

**Board of Selectmen  
Special Meeting Minutes  
Thursday, February 10, 2022  
Preston Town Hall - Lower Level**

**1. Call to Order**

Sandra Allyn-Gauthier called the meeting to order at 6:04 P.M.

**2. Roll Call**

***Members***

Sandra Allyn-Gauthier  
Ken Zachem  
Jerry Grabarek

***Also Present***

Kimberly Lang, Recorder

**3. New Business - 2022-2023 Budget**

**a. Salary Increase**

Sandra Allyn-Gauthier reviewed her findings while researching the average salary increase for the coming year.

- Social Security - COLA adjustment is a 5.9% increase
- CCM sees an average 2.31% increase in salary with a maximum of 4%
- Ledyard is 2.75% average with a maximum of 4%
- N.Stonington is in the 2-3% range
- Voluntown is starting at a 2.5% increase
- Griswold is unknown they have yet to reply to the request for information
- Cost Council of Small Towns consumer price is 4%
- Preston Board of Education is 2% increase with a 2% increase per Step

It was noted that the monthly inflation for January is at 7.1%; and that the last 2 years' salary increases were very conservative. It was discussed that salary increases should be based on a comprehensive wage study so that Preston is comparable to surrounding towns. It may be prudent in the future to have a Human Resource person look at job descriptions and responsibilities to justify salary increases more clearly. It was decided to create a budget with a 4% salary increase.

It was shared that Code Enforcement, Human Resource, and Grant Writer were all positions that were to be covered by grants encouraging regionalization. The first year would be free to towns and then subsequent in years towns would each town pay for the services they use. Unfortunately, when Covid occurred that was a program that was not funded by the state.

**b. Boards and Commissions Budgets**

The following Budgets were reviewed:

- Zoning Board of Appeals budget is \$612 - no change
- Ethics Commission budget is \$650 - no change
- Registrar of Voters budget is \$14,276 - without salaries no change
- Inland/Wetlands budget is \$2,250 - without salaries no change
- The Town Clerk budget is \$27,950 - without salaries a decrease of \$100
- Tax Collector budget is \$2,800 - without salaries an increase of \$100
- Troopers - There is an unknown saving because the new troopers aren't at the top steps of the pay scale, there will be a decrease from last year's budget of \$351,279.

There was a short discussion on whether to have true department budgets or to have centralized budgets for things like technology, electricity, etc.

### c. Membership, Dues, and Contributions

The next area of discussion was the dues and contributions that the town pays. It was stated that SCOGG, CCM, and CCOST are all organizations that have proven helpful and a great source of information to the town, and membership in those organizations should continue. The costs are as follows:

CCOST - \$975 (based on population)

CCM - still waiting for their request

Southeastern Connecticut Enterprise Region (**seCTer**) - \$1,676 (based on population)

Others are:

- Norwich Probate asking for \$3,529.68 (based on population)
- United Family Services asking \$40,084 - This is a significant increase from the previous year's \$27,621, perhaps the ARPA funds could be used to pay the increase. It was decided to budget \$27,621 and look into ARPA funds to contribute more.
- TVCCA was \$1,000 asking for \$1,100, which will be budgeted.
- New London Homeless Hospitality was \$1,500 asking for \$3,000 - It was decided to budget \$1,500 and perhaps pay the additional \$1,500 with ARPA funds.
- SAFE Futures is asking for \$300 - there is no increase, so that will be budgeted.
- Sexual Assault Crisis Center of Eastern CT in Willimantic - They state that they have serviced 13 Preston residents at a cost of \$16,000. It was decided that a \$100 contribution will be made and that any additional contributions will possibly come from ARPA funds.
- Last Green Valley asking for \$500 - It was shared that the Historical Society contributed \$100. It was decided that the Historical Society's contribution was sufficient for the town.

### d. Health Care

It was reported that the town has been told to plan for an 8% increase in the current Health Care Plan. Some federal monies were used to help keep the increase down, but even with the federal funds helping to offset the increase looks to be 8% overall. There is a need to calculate the number of employees and their status before that number can be added to the budget. Last year the employee contribution increased by 1% to 6%, any new increases will need to be kept in mind when deciding the salary increase.

Gathering technology prices and will discuss this at a later date.

**e. Ten Year Reval**

The Ten Year Reval is just 4 years away, it has been suggested to set aside funds in the next 4 years' budgets for the cost of the Reval. It has been suggested that \$25,000 be placed in the Capital Non-recurring Fund to cover the impending cost. The last reval cost the town \$118,000. It was discussed that any increase to the cost that \$25,000 for the next 4 years wouldn't be enough to cover the estimated \$150,000 cost. It was decided to ask the Board of Finance next week how they'd like to handle this expense - budget for it over the next 4 years or deal with it in another way.

**f. Budget Workshops**

It was decided that future Budget Workshops with Dept. heads are needed. During these workshops each Dept. will be given 15 minutes to present their needs and increased costs. All the Workshops will be held at 6:00 P.M. and the following schedule was set:

- Feb. 24th - Fire Department, Public Works, and Parks and Rec
- March 3rd - PRA, Senior Affairs, and Library
- March 8th - tentative
- March 17th - tentative
- March 24th - finalize to present to Board of Finance

**5. Public Comment** - No public

**6. Adjournment**

*Ken Zachem motioned to adjourn at 6:55 P.M.. Jerry Garbarek seconded the motion. The motion was carried unanimously.*

Respectfully submitted,

*Kimberly Lang*

Kimberly Lang

Recorder

