

Town of North Canaan
Board of Finance
Budget Workshop Meeting
March 30, 2022

Present: Chairwoman Nancy O'Connor, Bryan Johnson, Susie Clayton, Brian Allyn, Bill Minacci, Chris Sorrell

Chairwoman O'Connor called the workshop to order at 7:32 explaining that this is a workshop, not a public hearing and the commission will not be taking questions from the public.

Dr. Roy was in attendance and stated that the budget has been approved by the Board of Education and that no changes have been made since the board of finance received the budget.

There was a question regarding the number of teachers using the course reimbursement. Currently there are 2 teachers that are going for their Masters Degree. They must go to an accredited school to be reimbursable. Transportation is all set. No other questions for the budget at this time.

Municipal budget:

The auditors for next year is \$33,000. The contract with King King was up and we requested the renewal price. The line item is currently short and will need to be increased. Because of the Federal money we received we will have to have a federal audit as well.

There was a question regarding the rec director's work load and salary. There was a discussion if he is working with regional sports as well. Chairwoman O'Connor will request that the rec dept come to the next meeting to speak to the board. The rec dept requests a flat amount of money and then they spend it as they see fit.

The social worker salary appears to be too low. Selectman Perotti explained that as of Monday our current social worker will no longer be with us. We have advertised but most individuals want full time and benefits. Heather Dean from Cornwall will fill in for us temporarily. There was a discussion about the salary. It is in the budget based on 15 hours at \$20 per hour. Our current social worker recommends 24 hours at \$25 per hour. Considering we are having difficulties hiring for the position Chairwoman O'Connor would recommend the salary at least stay the same, if not increase it.

Computer services discussion. The new system is for the building officials office and assessors office but the rest of the departments would be able to get information from it as well making it a more streamlined system. The initial payment would be \$30,000 and \$20,000 annually. Chairwoman O'Connor asked if this meant that more items could be done online, decreasing staff time? She requested that Jeff come before the board and explain how this is going to help benefit the taxpayers. Selectman Allyn spoke stating it is an accountability system and could potentially save money on legal issues.

The fire marshal budget remains the same. Selectmen are in the process of interviewing for the position.

The town equipment was upped a little bit but not anticipating anything major. Selectman Whiting will update the equipment list now that the loader was approved.

The last page biggest increases: The transfer station increase totals \$79,600. Tipping fees are \$111 a ton. Salaries are the largest increase overall at \$84,795.00 for elected, hourly and benefits. Capital non-recurring is up about \$45,000. We are looking at \$19,500 for crack sealing, \$109,000 for chip sealing of the roads we paved last year and we have not gotten numbers for black topping roads this year. Road aid funds do not come until the fall.

Ambulance – the increase is to provide a second paid crew so that they can keep up with the calls. There are approximately 5 volunteers in total left in town. Bill Minacci explained how the mutual aid with Falls Village and Salisbury works, but they are at a bare minimum for volunteers as well and North Canaan frequently has to respond to their calls as well as ours. The ambulance goes out several times a day with the largest number of calls coming from Geer, Mountainside, and Wangum. If there is only a single crew it is a large possibility that someone may have to wait for care. This is a safety issue. The state sets the prices for the ambulance and unfortunately the payer mix (insurance) doesn't pay what we need.

The Canaan Child Care center was discussed as it appears tho they requested to be put into the budget, the last couple years they have not requested the money other than \$500 in 2020. Could be due to COVID. Chairwoman O'Connor will reach out to them to get some answers.

Discussion about the AHA program and who's budget it is in. Dr. Roy stated it was not in anyone's budget and that the school just makes sure it continues. They have been applying for grants. They would like to work with the town. They will be offering it this summer (they couldn't last year because of COVID). No one is in arrears as was the case several years ago. Chairwoman O'Connor read to Dr. Roy what was supposed to occur back a few years with the program making themselves self-sufficient with a board. Dr. Roy stated this did not happen and there is not the staffing to do this currently. Chairwoman O'Connor stated that the program should be in one of the budgets and it would make sense to put it in the school budget as it is being administered by the school. According to Dr. Roy the budget would have to be about \$10,000. The board can make a recommendation to look at adding the line item to their budget and then it could be brought back to the next board of ed meeting. Dr. Roy stated she does not want to put a line item in their budget for AHA.

There was no further discussion. The next regular meeting is April 13, 2022.

Mr. Allyn made a motion to table the budget until the next meeting April 13. Ms. Clayton seconded the motion. Motion was approved.

Ms. Clayton made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Mr. Sorrell seconded the motion. Motion was approved.

Meeting adjourned at 9:00pm

Respectfully submitted,

Ayrslea A Odell

Recording Secretary