

Swampscott Finance Committee
April 17, 2018

Attending: Marzie Galazka (Chair), Mary Ellen Fletcher, Joan Hilario, William Jones, Jill Sullivan, Tim Dorsey (Vice Chair), Gail Rosenberg

Not Present: Polly Titcomb, Cinder McNerney

Also Attending: Alyce Deveau (Library Director), Pete Kane (Community Development Director), Ron Mendes (ATA), Marilyn Hurwitz (Senior Center Director), Danielle Straus (Recreation Director), Cheryl Herrick-Serra.

Marilyn Hurwitz presented the Senior Center Budget. She noted major differences from last year. The director's salary is significantly reduced because a co-director was replaced by a third administrator position. For the first time, there is a five day a week person: the outreach director. Ms. Hurwitz does not agree that "office supplies" should go to facilities. She would like to see that amount go in some other line item of her budget. Ms. Galazka notes that the expenses have gone down. Ms. Hurwitz indicates that the assistant accountant helped look at the three years of actuals and, in addition building maintenance budget went to the facilities department. In addition, there is a new line in the budget for Intergenerational Programs. Mr. Mendes indicates that the selectmen have asked for an added \$30,000 in the FY '19 capital plan for a study on how to make Swampscott an age-friendly community. Mr. Mendes also indicated that the future vehicle needs are reflected on the 30 year capital plan.

Alyce Deveau presented the Library budget. She reports that there are a few changes in her staff. One staff member is going from adult assistant to library assistant. Again, the major change is the elimination of the utilities – moved to the facilities budget. Library materials line goes down because that line used to be joined with "outside service" while now they are separated. The library has a capital item to fix up the third floor (\$30K). Ms. Galazka asks about other compensation.

Mr. Mendes and Ms. Serra indicate that in many departments the "other compensation" line item includes vacation buy back for every person who is eligible to take it. Ms. Serra indicated that in FY'18, we had to pay close to \$80K in vacation buy back so they felt it important to budget conservatively for it this year. Ms. Deveau indicated that the library has 115,000 visitors per year, and 350-400 patrons who use the library as their only source of internet access.

Pete Kane presented the Community Development Department budget. This covers the Conservation Commission, the Planning Board and the ZBA as well. This is the first year we are budgeting for longevity and sick incentive. The assistant planner has been a part time role, but they are requesting for a full time town planner/conservation agent. The salary goes from \$30,300 to \$48,213. The new office manager position in this department will also be supporting the health

department and the building department and recreation. Mr. Kane indicates that the salary indicated is appropriate for an entry-level position at 34 hours. It was noted that the recommended salary for the director was above 1.5 percent increase. Mr. Kane stated that the recommended amount is his current rate of pay. Mr. Kane state that he was not under contract.

Ms. Fletcher asks what the benefits are to having an office of community development. Mr. Kane indicates that combining planning with building and inspectional services with the planning function (looking at implementation of the master plan). The idea is to get a certain amount of one-stop shopping for real property oriented needs. Mr. Kane has gotten nearly \$1MM of grants that result in community development, first master plan in over forty years, first open space plan in over 30 years, resiliency work, community electric aggregation plan, moved a number of shuttered town buildings, etc. The office manager role is outside of the union and is more of a supervisory role with a more flexible series of duties.

There is a new line item of \$5K of consulting services allowing two projects of \$2500. Many departments have outside services – planning has never had it. For grants that have a required match – the planning department could use these amounts for that.

The Planning Department's FY'19 Capital improvement plan included three items. A façade improvement plan would be \$25,000. Mr. Kane handed out a comparative analysis of other communities who have this sort of program. This was an item in the Master Plan Action item. The program offers small grants to offset improvement costs. There would need to be a 1:1 match and the landlords need to be involved or consulted. The idea is to have this funded each year with a review after the first year to see what the fruits of the program are. Limits would be set as to the maximum amount that each business could apply for. Ms. Galazka asked if state and/or federal prevailing wage rates will need to be followed and if Mr. Kane considered this program to be implemented as loans vs grants. The comparative analysis showed other communities that implement this program fund it by federal grants and not local revenues. Loans could be structured as a zero percent deferred loan with a balloon payments due at the end of the term. Mr. Kane was concerned about staff time needed to implement a loan program. Mr. Jones asked if Mr. Kane could estimate the return on this investment the taxpayers could see. Mr. Kane was unwilling to take a guess.

There is a request for \$25K for smart growth zoning for the train depot neighborhood. This money would be for the consultant services that would take us from planning to community buy-in, writing the by-law, etc. Mr. Kane is investigating incentive money that is available from the commonwealth for 40R smart growth zoning. If we were to get the grant, it would likely exceed the amount of this funding request.

There is a request for historic streetlight replacement on Humphrey Street and Monument Avenue. The request is for \$125K. This is to replace all of the highway style lights that are there, that we now own.

Ms. Straus presented the Recreation Department budget. Ms. Fletcher asked about the sailing director and 3 park supervisors. Those individuals are directly involved in the programs that are paid for through the Recreation Revolving account. Ms. Straus indicates that they might go into revolving while the buoys for the beaches might come out of Rec. Revolving – they might be about a wash. The fees for field use are coming out of rec. revolving and going into a special fund to be approved on the FY'19 TM warrant. Ms. Fletcher asked why the "Other Expenses" item continues to increase significantly, which reflects new programs while the revenue line does not increase at the same rate. She feels that the revolving account needs to be looked at more closely because some years it appears to wind up in the black and others in the red, and it would be good for the finance committee to understand more closely what is going through that account.

Motion to approve minutes of 4/5 and 4/10 (with the addition of a comment about a police vehicle being totaled in the storm and covered by insurance) Fletcher/Jones 7-0.

Ms. Sullivan reported that the Town Administration will be getting the some information about our revenue projections to the subgroup looking at revenues (Sullivan/Spellios).

Ms. Galazka reported that at Tri-Chair she learned that this year's fiscal budget will come in just on target (or very close).

Motion to adjourn: Rosenberg/Jones 7-0.