

**TOWN OF SOUTH WINDSOR  
SPECIAL BUDGET WORK SESSION MINUTES**

**TOWN COUNCIL  
COUNCIL CHAMBERS**

**MONDAY, MARCH 31, 2020  
TIME: 7:00 P.M.**

**1. Call Meeting to Order**

Mayor Paterna called the meeting to order at 7:01 p.m.

**2. Roll Call**

Members Present: Mayor Andrew Paterna  
Deputy Mayor Liz Pendleton  
Councilor Erica Evans  
Councilor Audrey Delnicki  
Councilor Cesar Lopez  
Councilor Karen Lydecker  
Councilor Lisa Maneeley  
Councilor Liz Pendleton  
Councilor Janice Snyder

Also Present: Michael Maniscalco, Town Manager  
Scott Roberts, Assistant Town Manager  
Vanessa Perry, Assistant Town Manager

**3. Public Input**

None

**4. Communications**

Mr. Maniscalco stated that he had some follow up questions and would first like to answer those follow-up questions. Mr. Maniscalco explained further to the Council that Town Council cell phone monthly invoice averages \$390 per month or \$4,680 per year. We may have been a bit conservative on budget estimates for FY 21, but if the Council starts to use tablets/computers and receive electronic agendas, the cost for courier services will decrease and offset some of the overage.

**(Discussion Continued on Next Page)**

**ITEM:**

**4. Communications (Continued)**

Mr. Maniscalco then reviewed the submitted questions sent in, as well as the answer to each question:

1. I would like to see no new positions in the budget.

Each of the positions proposed in the budget supply a direct service to the community. While it is the Council's prerogative to eliminate each of these positions, I would warn the Council that in the event a position is eliminated, do not be surprised that there may be a failure in service delivery. For example, elimination of the Assistant Building Official position could result in more complaints from businesses and residents as well as a slowdown economic development/growth; the removal of the Assistant Mechanic position could result in longer times for plowing roads since it is often this position that keeps the trucks working during high volume time and it will also result in an increase in farming out work to private contractors which is usually a higher cost; the removal of the Parks Maintainer may result in the grass not getting mowed in a timely fashion or park maintenance not getting done in certain areas. Prior to eliminating these positions for monetary reasons, I would recommend the Council think about the current level of service our residents expect and be aware that those levels may not be maintained if these positions are eliminated.

2. You presented three new positions on March 23, and last night included in the numbers for the Finance Department was a new position. I believe it is for a Finance Director. Please advise if this is the wrong title.

There are no new positions in the Finance Department. The only position discussed last night was that we are currently hiring for an Assistant Finance Director due to a recent resignation.

3. I would like to see about using some of the Fund Balance for this budget. I know it is in the Budget Policy not to use Fund Balance, but I would like to see what \$200,000 to \$250,000 would do in addition to no new positions (things are different now since we adopted the policy).

**(Discussion Continued on Next Page)**

**ITEM:**

**4. Communications (Continued)**

The Town Council Budget Policy Statement stated to not use Fund Balance to balance the budget. Additionally, S&P frowns upon balancing operating costs with Fund Balance, and if it is the intent of the Town of South Windsor to maximize its ability to bond for schools and other large capital projects, using Fund Balance will be counter-intuitive to making that happen.

4. The Town Clerk asked for \$213,360, and you increased that. I would like to see the original request used and not your proposed \$228,566.

The increase in the Town Clerk's Town Manager's proposed budget needs to remain to account for the salary increase that was recently approved by the Council. This line item accounts for current budgets, plus the proposed salary increases as well as the 53<sup>rd</sup> pay week.

5. I would like to see the same for the Building Department. Please use the original \$290,021 as opposed to your amount of \$298,940.

The original request included a PT Clerical Assistant (\$41,974) and temporary help (\$10,000). Both of those line items were removed and moved to the FT Salaries to put towards a second Assistant Building Official with a salary of \$60,000. With all of the upcoming inspection needs with the schools and economic development, it is essential that this position be filled, or we are going to potentially fall into a liability issue when we can't properly inspect what needs to be inspected.

6. How are projected salary budgets figured?

The 19/20 salary line item was increased by the appropriate contractual increase, and then an additional full week's pay was added for the 53<sup>rd</sup> pay period.

Further questions were answered as follows:

Mrs. Patty Perry explained that Town staff gets paid on Thursdays, and she was told there are 53 Thursdays in this coming Fiscal Year.

**(Discussion Continued on Next Page)**

**ITEM:**

**4. Communications (Continued)**

Mr. Maniscalco confirmed that in the Building Department, there were two proposed positions that were eliminated, which equaled approximately \$51,000. A position of an Assistant Building Official was added to the budget with a salary of \$60,000. The total cost with benefits equates to \$82,381. Benefit calculations are under Unclassified in the budget.

**5. Items for Discussion**

**A. General Government Budget for Fiscal Year 2020/2021 (Public Works, Human Services, Fire Marshal, and Volunteer Fire Department)**

**Public Works**

Mr. Maniscalco reviewed the questions that were sent into him regarding Public Works with the answers as follows:

1. “Temporary” line for engineering intern. Long term plan for this?

The Engineering Department has hired an Engineering college student as a temporary intern this year and in past years. This position provides the department with a person (who is paid at a reasonable hourly rate) to assist with some office tasks and field inspections such as researching Town infrastructure maps and records, inspecting stormwater outfalls, sidewalks, and assisting with GIS maps. The full time engineering staff is not usually able to devote much time to these tasks. This position gives an Engineering student valuable real-world experience. In lieu of hiring another full-time engineering staff member such as a Project Manager (this request was discussed with the Town Manager), we plan to continue to hire a temporary Engineering Intern.

2. Amount for rental and leases shows \$400, but then \$100 in MUNIS. Reason?

The Rentals and Leases budget line item is \$100. You may have been looking at the Repair/Maintenance Equipment line item.

**(Discussion Continued on Next Page)**

**ITEM:**

**5. A. (Continued)**

3. Reasons for the increase in “Overtime” to \$17,000 over \$8,000 previous year. Anticipated projects/reasons?

This account was budgeted for \$17,100 in FY 18/19 and should have budgeted \$17,100 for the current Fiscal Year as well.

4. What are the new “Other Purchase Services” we are including for this year compared to last?

The account includes costs for Refuse Disposal, Bulky Waste Disposal, Hazardous Waste Disposal, Backyard Composters. No change in services below explains the cost increase.

The budget reflects a \$90/ton tip fee for 7500 tons of refuse disposed; up from the current \$73/ton fee (increase equals \$129,500). The budget also reflects a \$115/ton tip fee for Bulky Waste; up from the current \$95/ton fee (increase equals \$14,750). The total increase for Account 390 is \$142,250. Refuse Disposal tonnage rates per resident per year has been steady in the last few years – total tons have increased due to increased residents’ housing. Staff is looking to bring forth an extended disposal and collection contract with our refuse/recycling contractor that would provide potential savings in the Refuse Account.

5. With regard to Public Works, in Highway Maintenance (pg. 139), the narrative discusses that a smaller request in the budget means highway maintenance will have an inability to address aging infrastructure. Can you advise if the infrastructure that is not being addressed or attended to is some of the same infrastructure that would be addressed in the \$15 million referendum passed a while back?

This point was relative to funding for non-bond projects and repairs (projects/repairs not meeting bond spending requirements of project-specific and with life-expectancy of greater than ten years). Since the narrative was drafted, funding for these type of expenditures has been proposed in the CIP budget.

**(Discussion Continued on Next Page)**

**ITEM:**

**5. A. (Continued)**

6. With regard to Public Works, in the narrative on pg. 142, it states that only half the salt inventory was used this winter, however, it appears the proposed budget is for the full amount that was budgeted for last year. Shouldn't it reflect half as we still have half inventory?

Depending upon yearly salt prices and the prior year's winter weather, the salt shed can generally accommodate the budgeted volume of salt annually. Public Works SOP is to have a full salt shed prior to the start of the winter season. Being prepared means having an adequate salt supply. While this winter has been a light snow fall year than in the past, statistics show that a light snow winter is generally followed by a more than average year of snowfall. Availability of salt can fluctuate greatly year to year and can lead to price escalation or lack of availability, which in the middle of February can create liability exposure and impact levels of service. Councilor Snyder can speak to this issue from her experiences at DOT. Some Town Councilors may remember a number of years ago when there was a reduction to the salt budget, and the Town was left in a precarious position with a scarce supply three quarters through the winter. Ultimately if this line item is not utilized to its full potential, the money returns to the general fund at the end of the year, a positive to the Undesignated Fund Balance.

7. With regard to Public Works, in Street Services (pg. 144), can you clarify the positions? Is the Town adding both a 2<sup>nd</sup> Mechanic and a 2<sup>nd</sup> Assistant Mechanic?

Our Master Mechanic was recently promoted to the Fleet Manager. We currently have one Mechanic and two Assistant Mechanics. One of our Assistant Mechanics has recently received his CDL and will soon qualify for the Mechanic position. That will then put our current staffing at two Mechanics and one Assistant Mechanic. The new position would add a second Assistant Mechanic. If you look at the Full-Time Equivalent column, there is no Master Mechanic. It is a position within the Division, but currently, no staff is qualified.

**ITEM:**

**5. A. (Continued)**

8. Public Works (pg. 152). Other purchase service \$776,900 from \$62,650, which is due to the 20+% increase for disposal of refuse (tipping fees). Is this 20% increase due to just the tipping fees drastically rising, or does it include any projected increase of the amount of refuse/recycling that residents generate? If it is strictly tipping fees, what is the actual change in price/fee?

The budget reflects a \$90/ton tip fee for 7500 tons of refuse disposed; up from the current \$73/ton fee (increase equals \$127,500). The budget also reflects a \$115/ton tip fee for bulky waste; up from the current \$95/ton fee (increase equals \$14,750). The total increase for Account 390 is \$142,250. Refuse disposal tonnage rates per resident per year has been fairly steady in the last few years – total tons have increased due to increased residents/housing. Staff is looking to bring forth an extended disposal and collection contract with our Refuse/recycling contractor that would provide potential savings in the Refuse Account.

9. In the Public Works budgets, the Town Manager has reduced the department requested amount for equipment. What is the rationale with this decision? Was it a question of New vs. Replacement? Or not fully depreciated?

Department Equipment (pg. 149)

The reduction reflects leasing the truck versus outright purchase.

Repair/Maint Equipment (pgs. 145)

The reduction reflects adding the new mechanic and realizing being able to perform more work in-house versus sending it to outside vendors.

Department Equipment (pg. 142)

A flat reduction made by Town Manager, not made to any particular piece of equipment.

Department Equipment (pg. 138)

The reduction reflects eliminating the lease for replacing the Engineering Truck; it will need to be replaced in FY 21/22.

**(Discussion Continued on Next Page)**

**ITEM:**

**5. A. (Continued)**

Answering questions from the Council, Mr. Gantick explained that if the Town were to go with the project in Hartford (Mirror), the fee would be \$145.00 per ton. Mr. Gantick informed the Council that by the April 20<sup>th</sup> Town Council Meeting, there might be alternatives discussed to extend the Town's current collection disposal contract, which may mitigate future costs.

Mr. Maniscalco, Town Manager, explained to the Council that Mr. Gantick would be retiring as of May and as a result, the staff has reviewed the organizational structure and feel there are qualified Division Heads for Street Services, Facilities, Engineering, and Water Pollution Control and therefore the Director of Public Works will not be replaced which will save taxpayers money. There are no additional duties or pay. These individuals will be reporting directly to the Assistant Town Managers.

Mr. Gantick stated that truck 143 is one of the Town's plow trucks. The Public Works Department has an amortization schedule, which is a 20-year plan for all of its equipment. Once any of the equipment gets within a year or two of its life expectancy, the department takes a look at it to see whether it is on schedule to get replaced or if the equipment can last a bit longer. Town staff makes sure the Town gets the best life out of all of its equipment, but when the equipment is ready to be replaced, it is put into the budget. Public Works tries to balance those funds to replace items and keep the budget running efficiently.

Mr. Gantick then explained that if the plan regarding composting goes as proposed, the Town will be looking to reinvest proceeds from the program and possibly buy additional accessories for the program. It is going to take years for the composting program to pay for the leaf collection services, but if the program continues on track, eventually it will pay for the leaf collection program.

Mr. Maniscalco informed the Council that the position of Project Manager was proposed by the department but was not included in the budget. Mr. Gantick added that a lot of the commentaries reflect what the departments had submitted but did not necessarily reflect what the Town Manager is proposing in the budget.



**ITEM:**

**5. A. (Continued)**

Human Services

Mr. Maniscalco reviewed the questions that were sent into him with the answers as follows:

1. Under "Professional" (pg. 172), there is \$30,000 for "Fee for hotel stay for two clients home condemned." Can we get an explanation of this? House does this fit under "Professional"?

The Professional Line Item increased by \$30,000 for reimbursements to the Human Services Revolving Fund for payment of housing costs for two individuals that are disabled and were displaced from their home after the Town's Building Official condemned the property.

Mr. Maniscalco explained further that when the Town condemns a property and has somebody removed from it, the Town does have a responsibility for providing that individual housing for a period of time. The Town puts a lien on the property to try to get some of the funds back.

Answering questions from the Council, Mrs. Cofrancesco explained that the house was condemned last March or April and is still going on currently. It usually is a cost of approximately \$4,000 per person under the Uniform Relocation Act.

Mayor Paterna informed the Council that when individuals are displaced, our senior housing does not have enough space to accommodate them. The waiting list is approximately three years or more. Mrs. Cofrancesco added that this is happening in all Towns.

Mrs. Cofrancesco told the Council that this is not an item that goes into the budget every year because this is not something that happens frequently. These funds have already been expended, and this request is to reimburse the Human Services account.

**ITEM:**

**5. A. (Continued)**

Mr. Maniscalco reiterated that the Town puts a lien on the property to try to recoup some of the funds from the sale of the house. If the Town was to condemn another house and tell people they cannot live in the house, the Town could potentially be in a similar scenario. This is the way the State Statutes are written. The amount that is capped at is approximately an \$8,000 limit, but by the time the Town hit that amount, it was the middle of the winter.

Mrs. Cofrancesco explained to the Council that nothing had been put in the budget for the Department equipment. This is an item that hopefully funds can be raised, or a grant can be found to limit what is asked for in the budget.

**Fire Marshal**

Answering questions, Mr. Summers explained that there are no new positions in this budget however, there is an increase in the full-year salary for the new Fire Inspector/Emergency Coordinator, Chris Wilcox. About 98% of Mr. Wilcox's time has been with emergency management because of the virus. Mr. Wilcox has reactivated the CERT Team, has done about eight more background checks, and has gotten the ID's badges printed. Currently, he is also working with Human Services on some food drive ideas and is coordinating the walking of dogs for seniors who can't get to the dog park. Community requests will be reviewed, and the Town will work with the CERT Team to see what can be done. There is no limit within the Town's regulations regarding the number of CERT Team members the Town is going to have. At this current time, The Town has approximately 20 active members. The Town is always advertising, and usually once per year, CERT classes are held.

**ITEM:**

**5. A. (Continued)**

Volunteer Fire Department

Chief Cooney stated that the current budget amount is \$974,000. The Fire Department is requesting a 2% increase. The current drivers in this budget request are for the Duty Officer System, Length of Service Awards Program, and other small increases across the board. There is no new equipment or positions in this budget.

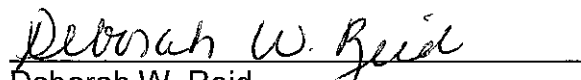
**6. Executive Session**

None

**7. Adjournment**

At 7:50 p.m., Councilor Maneeley made a motion to adjourn the Special Budget Work Session. Deputy Mayor Pendleton seconded the motion, and it was approved unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,



Deborah W. Reid  
Recording Secretary