

**Preston Board of Selectmen
Budget Workshop
Thursday, March 1, 2018
Preston Town Hall
5:30 p.m.**

BOS Present: Robert Congdon, Lynwood Crary, Michael Sinko

BOS Excused: None

Departments Invited to workshop:

1. Fire Department
2. Parks & Recreation
3. Senior Affairs
4. PRA

Fire Department: 5:30 p.m.

Two questions posed to Chief Tom Casey by Selectman Crary: 1) Why purchase costly breathing gear at once? Chief Casey responded better pricing, none of current equipment is compliant and prices increase regularly.

2) Proposed promotion of full time Deputy Fire Marshal to position of Lieutenant cost? Chief Casey responded that there is no increase to budget, yet it's a well-deserved promotion to title and responsibilities based on performance and dedication.

Fire Department Operational:

- Administrative Costs/Office Supplies – \$1,000 increase due to required upgrade of incident reporting software and increase in the annual software support contract
- Gas - \$1,000 requested increase derived from annual consumption of 2200 gallons and projected cost of \$2.80 per gallon
- Diesel - \$1,600 increase derived from average annual consumption of 1300 gallons and a price of \$2.60 per gallon
- Personal proactive gear - \$2,000 increase for purchase of 3 sets of turnout gear (each year) based on change in NFPA Standard. Proposed to extend over a 10 year cycle so Town will not be faced with another huge purchase equipment as in past.
- Training - \$1,000 increase due to consistent increase in cost of continuing education classes and so that there will not be a need to deny training as in last few years
- Heating - \$1,000 increase based on calculation of 2200 gallons of fuel (Preston City) and 3000 CCF natural gas at Poquetanuck
- Phone – suggested that Internet be added to this line. \$1300 increase in phone rates, along with upgraded internet service via Comcast at both stations to support ambulance reporting system and dispatch aid to improve volunteer response. This line item should cover phone, fax and internet.

Fire Department Salaries & Benefits:

- Board of Selectmen discussed Health Benefits line and adjusted from \$20,002 to \$16,978 to reflect projected cost. BOS added \$20,000 for PT/Weekend, per diem, which will be offset by \$20,000 in revenue.

Areas of savings: Vehicle Maintenance at \$1,000; Uniforms at \$2100; Insurance at \$2,716; and Fire Police \$1,000 based on continual loss of volunteers resulting in 3 active Fire Police who do not need additional equipment nor supplies.

BOS made no changes to Operational Budget.

Parks & Recreation: 6:10 p.m.

Amy Brosnan and Dan Coley present

BOS cut \$2,000 for Geese dispersal since it has not been used for the past two years. If necessary, it can be proposed to Board of Finance.

Maintenance increase of \$2,000 due to the Park getting older and everything ageing at same time. Breakdown presented and it was noted that staff chaired fundraisers have helped offset current expenses.

Data Website – new line item of \$2,800. 1st Selectman Congdon suggested this be moved to Town's Data Processing. New software, CivicRec, is program of CivicPlus and handles online registration which is a big convenience to residents and efficient for staff. BOF Chair questioned whether this should remain as an item under department since exclusive use. 1st Selectman Congdon responded that all the Town's specialized programs fall under Data Processing.

Senior Activities – Proposed \$4,500 as seniors have been requesting more activities. BOS reduced Senior Activities by \$2,000, the labor component that will be added to Program Assistant for better tracking of wages.

Salaries & Wages – Board agreed to adjust Coordinator and Program Assistant to put in line with current secretarial pay scale.

Andy Depta asked if individuals using the online registration pay for the service with positive response and explanation.

Senior Affairs – 6:30 p.m.

Fran Minor and Betty Bissette present

Director of Senior Affairs, Fran Minor, requested to be present at meeting to personally present her budget narrative. All budget items are unchanged from previous year with exception of wages. Fran voiced her strong discontent that last year her employees were hit as the Board of Finance did not approve the meager cost of living increase. Fran stated she has always been frugal and puts high value on her dedicated employees. For the record, she hopes that the Board of Finance does not again refrain from increases for these dedicated employees who are already low on the totem pole for wages.

Congregate Meal - Requesting increase from \$3,576 to \$5,100 to cover cost of providing service

1st Selectman Congdon explained some challenges that have been experienced including oil deliveries from East River and Fran's willingness to take on responsibility of calling in for oil deliveries.

Finance Board Chair questioned BOS why BOE unaffiliated employees are at 2% COLA and BOS is proposing 3% for Town. Discussion along with Selectman Congdon's explanation that CCM has an Analysis of Wage Agreements whereby the Town has been under the average the past years.

PRA – 6:50 p.m.

Sean Nugent and Bill Legler present

Sean shared an overall project update and presented the PRA Budget Composition. PRA working budget is made of 3 components: Annual Operating Budget and Grants/Loans. Town approved budget is comprised of Annual Operating Budget. Town Matching Funds does not apply to either budget. PRA Operating proposed at \$162,250; and PRA town budget at \$158,850.

Discussion on:

- Hiring a Clerk of the Works with CSG doing a search for this role
- Grounds Maintenance – feasibility of Public Works doing the work.
- BOS deleted \$20,000 Abatement;
- BOS removed \$5,500 Liability Insurance because it's already included in Town's Liability Insurance;
- BOS reduced Grounds Maintenance by \$4,500
- Total BOS cuts to PRA Budget equals \$30,000

PRA concluded at 7:40 p.m.

1st Selectman Congdon gave update on Library budget and BOS agreed to adjust heating line by \$1500.

Selectman Sinko opted out of his proposed 3% increase; Selectman Crary agreed. Andy Depta commented that Board of Finance should recognize that.

Discussion on Planning & Zoning and Selectman Crary proposed that Blight Enforcement Officer be an added duty to Zoning Enforcement Officer since duties would be similar in nature. All agreed.

Selectman Crary suggested looking into use of new gas station next door for fueling Town and School vehicles versus spending \$137,000 for tank removal/updates. 1st Selectman Congdon will pursue conversation recognizing this is potentially on a larger corporate level (Mobile or Citgo) versus local level.

Selectman Crary asked about leasing another compactor for Transfer Station. Piping could be a LOCIP item.

Discussion on 2nd Resident Trooper and concluded that since it went to Town Referendum, it should be included in the Budget.

1st Selectman Congdon met with Mayor of Ledyard and will be pursuing further conversation on potential for shared services.

Meeting Adjourned at 8:10 p.m.