

Committee Report

Date: May, 1 2012

Location: Westport Fire Headquarters

Westport RTM Public Protection Committee Meeting

Public Protection Committee Members present: Sean Timmins (chairman), Velma Heller, Louis Mall, Stephen Rubin, Jimmy Izzo, Richard Lowenstien, Melissa Katz, and George Underhill.

Meeting started at 7:30 and was adjourned at 9:43

Westport Police Chief Dale Call and Deputy Chief of Police Foti Koskinas addressed the Committee on staffing which has been reduced to 64 full time police officers. The Committee was informed of the various duties the police perform such as railroad parking, which now has 1 officer instead of 3. Overall cost of overtime to public is down. Due to shortages in manpower scheduling has been more "creative" to fill voids. Chief Call is in favor of 1 more full time police officer to help alleviate schedule shortages. The Dare program basically cut due to budget restraints. The budget reductions have basically cut down on services to areas such as the beach. Chief Call has made it clear that Railroad Parking with it's importance of revenue to town needs to be resurfaced. Overall the Police Department has done what the Board of Finance has requested in terms of cuts and consolidation.

The committee voted 7-0 to recommend the approval of the Police budget for 2012-2013.

Fire Chief Andrew Kingsbury, Deputy Chief Jonathan Gottfried, Asst. Chief Robert Kepchar, Asst. Chief Robert Yost, and Asst. Chief William Dingee addressed the Public Protection Committee following the Police presentation.

Chief Kingsbury explained the many duties of our 74 member Fire Department which also includes 6 volunteers trained to fight fires. Responsibilities of the WFD include not only residential and commercial buildings in Westport, but also our waterways, highways, and metro north railroad. Chief Kingsbury and his Assistant Chiefs pointed out the importance of preparation and education of not only our fire fighters but the residence of our community as well. We were shown different emergency challenges which included a boat fire, church fire and a recent condominium fire.

Chief Kingsbury also pointed out Federal Money had been received for relief to our town from Hurricane Irene and other disasters that have confronted us in past year. WFD has managed several Fema Projects where costs have been subsidized by Federal Government. Also pointed

out was how WFD works regionally well with neighboring towns. The Hazardous Material truck and team an asset not only to Westport, but our neighboring towns as well.

The Public Protection committee voted 7-0 to recommend the approval of the Westport Fire Department budget for 2012-2013.

Both our Police and Fire Department did a great job in explaining what they are about, and what they do. Both departments very open to any questions and concerns the public has going forward.

RTM Public Protection Committee

RTM Public Works Committee

Date; April 25, 2012

Location; Town Hall, Room #201 (7:35 – 8:25 PM)

Attendees; George Underhill, Cornelia Olsen, Cathy Talmadge, Matthew Mandell
Melissa Kane, Steve Edwards (DPW Director), Jay Keenan (chair/rpt)

Steve Edwards, DPW, outlined the Public Works/WPCF Sewer Budgets for the 2012/2013 fiscal year; overall budget, salaries, fuel costs, road paving, capital projects and 5 year capital forecast were all reviewed. The overall funding increase for the fiscal year is 7.9%. Mr Edward explained that the major increases were due to increased fuel costs and the need to play catch-up on road paving projects which had been deferred in recent years to alleviate budget increases. Mr Edwards explained the difference in the types of road resurfacing and rebuilding projects. The remainder of the budget is basically flat overall from 2011/2012 fiscal year.

Mr Edwards pointed out that the recently arbitrated and approved Public works labor contract is not reflected in this budget but is carried in the overall Board of Finance budget and would be a separate appropriation at a later date as was done on the past few labor contracts.

Mr Edwards reviewed the 2012/2013 capital projects and purchases; computers, truck repairs, salt (purchased in spring at reduced rates), equipment scanner, snow blower, carpet at Town Hall and Police HQ, duct cleaning, upgrade to electric and lockers at Compo bath house and pavilion and minor lab equipment purchases for treatment plant.

The committee had several questions and clarifications then voted unanimously (6-0) to recommend the budget for approval to the full RTm as approved by the Board of Finance

RTM Public Works Committee

To: Representative Town Meeting
From: RTM Library, Museum & Arts Committee
Date: May 3, 2012
Re: 2012-2013 Budgets for The Westport Public Library and Earthplace

Appropriation Requests:

The Westport Public Library has requested \$4,172,383 from the town for their operating budget. This is a .47 % increase from the 2011-2012 budget, and a total of \$19,600 over the total appropriation granted for the current year.

Earthplace has requested \$85,000 for their operating budget. This is a 4.2 % increase over the current appropriation, and the first such increase since the 2007-2008 budget year.

Recommendation: The RTM Library, Museum & Arts Committee voted unanimously to recommend approval by the full RTM of both Budgets as approved by the Board of Finance.

Present:

4/24 - Westport Public Library: Arthur Ashman, Heather Cherry, Hope Feller, Melissa Kane, John McCarthy

4/29 - Earthplace: Arthur Ashman, Wendy Batteau, Melissa Kane, Cornelia Olsen, John Suggs

Observations and Discussion:

Library

- The WPL has seen a huge increase in program attendance this year.
- It has been able to keep its requested budget increase to .47% as a result of staff and Board focus on increased fund raising - leading to a projected increase of 10% in donations. It has also continued to increase revenues from other sources.
- WPL currently has a total of 104 employees - 8 non union, 25 union and 71 part time. There has been no rise in FTE hours over the past 4 years. It was noted that, unlike other town departments, the cost of medical benefits to current retirees is carried by the WPL. (Future retirees benefits will be covered under the town.)
- For 2012-2013 the WPL forecasts significant cuts in expected sources of income; state Connecticut funding has been reduced by \$12,000, and a Passport program which was expected to generate an estimated \$40,000 was denied by the US State Department.
- WPL is actively exploring additional future sources of income including becoming a publisher. Knowing Westport, this could be a big moneymaker and a great asset to the community.
- Cost sharing is not new to the WPL, however additional opportunities are being explored to benefit from synergies with the Board of Education. The Committee recommends further exploration of the possibility of cost sharing where there are overlaps in need (in the area of technology assistance, for example).
- Committee members acknowledged the continued efforts of Library staff and board members to serve Westport efficiently and with excellence, and expressed appreciation for the rise in its revenues in comparison to other town departments.

Earthplace

- With Executive Director John Horkel leaving at the end of November, the board of Earthplace is conducting a search for a new director. The new director will likely have a business background and will have a mandate to raise funds and work towards making the organization more of a profitable business. Horkel will be very involved with the transition.
- Fund raising has been a priority for Earthplace this year. Initiatives have included increased use of social media and invigorated volunteer / donor outreach.
- Earthplace continues with its ongoing program of increasing efficiencies. Efforts have included; eliminating 3 FT staff positions through cross training and increased use of volunteers, freezing salaries, capping benefits, upgrading technology - including the accounting suite - and acquiring a system to capture information on and communicate with donors.
- This year Earthplace put up a \$500,000 CD in order to complete much needed capital improvements such as a new roof and other infrastructure. That loan has already been paid off.
- While the town makes a lump sum appropriation, Earthplace administrators divide the money equally between 3 programs which are considered town related costs: Harbor Watch, the open space Museum and the Animal Hall. The town does not pay for capital improvement expenses.
- The 4.2% increase Earthplace has requested is the first increase it has requested in 6 years.
- The increase is due to the rising cost of the Harbor Watch program (a town-related service) and the cost of hosting Westport school students. Currently, the Board of Education does not pay for any of the visits Westport students make to Earthplace. This includes every 1st and 3rd grade class who's visits are embedded into their science curriculum.
- The committee recommended a number of ways by which Earthplace could generate more revenue in the future. For example; adding donation boxes to the trails and charging fees for services to the Town of Westport such as water quality management.
- The Committee strongly recommends that Earthplace explore charging the BoE for the visits students make (again, many as part of their curriculum). When school systems from other towns visit Earthplace they pay a fee for each class of \$125. We recommend that the BoE pay a per-class fee as well. For example; a fee of \$5000 would have been charged to the school system for all the 3rd grade visits - 40 in total - over the past two years.
- The Committee feels the Town receives quite a bargain for all of the services it receives from Earthplace and acknowledges its continuing efforts to keep costs low.

Respectfully submitted,

Melissa Kane