

TOWN OF EAST LONGMEADOW
TOWN COUNCIL'S BUDGET FINANCIAL OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES OF APRIL 1, 2021

Present; Chr. James Broderick, Kathleen Hill, Tom O'Connor, Richard Freccero, Christine Saulnier

Town Mgr. Mary McNally, Finance Director, Steve Lonergan

Chairman Broderick opened the meeting at 1:30 PM noting that the meeting was being held by Zoom in accordance with the Governor's orders of March 16, 2020.

Ex officio Town Council President, Michael Kane, joined the meeting at 1:34 PM.

Jim thanked Mary and Steve for the organized budget packages received by the committee members and thanked Mary for the budget message and organization charts contained in her draft of the FY'2022 budget.

First order of business was to approve the minutes of the initial meeting held on February 17, 2021. Approval was voted unanimously following a suggestion to identify the Town Mgr. and Finance Dir. by their titles.

Chairman stated that the committee would be meeting weekly from this point forward. Since members submitted questions for the Town Mgr. and the Finance Director prior to the meeting, Jim suggested that we would go over their responses later. He stated we should get an overall picture of the draft budget. The Committee began the review of the Town Manager's 18 page Preliminary FY'22 Sources and Uses document.

On page 1, initial comments were made on the projected 1.37% budget increase. Noted under the General Fund Sources was the use of the F'21 maximum levy limit and not the actual levy and a 1.1% projected increase in valuation. Discussion followed on a .23 cent increase in the tax rate. On Page 2, the comparison of actual and projected local receipts was reviewed. Page 3 featured FY'21 actual budget sources and uses and FY'22 recommended sources and uses. Noted was the reduction in debt service due to refinancing of bonds. The category of Other Charges was questioned to learn it contains items such as the Overlay for abatements and exemptions, etc. On Page 4, the use of \$350K for new growth was discussed. Committee moved to page six Departmental Budget listings. The procedure was decided to review these pages and mark those departments that the Committee wished further information or to meet with the Department head as deemed necessary. They are as follows;

Under Town Council, Tom O'Connor proposed adding \$10K for a Professional Services line item, to be further discussed.

Under Town Manager, the addition of an assistant/grant writer position requires more information.

More information on the proposed temporary Internal Auditor position in the Finance Director's office is needed.

Assessors, the 14.9% increase in the non-salary line item requires more information.

Legal Services request at \$140K was deemed reasonable.

The increase of 40.2% in the non-salary line item under Human Resources was questioned.

Committee wants to meet with Information Technology Dept. Head.

Reduction in non-salary line item for Town Clerk requires an inquiry.

Police Chief to be invited to meet with Committee to discuss budget and impact of Police Reform Act

Fire Chief to be invited to meet with Committee to discuss budget and new position requested.

Meeting to be requested with School Committee and/or Administration to discuss budget request.

Further discussion on Veteran Services budget to be held.

Some of the above listed inquiries will be handled by e-mail, some by personal interviews with department heads.

Pages eleven (11) through eighteen (18) will be the subject of future meetings.

The Chairman reminded the Committee of the FY'22 budget approval calendar.

The Town Manager will be presenting the proposed FY2022 operating budget to the Town Council on or before May 1st.

Following that presentation, the Committee will be working to finalize their recommendations to the Town Council. The Town Council will hold a hearing and vote to appropriate the budget prior to June 1.

Question was raised as to the date of the School Departments' Budget Hearing.

Chairman announced the next meeting to be held by Zoom on Thursday, April 8th, 2021 at 1:30 PM

It was moved to adjourn the meeting at 3:06 PM and was unanimously approved.

Respectfully submitted,

Christine M. Saulnier