

**MONROE TOWN COUNCIL
Monroe, Connecticut**

**Joint Budget Workshop Session
February 11, 2015
6:30 PM
Monroe Town Hall
Council Chambers**

A Joint Budget Workshop Session was held on Wednesday, February 11, 2015 at 6:30 p.m. in the Council Chambers of the Monroe Town Hall.

PRESENT: Chairman Frank Lieto
Vice-Chairman Enid Lipeles
Councilmember Deborah Heim
Councilmember Kenneth Kellogg
Councilmember Raymond Knapp, Jr.
Councilmember Phyllis Kansky
Councilmember Dee Dee Martin
Councilmember Sean O'Rourke
Councilmember Kevin Reid

Also Present: First Selectman Stephen J. Vavrek

Proposed Budget for Fiscal Year 2015/2016
Presentation of budget requests from municipal departments

Chairman Frank Lieto started the Joint Budget Workshop Session at 6:30 p.m. In attendance were members of Town Council and Board of Finance (Mike Manjos, Debra Dutches, Ron Bunovsky, Heidi Meade)

Mike Manjos noted there will be 2 areas tonight that will not be covered and they are bonding (debt service) and pensions.

Registrar of Voters (*Susan Koneff and Judy Stripay*)

The mission is to provide the highest level of service to the residents of Monroe, assist candidates, proponents and opponents of ballot measures in a fair and unbiased manner. Maintain voter records; manage elections, primaries and referendums. Sue Koneff stated there are not many changes; most of the costs have remained the same. She noted the only change is salary to increase Registrars hourly rate from \$15.00 an hour to \$18.00 an hour, and the Deputy Registrars from \$12.00 an hour to \$15.00 an hour. Ms. Koneff noted they have additional responsibilities. Ms. Stripay noted there has been an extensive outreach sending out approximately 200 letters out to residents which is part of the

canvas; hopefully, eliminating the need for election day registration. Ms. Koneff also noted the responsibilities with the Secretary of the State have increased at the end of an election. Mike Manjos questioned when the last time the hourly rate was changed and the answer was 4 years ago. Judy Stripay also stated there was enough money in the budget for three (3) referendums. A referendum costs approximately \$6,000 not including Registrars salaries. A presidential election cost is approximately \$22,000 not including Registrars salaries. Ms. Koneff stated the hourly rate is basically for preparation of elections, running the election, clean up of election, canvas, letters to residents new to the area or those taken off, high school registration, anything the Secretary of the State mandates them to do.

Town Clerk (*Marsha Motter*)

The Town Clerk's office is the gateway to the community and serves as the central information point for the residents of Monroe includes land records, records management, public services, voting, vital statistics and printing. Ms. Motter's request is to increase hourly rate and add a part time assistant to assist with posting of town boards and commission agendas and minutes on the town website along with other duties. Chairman Lieto questioned Ms. Motter if there was enough time in the day to post minutes on the website and she said there was not. She is asking for someone to come in twice a week for four hours to help.

Police Department (*Chief John Salvatore*)

The mission of the police department is to provide professional law enforcement services to the citizens of Monroe. The staff is committed to the development and implementation of community/quality-of-life policing through proactive problem-solving initiatives and partnership with residents. Chief Salvatore's budget overview is an increase due to fully staffed uniform officers and items to perform their job duties. He also proposed a 4th car replacement rotation noting they are keeping older cars now as a deterrent in a stationery position at schools. Chairman Lieto requested the net increase in dispatchers year to year. He noted 4 assigned SRO's are assigned to the schools, and Sandy Hook now has their own SRO's.

Town Planner-Planning & Zoning (*Will Agresta*)

The mission is to protect the public health, safety and general welfare of the community by providing administrative and professional technical services to all Boards and Commissions, Federal and State agencies. Also, to guide the orderly development and use of land to provide housing and employment opportunities, to stabilize the property tax base and to protect open space and areas of unique natural resources within the town. Mr. Agresta stated they are looking for an increase in consultant fees for POCD of \$2,750. Mr. O'Hara was also present and stated how much revenue they have created expanding businesses such as Northeast Laser and Goodwill. He also stated Axel Plastic, was just approved as a 4 million dollar building and 7 million dollar interior. He also noted Wal-Mart is between \$600,000-\$700,000. He noted helping the department will also enhance the other departments, ex.: police department, police cars, etc. Chairman Lieto noted the First Selectman made an adjustment on Equipment (Computer) for public use is being moved to the IT budget to be used at the front desk to avoid personnel being

asked questions when residents can easily look up their basic questions on line. Debra Dutches had concerns on consulting fees.

Fire Marshal (*Bill Davin*)

The mission is to provide professional life safety protection to the citizens of the Town of Monroe through inspection, prevention, and investigation as regulated by the applicable Connecticut State Laws. Mr. Davin's request is an increase for a new part time position and vehicle expense. He noted many people come in asking for permits and he gets inundated with so much paperwork thus his reasons for administrative help.

Technology (*Jack Zamary*)

The mission is to use information technology to increase the capabilities of the organization by improving service delivery, supporting policy development and enabling information access. Mr. Zamary stated the only increase was in the salary line. All other lines have been flat or reduced. He noted the salaries are determined by the First Selectman and Superintendent of Schools and his estimate is a 2.84% increase. He noted on the technology refresh cycle, he noted they have many new machines this year and only need to upgrade the Wi-Fi within Town Hall. The Wi-Fi system currently in use now is not adequate. The new upgrade will support 24 plus users at one time. He noted the copier contract ends on June 30, 2014 and a new one comes up on July 1, 2014. He met with five (5) different vendors, doing background checks and met with numerous municipalities and school districts to get their feedback and all vendors' submitted bids. He explained about the printer and the useful features of not wasting paper, and keeping information secure. Mr. Zamary presented a slide of costs from different vendors, and as far as costs, Ryan was the second lowest and received positive feedback. He spoke about the phone system explaining the system is very old and needs to be replaced. He noted the new website and GIS system is working well. Mr. Zamary also proposed a projection system quote for a projector and mount at \$4,105.97. Chairman Lieto suggested it would be a good idea to have chrome books on the dais for Council members to be prepared as they use large documents that are on the agenda and feels it would be easy to access and can be used by various Boards and Commissions. Councilmember Martin and Councilmember Kansky suggested getting costs on televising meetings in the Town Council Chambers.

Parks & Recreation (*Frank Cooper*)

The mission is to promote dynamic programs and attractive public spaces that cultivate inclusion, wellness and vitality throughout the community and to promote healthy and engaging recreational activities including sport and leisure choices, plan and develop natural outdoor resources and provide opportunities for culture creative expression and growth. Frank Cooper stated the First Selectman presented a very responsible budget but some areas need to be addressed such as Parks and Recreation salary and Parks and Recreation (other). He wants to build a stronger and responsible workforce and the budget can look to itself to a large percentage of the changes, not looking at the taxpayers for these changes. His budget overview is to increase new Supervisor positions, part-time positions, equipment, operating, R&M and vehicle. He feels part-time people can switch to the contra account, and noted they are paying part-time people for part-time

work and he would like to consolidate all part time help to one supervisor. Chairman Lieto requested Mr. Cooper illustrate what he really wants to do so Council could consider.

EMS (*Don Smith and John Quinlavin*)

The mission is a team of dedicated, compassionate, volunteer professionals that serve the Town of Monroe by providing the highest level of pre-hospital basic and advanced life support for the health care needs of our community. Mr. Quinlavin stated the EMS Department had a conversation with the First Selectman and then negotiated some reductions in the estimated budget, and noted he is happy with it as presented to the Council. He was requesting a part-time administrative assistant who would provide service with the Commission. Mr. Smith stated there are contract services to contend with. Councilmember Kellogg had concerns on some of the line items, such as medical supplies. Mr. Quinlavin stated they have not spent any money on that but stated the equipment was budgeted for \$12,000. He noted all the medical supplies are being credited to the equipment line. Mr. Smith noted some of the lines have been quoted on the wrong line but it all comes out of the operating expenses. Chairman Lieto requested more information to discuss the issue of hiring part time help. Councilmember Martin requested information on finding a building to house the EMS when they return with more information.

Monroe Volunteer Fire Department (*Chris Krize*)

To provide aid in the preservation and protection from fire damage and destruction by fire and other emergencies of the properties within the limits of such, in any portion of the Town of Monroe and bordering towns, as agreed on by mutual aid agreements as may hereafter be fixed by the bylaws of this corporation; and to acquire, hold and use such equipment, apparatus and other personal property as may be required in the promotion of such purpose; and to acquire and hold such real property as may be necessary for the housing and care of such personal property. Mr. Krize stated they were not looking for a large increase, basically a 3% inflationary increase. He noted there were no drastic changes in the budget other than some items going up and some going down. He would like to see a capital equipment line to draw upon and he also noted apparatus is not included in the budget. Councilmember Martin questioned what was in the reserve fund; Mr. Krize stated approximately \$350,000.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further questions, Town Council Chairman, Frank Lieto adjourned the meeting at 9:55 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Donna Cerreta
Town Council Clerk