

FY18 Budget Forum  
Monday March 13, 2017, 7:00 p.m.  
High School Meeting Room A15, 535 Bliss Road, Longmeadow

**Present:** Chair Marie Angelides, Tom Lachiusa, Mark Gold and Richard Foster. William Low-absent  
**Also Present:** Town Manager Stephen Crane, CFO Paul Pasterczyk, Debbie House, Town Department Heads, Mary Rogeness and Richard Liasse

The Budget Forum was opened by Select Board Chair Marie Angelides at 7:08 p.m.

The Town Manager presented his proposed FY18 budget totaling \$64,002,712 which is an increase of 2.03% over FY17. The School budget is \$516,349 which is an increase of 1.56% over FY17. Available fund balances are: free cash \$587,406, operational stabilization fund \$2,944,987, capital stabilization fund \$129,126, water retained earnings \$592,560, sewer retained earnings \$633,722, solid waste/recycling retained earnings \$30,973, and ambulance reserves \$33,638.

Sources include property tax (82.53%) - \$200K being new growth from the Bliss Shops, state aid (9.71%), and local receipts (7.76%).

Uses include the General Fund operating budget (2.03%), solid waste/recycling (8.12%), water/sewer (\$9K increase in sewer, \$29K decrease in water), and capital budget (\$1.67 million, fully funded).

The Police Department budget is up 2.08% but at level service. The Fire Department budget is up 3.05% (offset by the increase in ambulance receipts) due to the addition of two firefighters/EMTs, one Captain elevated to Deputy Chief and new IV pumps for the ambulances. The School Department budget increase of 1.56% is due to: cost increase to fund collective bargaining (\$965,000) offset by the reduction in Special Education tuitions and transportation (\$616,000), reduction in middle school staffing (3.0 FTEs), addition of Adjustment Counselors at each middle school, and covers the loss of \$241,286 in School Special Revenues. The increase of 3.48% under the Community Services heading is due to: Veterans Benefits up \$29,000 as a result of better outreach/service to town veterans (75% reimbursable by state), Parks and Recreation Day Care salaries up \$10,000 due to increased enrollment and fees, and Regional Library System fee increase of \$5,764.

**FTEs:**

There are three new FTEs: one each in the Fire Department, Day Care, and DPW (seasonal to full time).

**Fire Dept:**

Fire Chief John Dearborn presented his proposal for a Deputy Chief stating that the cost to go from a Captain with overtime to a Deputy Chief is cost neutral. There is a gap between the Chief and the next level of administration. By having a Deputy Chief more inspections could be done, radio inventories, shelter work, local emergency planning committee training (opens up to grants)...

The IV pumps for the ambulances are a regulated one-time purchase with a 10 year life.

The EMT expansion proposal is due to the 53% increase in run volume since 2000 (which was the last staff increase) and running the second ambulance.

**Police Dept:**

The emergency dispatch stipend of \$9,000 was eliminated as part of the dispatchers' contract. The expenses increase of \$2,000 is for the increased cost of equipment maintenance and supplies.

**DPW:**

Rentals include equipment we do not own but need to complete a job (loader, excavator, hydro seeder...). GPS admin costs are appropriated as follows: 50% general fund, 25% water, and 25% sewer. The Building maintenance line in the Grounds Division is for repair and maintenance of pool houses/baths, painting of kiddie pool (pool painting costs have increased), replacement locks and keys. Repair costs are flat since they are level funded. The supplies line has increased; this line has been underfunded. Supplies are used to maintain the buildings: saw blades, drill bits, masonry supplies... The equipment replacement line that has increased is for the replacement of old vacuums with backpack vacuums. The school operating expenses line is level funded but it needed funds can be pulled from service agreements, maintenance supplies and repair/renovations to account for any overages.

**Town Manager:**

Mr. Crane is requesting a \$7,500 stipend for an Assistant Town Manager. This position will be posted and will be an employee at the department head level to improve service to the Select Board and other duties to give the Town Manager time to give more attention to major projects in town. The role will be shaped around the person.

**Veterans Services:**

The Veterans Director currently has a 20 family case load in town up from 13 families. More outreach is being done to get Veterans and their families the benefits they deserve. Veteran Directors are required by the Valor Act to help Veterans file the applications for benefits. An article will be on the Town Meeting Warrant for a checkbox to be placed on the tax bills to voluntarily donate to an emergency veteran's fund which would only be utilized for emergency food, transportation and heat/oil.

**Council on Aging:**

The Directors salary line has been increased to be more competitive since the last two Directors were lost to better paying positions. The increase in the COA supply line is related to making the department non-reliant on funds from FOLOCA in anticipation of establishing a revolving fund in the new fiscal year.

**Library:**

The CW Mars network membership charges have gone from \$20,000 to \$30,000 for FY18. The FY18 water/sewer will be paid out of municipal funds entirely. In the past this has been supplemented by the Library Board because the line item was not enough to cover the actual cost.

**Assessor:**

The increase in staff wages is due to the temporary position that was offset from expenses to the salary line for a full time person.

Ms. Angelides asked what was left on the table. Mr. Crane stated that another police car was not budgeted for; also \$30,000 for continued digitization of Human Resource records (trying for CPA funds), DPW overtime, increased wages at the department head level and Scantic Valley funding.

*Mr. Foster made a motion to adjourn the budget forum at 8:50 p.m. Mr. Gold seconded the motion. The vote was 4-0.*

Respectfully submitted,  
Debbie House