

Kim Healy Questions

BOS Budget Review

2/15/2022

Town Clerk- pg 187: Salaries: If the early voting bill is voted in this November, do we have any idea of the financial impact it will have on the town clerk budget? I understand that a lot will depend on how many days prior to Election Day we are allowed to vote will need to be determined.

In the 2020 Presidential election, we experienced a much higher rate of requests for absentee ballots and a higher rate of returned absentee ballots than was typical. The high rate of return was likely due to COVID. The high rate of requests was likely due to the Secretary of State mailing request forms to residents and COVID. The Town Clerk's office incurred approximately \$15,000 in temporary help for October and November. We consider 2020 unique and not indicative of what might occur in a non COVID year.

In the 2021 Municipal election, we experienced a higher rate of requests and returned ballots than was typical, but at a much lower rate for each than in 2020. The Town Clerk did not need to hire temporary help.

We don't have enough data to estimate the financial impact of early voting.

(same question for Registrar of voters).

Absentee ballots are processed through a voting machine, so there isn't the variable labor impact experienced by the Town Clerk's Office.

Do we get any funding from the state to cover election costs? Not typically, though we did during COVID.

Town Clerk- pg 188: Office Supplies: 2021 actual was unusually high- is this due to the covid Absentee Ballot change? No. Just the timing of purchase of small equipment that needs to be replaced periodically.

HR- pg 191: The change from p/t to f/t hr employee. Has this person started as p/t in 2022 which is the reason for the 2022 increased budget and now it is being determined that this person needs to be f/t? Can the new town administrator assume some of the duties in this dept to eliminate the need for the added cost of making an employee f/t? ***. I see the Temp Help- outside agency line- you can ignore this comment as it appears the need to increase the p/t person has been needed for the last few years.

For many years, the HR department has been authorized for two employees, the department head and another employee. The second employee position hadn't been filled. Last year it was budgeted as a part-time position and is being filled with a full-time person mid-year this year. Job has been posted and applications received.

HR- Labor relations pg 195- what is the reason for the significant fluctuations- 2021 only 3.6k; 2022 budget 10k, 2023 budget 20k and note indicates that 2022 will be over budget by 10k.

The line item represents billings from outside labor counsel related to employee matters. The amount varies each year based on the matters at the time. Current matters will be discussed in executive session.

Registrar of Voters: pg 199- Computer hardware 5k for 2022 and 2023? What is this expense related to?

The registrars are replacing the paper "poll books" used at the polls to check in voters and account for who voted with electronic poll books, which will save time on election day and after. They are being rolled out over two years.

Registrar of voters- pg 199- Printing, Binding... - increased costs and the note about no state grant- has this been brought to the attention of our state representatives? The state should be covering some if not all of the added costs.

The State typically doesn't provide a grant to cover the cost of the elections. The state did provide a grant for the November 2020 election because of the high number of anticipated absentee ballots.

Land Use- Other consulting services- pg 235- note refers to funding needed for 2023 P&Z regs but there is no dollars requested on this line.

Those comments should have been deleted. The comments were referring to the funding for the master planning, which is budgeted in operating capital, as the expenditure may exceed one year and is non reoccurring. The funding for the current master planning and the FY2023 reg changes was previously funded in FY2022 and with prior year savings. The \$75,000 funding for Cannondale is in FY2024 operating capital. The comment has been removed.

Social services- pg 344- Misc Contractual Serv.- had all services been provided in-house prior to 2022 or has there been such an increase in needed services starting in 2022 to require the additional cost? Do we foresee this as ongoing expense?

The department funds short-term counseling for individuals that do not have insurance and the resources to pay for counseling themselves. Previously, counseling was provided in-house, but this has been changed to a contracted services with an outside agency for two reasons: 1-the agency has multiple counselors so they can better service varying needs. The department works with the agency to match the individual with a counselor particular to their needs. 2-it eliminates the liability risk to the Town associated with performing counseling.

Transportation is often a barrier to counseling. The contracted agency has been given in office within Social Services to hold counseling sessions, thereby overcoming that barrier.

Nursing and Home Care-pg 356-prof services- Medical- I had no idea that almost 800k in school nurse costs are not covered by the BOE budget.

Paramedic services- pg 361-Prof Services- Medical- is this an agreed upon cost per a contract?

Yes. WVAC contracts with Norwalk Hospital for the EMTs that cover their day shifts and other shifts and the paramedics.

Rte 7 bus service- pg 362- transportation services- 5k? Town support for the bus rte? Who are we paying to have a (public?) bus on rte 7?

The bus service is operated by the Norwalk Transit District. The CEO of the Norwalk Transit District is a member of the MPO for our region, the South West Region Metropolitan Planning Organization. Information about the District is available here: <https://www.norwalktransit.com/services>

Economic Dev- pg 363- 30k to water plants? Is this a contract amount? Can we get Parks and Rec to do this work?

The baskets in the Town Center are currently provided through a partnership between the Wilton Garden Club and the Town. The Garden Club fundraises for the cost of the flowers, Park & Grounds picks them up and hangs them and since spring of 2020, the Town hires a professional to water and maintain the baskets. Prior to the spring of 2020, Parks & Grounds watered the basket. The change in the appearance of the baskets under the care of a professional in 2020 and 2021 has been noticeably improved. During the summer, the baskets need watering at least once per day, some times more and need fertilizing. Parks & Grounds didn't devote that level of effort because of a lack of availability.

Resident complaints lead to the change.

The town has been paying approximately \$17,000. The amount will increase to \$22,000 in FY2023 because we are expanding baskets on River Road.