passed

John Henehan asked about the therapeutic program. Director Schein advised that this programs being supported from her proposed budget is for programs such as sending kids to Camp Sunrise (last year 0 kids were sent and some went for more than one week), Manes in Motion (handicapped kids learning to ride horses), swimming classes, special program in West Hartford to teach/play baseball for handicap kids), learn to bike ride, etc.

Julius Neto noted that the 2014-2015 proposed budget is lower than last year's.

Budget Line #38 Health Dept

Motion made by Amanda Drew and seconded by Joseph Corlis to approve \$163,608 for line item #38 Health Dept. All in Favor – Motion Passed

No questions were asked of Chief Anthony Salvatore who was filling in for Wes Bell.

**D. Discussion and decision on the 2015-2016 Board of Education proposed budget**

Board of Education

Motion made by Julius Neto and seconded by Joseph Corlis to approve \$28,275,237 for the Board of Education. All in Favor – Motion Passed (opposed by Bob Milardo)

Ed Widders had a chart listing various towns and their budget percentages. Most of the towns listed recommendations are from 3.0% to 3.7%. The Town of Cromwell is proposing 4.46%. Superintendent Dr. Talty stated that they originally proposed 4.46%, which was amended to 3.96% and after review changed to 4.21%. Ed Widders praised Dr. Talty as to how she is running the school system.

Amanda Drew asked about the negotiations between Dr. Talty and the Board of Education. She wanted to know if there was a list of the items that were lowered/removed and then added back. Dr. Talty said as mentioned previously that the proposed budget started at 4.46%. She was asked to amend the budget and lowered it to 3.96%. Then after it was reviewed by the Board of Education she was asked to add some items back in (items added back included BCBA position for students with behavioral problems, summer programs, etc.).

Dr. Talty also mentioned that the \$400,000 overage for Special Education was offset by not buying supplies and/or initiating activities (books, field trips, general supplies, etc.). The schools are already a year behind in purchasing those items needed.

Business Manager Karen Clancy stated that as far as the wages and benefits, it is hard to determine what exactly those figures will be. This is due to the fact that it isn't always known who is leaving or coming in. This cannot be determined until the pay scale is determined and what their benefits would include (family or individual).

Amanda Drew is concerned with the significant budget number. She wants to make sure it stays in control.

Ed Widders asked about the board-certified behavioral analyst. Dr. Talty advised that presently the District provides this service but contracts someone to come in two to three times a week. She said it would be cheaper for the town to have a full-time analyst. Julius Neto asked if an administrative person would also be needed. Dr. Talty stated it would not. Dr. Talty also mentioned that this person would be a teacher working with the student with behavioral issues but would also teach the parents as to how to deal with the child's issue. The full-time analyst would be more accessible to the school and parents. The part-time contracted analyst's time is limited and can be inconvenient for those using the service.

John Henehan supports the behavioral analyst from part-time to full-time. He is also concerned with the Special Education part of the budget. Special Education has increased over the last five years. The town could save by having their own programs. The 2015-2016 proposed budget increased Special Education to \$438,000.

Julius Neto commended Dr. Talty and her staff for a job well done. The State Minimum Budget Requirement (MBR) is not sustainable and creates an environment for the long haul. No doubt resources are being used wonderfully and there is a fine balance as a result. The State takes flexibility away making it difficult to be able to do the right thing.

Dan Delisle wanted to know how much of the 4.21% is for Special Education. Dr. Talty said it was 1.8%. Note that this does not include personnel. Dr. Talty mentioned that \$176,000 was spent on Magnet Schools.

Joe Corlis still had Special Education budget concerns. He spoke to several aids in various State and Federal offices as to the rising costs in Special Education. Dr. Talty said that Cromwell is part of two regions regarding Special Education. One being the Capital Region and that other is grouped with several towns depending on the need/purpose.

Ed Weners proposes to amend the budget percent to 3.21% to 3.25%. John Henehan concurs with the 3.50%. It was then agreed by the rest of the Board to motion a 3.50% increase for the Public Schools (\$28,275,237; a 3.5% increase or \$956,167). The vote was then taken.

#### **E. Discussion on any 2015-2016 budget matter**

##### Budget Line #1 Town Manager's Office

Motion made by Amanda Drew and seconded by Bob Milardo to approve \$264,114 for line item #1 Town Manager's Office. All in Favor – Motion Passed

Amanda Drew asked if there is a copy the Town Guide. It was said that it can be obtained through the Town Clerk's office, Town Manager's office and also on the website.

##### Budget Line #8 Finance Dept

Motion made by Amanda Drew and seconded by Julius Neto to approve \$376,454 for line item #8 Finance Dept. All in Favor – Motion Passed

Amanda Drew and other members of the Board thanked Marianne Sylvester, Finance Director and her staff for a job well done and for providing realistic data.

##### Budget Line #35 Emergency Management

Motion made by Amanda Drew and seconded by Julius Neto to approve \$19,950 for line item #35 Emergency Management. All in Favor – Motion Passed

Amanda Drew asked if the two employees are no longer employed. She was advised they are not.

John Henehan asked if Emergency Management is mandated by the State. Chief Salvatore said it is presently mandated. Staff is taking classes to be better prepared for emergency situations. Since September 11<sup>th</sup> emergency services have been more prevalent.

Amanda Drew asked who handles the Chief's and the Captain's duties when there is an emergency situation. The Chief responded that they coincide with each other. It is easier for them since Emergency Management is located in the Police Station.

Ed Weners then asked Whether various departments then coordinate responsibilities in addition to their regular duties – Chief Salvatore concurred.

#### Budget Line #36 Police Dept

Motion made by Julius Neto and seconded by Amanda Drew to approve \$3,200,019 for line item #36 Police Dept. All in Favor – Motion Passed

Joe Corlis asked how many cruisers are scheduled for coverage at any given time. Chief Salvatore said the town is split in two to three districts. Dan Delisle asked how many patrolmen per shift are scheduled. Chief responded that two to four patrolmen plus one sergeant/supervisor is scheduled per shift.

Amanda Drew asked about the increase in part-time wages. Chief Salvatore said that part of it is due to union contract obligations and for an intern for the summer to assist with administrative work and records. Amanda also inquired that the budget line for vehicle maintenance should go down since we have newer vehicles that should required less work. Chief Salvatore mentioned that these vehicles are now being considered as old vehicles and maintenance will be needed. Amanda asked about the possibility of being able to access the records on-line (charging the user for this service – thinking this could generate funds). Chief Salvatore then explained that fees are mandated (for example: first page is \$1.00 and \$0.25 per page thereafter).

Joe Corlis asked if the salt used on the roads this winter caused damage to the vehicles. Chief Salvatore said officers are encouraged to wash their vehicles often to keep winter chemical damage to a minimum. Joe asked if the brakes are being affected and Chief responded if they are he is not aware of it..

Dan Delisle asked if vehicle maintenance is done in-house. Chief Salvatore said maintenance is done in-house whenever possible. However, due to the technology on the newer cars it is getting difficult for the town mechanics to stay up-to-date (training, equipment to diagnose problems, etc.). Dan suggested that a study be done to see potential in the possibility of training and equipping town mechanics.

Amanda Drew wanted to know as the town grows, what steps are being taken to increase police coverage. Chief Salvatore advised that calls are handled as they come in and prioritize by the severity of the call. On an average three to four calls come in per shift. The department has 27 sworn officers (not necessarily available for patrol – some are designated to the detective squad, school security, fraud cases, etc.).

#### Budget Line #37 Animal Control

Motion made by Amanda Drew and seconded by Julius Neto to approve \$82,877 for line item #37 Animal Control. All in Favor – Motion Passed

Proposed budget is lower than last year.

#### Capital for Police Dept

Discussion was held for each item individually (items included vehicles, car port with solar panels and body cameras).

Dan Delisle wanted to know what is going to happen to the two vehicles that were replaced with the new ones. Chief Salvatore advised that the vehicles would be offered to the town for their use; otherwise, they will be disposed of accordingly. Maintenance plans for purchased vehicles are not being offered by the dealerships.

Ed Wenners inputted that the proposed carport with solar panels might have some payback. Being able to have our Police Department respond to a call quicker and to protect the technology in the cars is important and should save the town money in the long run. Julius Neto asked how many cars would be protected. Chief Salvatore said there would be nine cars. The space would be in front of the building. Julius believes that the 911 calls respond time would be quicker. Julius asked if any analysis was made on the costs of the solar panel/electricity costs. John Henehan added that to clean the cars during the winter must have been a nightmare. Joe Corlis wanted to know if the solar panels would be equipped with the latest updates. Chief Salvatore said they would. Joe also mentioned that he attended a meeting in Plainville where members of the Town Council attended and were talking about the carport. Even though it was proposed for the 2016-2017 budgets our Town Council thought it was important enough to push the funding to the 2015-2016 budget. Dan Delisle is opposed to it being placed in the 2015-2016 and will not be in support it.

Amanda questioned the purchase of the body cameras. She didn't understand that two of the body cameras were being obtained through a grant and the town would be purchasing an additional body camera. Ed Wenners stated that the body cameras are needed for the protection of the police officers. Captain LaMontagne said that the majority of people act differently when they know they are on camera. Dan Delisle asked if this is state mandated. Chief Salvatore said it is not presently mandated, however, it may be in the future. Chief Salvatore stated that they are trying to stay ahead of the curve. It was asked if the software was included in the cost. Chief Salvatore said it was.

Motion made as follows:

- Motion made by Julius Neto and seconded by Ed Wenners to approve \$87,393 for the purchase of two vehicles. All in Favor – Motion Passed.
- Motion made by Julius Neto and seconded by Ed Wenners to approve \$150,000 for the purchase of the carport with solar panels for the Police Department. Majority in Favor (4 approved – 2 opposed) – Motion Passed. NOTE: Opposed by Amanda Drew and Bob Milardo.
- Motion made by Julius Neto and seconded by Ed Wenners to approve \$ 30,000 for the purchase of body cameras for the police department. All in Favor – Motion Passed.

#### **F. Adjournment**

Motion was made by Bob Milardo and seconded by Amanda Drew to adjourn the Special Meeting of the Board of Finance at 8:59 p.m. All in Favor – Motion Passed.

Respectfully submitted,



Cynthia Hardacker  
Recording Clerk