



TOWN OF EAST LONGMEADOW
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TOWN COUNCIL

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Kevin M. Manley, President
Michael J. Kane, Vice President
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MINUTES

Town Council Budget Subcommittee Meeting
May 15, 2018 at 1:00 P.M.
Library Conference Room, 60 Center Square
East Longmeadow, Massachusetts 01028

Present: President Kevin Manley, Vice President Michael Kane, Councilor Hill, Denise Menard, Town Manager, Sara Menard, Finance Director.

President Manley called the meeting to order at 1:16 p.m.

Ms. S. Menard said that based on yesterday's meeting she has removed from the capital project requests:

Clock/Intercom/Bell for School/IT	\$86,397
High School Interior and Exterior Doors	\$30,918
Two Police Cruisers	\$90,841

She is adding in \$150K for revenue from ambulance service. This would bring the tax rate to \$21.80. To include the \$92K Chapter 70 money would further reduce the rate to \$21.76, without having to cut any more supplemental or capital items.

The budget requests from each department were then reviewed, and the school's requests were discussed in detail, primarily the \$63K request for a special needs teacher. This position is to accommodate four students who have been in the district since kindergarten and are transitioning to the high school. Councilor Hill asked if circuit breaker money could be used to fund this, and Superintendent Gordon Smith replied that circuit breaker money is reimbursement based, and they are only reimbursed 65% for anything over \$44K. The circuit breaker money can be used to fund out of district services.

It was agreed that it would be best for the students to keep them in the district. Superintendent Smith said he understand that new positions have to cut to keep the tax rate down; however, cutting that special needs high school teacher would present a real challenge. Vice President Kane said if they kept the position, it would leave \$12K for the music/band teacher position, after not approving the remainder of the school's supplemental requests. He asked if that \$12K would be used for the music/band position if approved. President Manley commented that the Town Council does not approve positions for the school. They approve a dollar amount to be spent how the school sees fit.

There was discussion with Superintendent Smith regarding the best way for the school to accomplish what they want with the special needs teacher position and different ways to fund this. Superintendent Smith said if the \$63K was not approved, they would have to find money from other services to fund this need.

Ms. S. Menard said if they keep the \$63K and the \$12K in the budget, without adding in the \$92K Chapter 70 money, it brings the tax rate to \$21.74. With the \$92K added in, the tax rate becomes \$21.69.

The other department's requests were reviewed, including what was being left in the budget. President Manley looked at the encumbered money for the departments. After reviewing these, it was agreed to take out the IT request for \$6K for security training, and perhaps this could be funded with consulting fees. After more discussion, the Assessor's request of \$12.5K to upgrade their Vision software was removed, with the logic that it could be purchased with Free Cash either this year or next year.

The Town Clerk's capital request for \$22K for two fireproof vaults was discussed. Ms. D. Menard said the original request was for three vaults and it was reduced to two. Councilor Kane felt very strongly that the tax rate needs to be reduced even further, and it was agreed to remove the vaults from the capital projects and purchase these either with Free Cash or Community Preservation Act funds. This reduced the tax rate to \$21.67.

The Subcommittee reviewed other budget requests looking for possibilities for further reduction, but felt no other cuts could be made that would not change the dynamics of the Town and lose services.

The school's budget and their \$12K request for the music/band position were reviewed again. Councilor Hill would like to support the concept of that position since more and more kids are in the fine arts. However, she supports keeping the \$63K and feels the music/band position can be worked out in other ways; therefore, removing the \$12K. Ms. S. Menard said that removing the \$12K would save 1 cent on the tax rate. Councilor Kane said he would support Councilor Hill with that recommendation, bringing the tax rate to \$21.66.

Motion: Vice President Kane made a motion to adjourn at 3:01 p.m. Councilor Hill seconded and all were in favor.

Respectfully submitted,

Jeanne R. Guertin
Assistant Town Clerk