



Town of Bellingham

BOARD OF SELECTMEN

10 Mechanic Street

Bellingham, Massachusetts 02019

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March 9, 2019

The regular meeting of the Board of Selectmen was called to order by Chairman Spencer with all members in attendance. Mr. Spencer stated this meeting was scheduled as a budget workshop in order for the Board to receive an update on Town Finances and to hear from several departments relative to their FY20 budget request.

CFO Mary McKinnon presented an over view of the Town's finances. She explained Town reserves were relied upon for each of the past two budgets and will once again be relied upon for FY 20 but to a much lesser extent. She stated new growth is once again strong and will enable the Town to maintain services in spite of decreasing State Aid. Mrs. MacKinnon pointed to rising costs with the Debt budget as well as the Norfolk County Retirement Assessment. She further explained the greatest increase is from the schools with a budget increase of 1 million dollars.

Town Planner, Jim Kupfer, presented the Planning Board budget. He stated part-time clerk, Jean Keyes, will be leaving the position June 30th. Mr. Kupfer explained his budget has an increase for this part-time position which he believes is necessary to recruit a qualified candidate. All members agreed with the request and it will be forwarded to the Finance Committee.

Mr. Kupfer asked the Board to consider taking action on a fee schedule voted by the ZBA which must be ratified by the Board of Selectmen. The fees would pertain to 40B submittals presented to the Zoning Board. The fee schedule calls for a \$2500 application fee plus \$50 per unit. Mr. Kupfer explained this fee schedule was defensible and similar to other communities.

On a McNulty/Martinis motion the Board unanimously voted to adopt the fee schedule as approved by the Zoning Board.

Chief Daigle and Lt. Russell appeared before the Board to discuss their FY20 budget. Chief Daigle explained the budget is \$6,000 less than last year and will absorb the proposed salary increase once we have a settlement with the Police Association. The Chief stated his department is down several officers but he believes the Department will be able to maintain level services. He explained he will be leaving two positions unfilled and will be able to absorb the potential salary increase within his budget.

Mr. Martinis expressed his concern that the Town may be compromising public safety without allowing the public to vote additional funding through the override process. Mrs. McNulty agreed expressing her interest in learning more about the process. Mr. Spencer acknowledged it was something the Board needs to discuss for consideration in the coming year.

Lt. Russell updated the Board on telecommunication upgrades which will be necessary as a result of changes Verizon will be instituting next year.

On a Martinis/ McNulty motion the Board unanimously voted to recommend funding for \$125,000 for telecommunication upgrades.

Mr. DiMartino appeared before the Board to present the DPW budget. Mr. DiMartino stated the Snow and Ice budget for the current year will be in deficit by approximately \$175,000 which is considerably less than anticipated prior to the start of winter. He further stated the Gas and Oil budget which provides fuel to the Town vehicles will be increased by \$80,000 in the FY20 budget due to rising fuel costs.


Mr. DiMartino stated the Highway budget has two fewer positions as a result of budget reductions. He further explained the Department is down a total four positions over the past two years. Mr. DiMartino explained he was able to fund one new position with Water Enterprise for the Water budget which will help to reduce the impact of the loss of manpower within the Highway. Mr. Connor asked Mr. DiMartino what the amount for roadway repairs would be for FY 20. Mr. DiMartino stated there is \$40,000 budgeted which is down from \$150,000 last year. Additionally, the Town will be receiving \$560,000 in Chapter 90 funding.

Mr. Connor suggested the Parks Dept. is primarily a maintenance operation and the role of the Commissioners should be reviewed, specifically, the fields at the High School and Middle School should be permitted by the School Dept. All members agreed this would be a logical transition.

After a general discussion of the overall budget the Board requested the CFO provide copies of the Selectmen's recommendations to the Finance Committee.

On a McNulty/Connor motion the Board unanimously voted to adjourn at 11:45 a.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "D. Fraine". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "D" and a looped "F".

Denis Fraine, Town Administrator