

Charlestown Budget Commission

Open Meeting/Regular Meeting

Minutes

March 19, 2024
9:00 AM Council Chambers

Town Hall
4540 South County Trail
Charlestown, RI 02813

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 9:00 a.m. In attendance were Dick Sartor, Bill Dunn, Greg Plunkett, Paula Andersen, Town Administrator Jeff Allen, Town Treasurer Patrick Gormley, Assistant Treasurer Jeannine Raymond and Administrative Assistant Susan R. Shea. Absent were Council Liaison Susan Cooper and Tim Kenefick.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

February 27, 2024, March 1, 2024, March 5, 2024 & March 8, 2024

A motion was made by Ms. Andersen and seconded by Mr. Plunkett to table the minutes.

PUBLIC COMMENT

None

OLD BUSINESS - DISCUSSION AND POTENTIAL ACTION CONCERNING THE FOLLOWING BUDGET ACCOUNTS, TO INCLUDE BUT NOT BE LIMITED TO POTENTIAL REVIEW, ANALYSIS, MODIFICATION, INCREASE, DECREASE, ELIMINATION, REVISION, REQUEST FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION, CONTINUATION AND VOTE:

Lyn McAllister, the Chair of the Conservation, gave a brief presentation on the open space preserves in Town. Volunteers had been caring for the maintenance of the trails from cutting down tree branches and ensuring the paths are clear for the public to walk the trails. She stated that it's become too dangerous for volunteers to safely use chainsaws.

Treasurer Gormley updated the Commission on the money accounts for Coastal Ponds. They have a checking account (172K), investments account (147K) and the Arnold account (16K). Mr. Sartor said there was no reason for the Coastal Ponds Committee to request an increase based on the funds available to them. Rate increases seem unnecessary at this time.

Mr. Gormley stated that the draft audit was received and he has started analyzing the information. All financial statements are included. No major changes but just some philosophical differences.

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410 Account

It was moved by Ms. Andersen and seconded by Mr. Plunkett to remove the 3% increase from the Councilors salary. Line item would change from \$18,540 to \$18K. Ayes 4 Nays 0

The public is welcome to any meeting of the Budget Commission. If communication assistance (readers/interpreters/captions) is needed or any other accommodation to ensure equal participation, please contact (711-364-1210) at least three (3) business days prior to the meeting.

It was moved by Ms. Andersen and seconded by Mr. Plunkett to remove the 3% increase. Line item would change from \$2,500 to 2K. Ayes 4 Nays 0.

A motion was made by Mr. Dunn and seconded by Mr. Plunkett to approve the budget from \$36,210 to \$35,170. Ayes 4 Nays 0

Town Administrator 420

It was moved by Mr. Dunn and seconded by Mr. Plunkett to approve the 420 Account as is at \$196,569. Ayes 4 Nays 0.

Board of Canvassers 430

It was moved by Mr. Dunn and seconded by Ms. Andersen to approve the 430 Account as is at \$62,835. Ayes 4 Nays 0.

Finance 435

Mr. Sartor recommended putting the Finance Director's salary in at \$62,500 which would be a 6 month salary. He also suggested adding \$50,000 to the Finance Department Purchased Services which would be money available to hire an HR firm to create job descriptions and job classifications.

A motion was made by Mr. Plunkett and seconded by Mr. Dunn to approve a half a year salary at \$62,500 and \$50,000 for an HR Consultant for a total budget of \$112,500. Ayes 4 Nays 0.

Treasurer 440

Mr. Sartor recommended that the Treasurer wages requested at \$211,709 be reduced to \$141,753 to remove the new position of HR/Benefits Coordinator.

It was moved by Mr. Plunkett and seconded by Ms. Andersen to approve the recommendation and the budget at \$323,163.

IT 445

Mr. Gormley noted a change in the IT Technician Wages. It's proposed at \$48,782 but should be \$47,676.

Mr. Sartor recommended reducing the Dues and Subscriptions from \$500 to \$400 and Professional Development from \$4,000 to \$3,000. Total budget would be \$267,761. A motion was made by Ms. Andersen and seconded by Mr. Plunkett to accept the changes as proposed. Ayes 4 Nays 0.

Tax Assessor 450

Mr. Sartor recommended reducing the Operating Supplies from \$2,500 to \$2K with a bottom line of \$208,381. A motion was made by Mr. Plunkett and seconded by Mr. Dunn to accept the changes as proposed. Ayes 4 Nays 0

GIS Salary 455

Mr. Sartor recommended reducing the Operating Supplies from \$9,600 to \$7,500 and to reduce Professional Development from \$1,800 to \$1,500 with a bottom line of \$137,358. Mr. Plunkett made a motion to approve the changes. Seconded by Ms. Andersen. Ayes 4 Nays 0.

Tax Collector 460

A motion was made by Mr. Plunkett and seconded by Ms. Andersen to approve the budget as proposed at \$153,335. Ayes 4 Nays 0.

Town Clerk 470

Mr. Sartor recommended changing Purchased Services from \$20K to \$29,600 to reflect the costs of the outside minute making service. The Town Clerk has been charging against the side fund but it needs to be a part of the budget. He also recommended reducing the Dues & Subscriptions from \$980 to \$700. The new budget bottom line would be \$244,831.

It was moved by Ms. Andersen and seconded by Mr. Dunn to approve the budget with the recommended changes. Ayes 4 Nays 0.

Town Planner 480

Mr. Gormley suggested a change in the Town Planner Wages from \$52,043 to \$49,731 to correct a clerical change.

Mr. Sartor recommended reducing the Dues & Subscriptions from \$800 to \$700 and Operating Supplies \$800 to \$600 with a bottom line of \$164,537.

A motion was made by Mr. Plunkett and seconded by Mr. Dunn to approve the recommended changes with a bottom line of \$164,537. Ayes 4 Nays 0.

Central Services 490

Mr. Sartor recommended reducing Computer Maint & Upgrades from \$226,460 to \$216,460 as well as deleting the Wages – Floater line item from \$43,763 to \$0.

A motion was made by Mr. Plunkett and seconded by Ms. Andersen to approve the recommendations. New bottom line total is \$433,275. Ayes 4 Nays 0.

Police 510

Mr. Sartor recommended reducing the Police Salaries line from \$1,680,630 to \$1,620,630, a \$60K reduction. This would still leave money to cover the salary of an officer returning from military.

Mr. Plunkett moved to approve the budget with proposed changes. Seconded by Mr. Dunn. The bottom line would be \$3,169,191. Ayes 4 Nays 0.

Building/Zoning 520

A motion was made by Mr. Plunkett and seconded by Ms. Andersen to approve the budget as presented with a bottom line of \$378,696.

CEMA 530

Ms. Andersen moved and Mr. Dunn seconded to approve the budget as presented at \$136,285. Ayes 4 Nays 0.

ACO 540

Ms. Andersen moved to approve the budget as presented at \$150,432. Mr. Plunkett seconded. Ayes 4 Nays 0.

Public Assistance 560

A motion was made by Mr. Plunkett and seconded by Ms. Andersen to approve the budget as presented at \$6,100. Ayes 4 Nays 0

Municipal Court 570

It was moved by Mr. Plunkett and seconded by Mr. Dunn to approve the budget as presented at \$10,029.

DPW Administration 610

Mr. Gormley recommended changing the salary line for the DPW Secretary Wages from \$53,245 to \$49,731 to be consistent with the Teamsters contract.

Mr. Sartor said there was a request for reclassification that was accepted by the Town Council in 2019 as well as the recommendation and reclassification by Mr. Arsenault during his budget presentation.

Mr. Sartor recommended that the DWP Secretary Wages title be changed to the reclassification as Assistant Public Works Director at a salary of \$63,219 from \$53,245. That position's longevity would also be affected and should be \$5,374. The bottom line would change to \$208,

It was moved by Mr. Dunn and seconded by Mr. Plunkett to approve the budget with the recommended changes for a bottom line of \$208,320. Ayes 4 Nays 0.

DPW Wages 620

Mr. Gormley said that after meeting with Lynn McAllister of the Conservation Commission, that the line item Purchase Services – Trails & Field Maint should be adjusted. It was placed in the budget at \$13K and Ms. McAllister was requesting \$21K. The Treasurer suggested \$17K.

Mr. Sartor recommended reducing the Operating Supplies from \$62K to \$61K, Maintenance Supplies \$150K to \$140K.

Mr. Plunkett moved and Ms. Andersen seconded to approve the budget with the above recommendations. The bottom line would be \$1,268,455. Ayes 4 Nays 0.

Building & Grounds 630

Mr. Plunkett suggested that the DPW Tree Removal be reduced from \$30K to \$26K in light of adding additional \$4K into 620 Purchased Services – Trails and Fields Maint.

It was moved by Mr. Dunn and seconded by Mr. Plunkett to reduce the DPW Tree Removal budget line from \$30K to 26K. The bottom line would become \$450,448. Ayes 4 Nays 0

Monitoring Closed Landfill 640

A motion was made by Ms. Andersen and seconded by Mr. Plunkett to approve the bottom line as presented at \$9,600. Ayes 4 Nays 0.

Wastewater 660

Mr. Dunn moved and Mr. Plunkett seconded to approve the budget as presented at \$184,282. Ayes 4 Nays 0.

Outside Agencies 720

Mr. Sartor recommended reducing Wood River Health's request from \$10K to \$7,500K, an increase of \$500 for RICAN which would go from \$4,500 to \$5K and no funding for Community 2000 Education Foundation as they reported to the Commission and they had met their \$2 million dollar endowment goals.

Mr. Dunn requested that agencies should provide the Commission in the future with audits/financials.

Mr. Plunkett moved to approve the recommended changes. Ms. Andersen seconded. The budget approved at \$29,300. Ayes 4 Nays 0.

Local Agencies 730

Mr. Gormley reported that Naval Airfield Memorial \$1,250 request should be rolled over to the DPW Budget.

It was moved by Mr. Plunkett and seconded by Ms. Andersen to reduce the Naval Airfield Memorial request of \$1,250 and approve the budget at \$322,512. Ayes 4 Nays 0.

Boards & Commissions 740

Mr. Sartor recommended reducing the Economic Improvement budget request from \$2,500 to \$1,000 based on their past expenditures. Charter Review Commission to be reduced to \$100 from \$1,000 as they have not spent any money yet from last year's budget.

Mr. Plunkett moved to approve the changes. Mr. Dunn seconded the motion. The bottom line of the budget would be \$40,485. Ayes 4 Nays 0.

Chariho Regional School District 780

Mr. Gormley stated that he had an updated number for the Chariho School Budget of \$14,082,684.

It was moved by Ms. Andersen moved and seconded by Mr. Plunkett to approve the budget as \$14,082,684.

Charlestown Ambulance Rescue Service

It was moved by Ms. Andersen and seconded by Mr. Plunkett to approve the contracted Charlestown Ambulance Rescue Service Budget at \$747,600.00. Ayes 4 Nays 0.

Senior Center 800

It was moved by Mr. Plunkett and seconded by Mr. Dunn to approve the budget as presented at \$183,683. Ayes 4 Nays 0

Recreation 810

Mr. Gormley had a change in the Recreation Salary Wage from \$59,542 to \$50,888.

It was moved by Mr. Plunkett and seconded by Mr. Dunn to approve the budget at \$259,124. Ayes 4 Nays 0.

Recreation 815

It was moved by Mr. Plunkett and seconded by Mr. Dunn to approve the budget as presented at \$181,800. Ayes 4 Nays 0.

Charlestown Beach 820

A motion was made by Mr. Plunkett and seconded by Mr. Dunn to approve the budget as presented at \$214,432.

Ninigret Park 830

Ms. Andersen moved and Mr. Plunkett seconded to approve the budget as presented at \$96,650. Ayes 4 Nays 0.

Blue Shutters 850

Mr. Plunkett moved to approve the budget as presented at \$211,184. Ms. Andersen seconded. Ayes 4 Nays 0.

Mr. Gormley will look into the increased wages for summer employees. Mr. Sartor stated the increased wages is not sustainable and a thorough research should be conducted. The Lifeguard shortage is an issue throughout the state as well as some surrounding states.

Debt Service 900

It was moved by Mr. Plunkett and seconded by Ms. Andersen to approve the budget as presented at \$488,998. Ayes 4 Nays 0.

Employee Benefits 920

Mr. Sartor recommended reducing In Lieu Health Insurance from \$12,500 to \$10K as well as reducing FICA Tax from \$600,246 to \$550,000 and Unemployment Expenses from \$10K to \$5K.

It was moved by Ms. Andersen and seconded by Mr. Dunn to approve the budget with the recommended changes at \$2,485,028.

Professional Services 940

Mr. Sartor recommended reducing the Town Solicitor line item from \$181K to 150K.

A motion was made by Mr. Plunkett and seconded by Mr. Dunn to reduce the Solicitors line item to \$150K which would make the bottom line \$272,500. Ayes 4 Nays 0.

Town Insurance 950

It was moved by Ms. Andersen and seconded by Mr. Dunn to approve the Town Insurance at \$375,000.

Council Contingency 960

Mr. Gormley had an updated figure for Collective Bargaining at \$217,804.

Mr. Plunkett requested the TA Contingency Fund for \$2,500 be removed.

It was moved by Mr. Dunn and seconded by Ms. Andersen to approve the Council Contingency at \$267,804. Ayes 4 Nays 0

Capital Transfers & Contingency 990

Mr. Sartor recommended to remove the bullet proof vests at \$34,000 as funding is available in the current police budget to purchase them. Also, to remove the \$7,500 picnic tables.

A motion was made by Mr. Plunkett and seconded by Ms. Andersen to approve the recommended reductions for a bottom line of \$318,283. Ayes 4 Nays 0

Transfer Out 995

Mr. Sartor moved to delete the \$10K for Reevaluation Fund as Mr. Swain had previously stated when he was presenting his budget that he had a second full time staff who would be available to assist with the required work. He also recommended removing the transfer of Open Space Bonds.

The transfer to Environmental Resilience & Adaptation fund will remain at 15K.

Mr. Sartor recommended increasing Transfer to Pond & Beach Preservation from \$300,000 to \$350,000. He also suggested removing the Transfer to Town Capital Maintenance Fund of \$125,000.

Ms. Andersen moved to approve the recommended changes to Transfer Out for a new bottom line of \$387,759. Mr. Plunkett seconded. Ayes 4 Nays 0

The bottom line of expenditures at \$29,276,380.

ADJOURNMENT

A motion to adjourn wat 10:58 a.m. was made by Mr. Plunkett and seconded by Ms. Andersen.

Date Approved: March 29, 2024

Susan R. Shea, CMC
Administrative Assistant