

Questions for BOS – FY22 BOS Budget (Rutishauser)

- Salaries/Wages up about 4.12% while insurance is down 11.82% Medical insurance decline is a one-time event while salary increases are annual. Should the underlying salary increase rate of 4.12% be concerning for the future? **No, for three reasons:**
1-Over the last 6 years, a significant number of employees have retired. When replaced, those retired employees were replaced with employees at a lower wage rate. Newer union employees receive both a general wage increase and an annual step increase as they gain more work experience. Once they reach the top step, they receive only a general wage increase. Therefore those newer employees receive increases greater than the 2 to 2.25% budgeted for FY2022. Again, those increases are on a lower base.
2-Over the last 6 years, as positions became vacant, either through retirement or other departures, we examined the positions and determined if the positions could be eliminated or combined with another position, either within municipal government or the schools. We have eliminated a number of positions through this effort, including significant management positions, Finance Director for the School-now a shared CFO with the BOE and BOS budgets sharing the cost 50/50. Greater savings achieved by the schools as joint CFO compensation was less than that of the Finance Director, DPW Director-consolidated the DPW Director position with the existing Facilities Director position, Schools Facility Director-Town DPW and Facilities Director provides the function to the schools for a stipend, which is paid by the BOE.
3-the 4.12% increase includes pandemic restored wages and the difference in budgeted vacancies as follows:
 - Annual wage increases 2.75%
 - Swim Program wages not incurred last year due to pandemic .60%
 - FY21 budgeted vacancy savings in excess of FY22 vacancy saving .67%
 - Reinstate First Selectwoman temporary salary decrease .21%
 - All other (.11%)
- With Interest Rates rising, is a \$10,000 increase in interest too conservative? **Investment income is forecasted to be underbudget for FY2021. All revenue recommendations will be reconsidered in advance of BOF deliberations based on the most recent information available.**
- Of the \$550,000 in Building Permits budget, what percentage are known projects? **The amount is a recognition of the expected increase in revenue due to known potential projects based on P&Z activity and discussion with potential applicants. There is no certainty that any of these potential projects will end up filing for a building permit, but greater activity is a reasonable budgeting assumption.**
- Are we very confident that we will receive \$462 K in ECS this year? **Yes, both the Governor and Legislative leaders have indicated we will receive the grant. We have been receiving the expected funding this year.**

- There are numerous line items of lower medical insurance costs. IS this the one-time adjustment of the medical savings so that next year, it will be about the same as this year? You may recall from the FY2021 budget discussions, we were uncertain whether we would achieve union agreement to move to the State Partnership Program. As such, our approved budget included 50% of the possible savings of that.

All unions moved to the State Partnership Plan as of July 1st. The FY2022 reductions are the balance of the savings due to that move plus any favorability due to changes in employee selection, reduced by the 3% premium increase for FY2022.

As a result of the move, our base cost for medical benefits was reduced by approximately 20%. The FY2022 premium increase of 3% is on that lower base and is much lower annual increase than we had been experiencing. With more towns and boards of ed moving to the state plan and the state likely subsidizing the plan, it is hard to predict future premium increases. So far the move to the Plan has been favorable all around.

- HR Salaries – Full Time went up \$33,400, or 20%. Seems too large for an annual salary increase. Was a new person added to HR staff? A much-needed position has been in past budgets for a number of years, but the position hasn't yet been filled. Last June, we expected the hiring would be delayed because of the pandemic and budgeted the position as of January 1, not July 1.
- Finance Dept – What is \$50,000 for Misc. Contractual Services for? One-time cost? This will be discussed.
- Info Systems - \$70k for "Temp Help - Outside Agency" Isn't in-house easier and cheaper? This is projects specific to catch up on the backlog that occurred this year because resources were focused on pandemic specific tasks. We have two full-time positions in IS. Otherwise, we utilize consultants with specialized skills or temporary help with less specialized skills for specific tasks. This approach results in better outcomes at a lower cost. We don't have the workload to justify the variety of full-time staff to obtain the variety of skills required.
- Health Dept – Full and Part-Time Salaries up a combined \$53,500 - 15% overall. Seems like a big increase. Why? Additional personnel and hours to address the pandemic. Based on information we are just receiving about the American Rescue Plan; we expect some or all of these amounts may be covered by the local or county grant. Detailed instructions on eligible expenses won't be received for 90 days, but we are currently identifying potentially eligible expenses in the FY2022 budget. We expect to provide those amounts to the BOS at our April 5th BOS meeting and present to the BOF at your April 6th meeting.

- Other Consulting Services (011-08-3105-59626) is \$50k. What for? **This will be discussed.**
- Why is Salt up 99,600? Did we use up this year's supply? **Because of the warmer weather, we had an oversupply at the end of FY2020. We used the oversupply in FY2021.**
- Why is Rent – Equipment Trees up \$70k? Is \$125k the “new normal”? Is this storm related or regular trimming? **The account title is a misnomer. This is the outside contracting for tree removal. Yes, we have increased the budget to \$125,000 per year. Although we have increased the budget over the last few years, the Town has historically under budgeted tree work. There is a greater urgency to address this due to residents’ increasing reliance on the internet.**
- I thought BOS was going to use some of the FY21 surplus to fund the Master Plan and zoning changes, etc.(\$150,000). Why is it in the FY22 budget? **\$100,000 is assigned in the general fund balance. That amount was developed based on the expectation that the work it funded would supplement the planning work being done by P&Z working group themselves. That working group has determined the scope is too much for volunteers. P&Z Chair and Director of Land Use Management/Town Planner have identified and requested a total of \$250,000 for the Wilton Center/Surrounding RT 7 master planning. Hence the additional \$150,000.**
- Looks like we bought a Paramedic Fly Car in 2020. Are we buying another one in FY22? **Yes, there are two.**
- What's an Excavator (\$140,000) and why is it needed? Do we have one now? Do we need our own or could we pay/share cost with a neighboring town? **A picture of an excavator is shown on this link: https://www.cat.com/en_US/products/new/equipment/excavators.html The excavator is a multi-use, year-round piece of equipment. Uses include rebuilding road drainage systems at the time of road paving, trenching, loading salt into the plow trucks for winter plowing, loading other materials into trucks and assisting with tree and debris road clearing after a power outage. It can't be shared with another community, as the demand is too high within Wilton itself.**
- What is the difference between Parks & Rec Trailer for \$3,500 in the Operating Budget and the Parks & Rec Trailer for \$12,000 in the Operating Capital Budget? **Two different sized trailers. Because operating capital can be carried over for up to 5 years, smaller cost items are generally included in operating expenses.**
- Do Dial-A-Ride fees cover costs? If not, what is the shortfall amount? **Dial-A-Ride is a social service and is not intended to operate at breakeven. The charge is nominal for**

each trip. Budgeted revenue is \$4,000. The State provides an annual grant of approximately \$25,000, which is budgeted in Other Town Grants. Operating expenses are budgeted at \$168,000. The State provides grants for the purchase of the vehicles.

- Is there money in budget to expand/enhance cybersecurity? Don't need to answer if it is not to be discussed in public. Yes, budget includes monies to fund necessary cybersecurity.
- What is status of police radio upgrade? I recall hearing a total cost of \$2 million or sharing with state at higher cost? Is there any of that cost in FY22 budget? The project you refer to is a required replacement of the public safety radio system, used by police, fire, EMS and adding DPW. Last year's 5-year capital plan reflected a bonding request at this May's Annual Town Meeting. That request has been delayed for several reasons:
 - It may be that the project is an allowable expenditure under the American Rescue Plan local or county grant.
 - There are two options for the system, which are undergoing further investigation and refinement : Option 1, essentially an upgrade our own system has a cost of approximately \$2.5 million. Option 2, join the State network at a cost of approximately \$4 million.
 - We are collaborating with another adjoining town that is also required to upgrade their system.
 - If the project isn't eligible for grant funding, it will be recommended for this November's ballot.