

Budget Task Force FY2018 Budget Meeting
Tuesday, January 3, 2017 at 8:00am
Selectmen's Meeting Room-Truro Town Hall
24 Town Hall Road

Present: Finance Committee Member-Roberta Lema, Town Manager-Rae Ann Palmer, Assistant Town Manager-Kelly Clark, Town Accountant-Trudi Brazil, Board of Selectmen Chair-Paul Wisotzky, Board of Selectmen Member-Robert Weinstein, Board of Selectmen Member-Maureen Burgess, Board of Selectmen Vice Chair-Jan Worthington, Building Commissioner-Russell Braun, Health/Conservation Agent-Patricia Pajaron.

Chair Wisotzky convened the meeting at 8:05am.

Building Commissioner Braun gave a brief overview of what the Department does. The primary focus is safety. They do not put out fires, but they help prevent fires. Beyond that they help buildings stand up, withstand floods and earthquakes. The Building Department also handles zoning enforcement. Between 265 and 330 building permits are issued throughout each year. 96% of the budget is for payroll and the balance is for the tools needed to do the job; regulatory books, building code, electrical code, plumbing code, ongoing education, gas and office supplies.

Selectman Burgess asked if there had been many requests for wind turbines. Building Commissioner Braun stated that there had not. The only wind turbine he could think of was from years ago and he was not sure it was even working. A small discussion was held regarding the cons of wind turbines (cost, fall zone).

Chair Wisotzky brought the conversation back to the budget by noting that the Building Commissioner is at 32 hours per week and that every year the question is posed; do we need a full time Building Inspector, should services be regionalized? He asked Building Commissioner Braun what his thoughts were on that. Building Commissioner Braun stated that it's something worth pursuing. The issue is finding the right partner. He did mention that he did not believe that Provincetown would be that partner.

Selectman Burgess asked how much time was spent on enforcement. Building Commissioner Braun explained that typically a first enforcement call is complaint driven. The next would be weather driven- something he sees while driving around town. He does not have a "beat". Selectman Burgess asked if that were something typically within the purview of the Building Inspector. Building Commissioner Braun stated that based on his experience (and that of what other towns do) it is complaint driven.

Selectman Weinstein asked about "income" since one of the goals and objectives deals with "fee driven departments". Specifically he asked to get an idea of how much of the Building Department's budget was supported by fees collected for inspections and permits. Building Commissioner estimated that approximately 1/3 of the budget is covered by fees collected. Town Manager Palmer interjected by saying that the revenues would be provided at a later date and estimating should not be introduced into the conversation. She further cautioned that a Department such as Building Inspection which is statutorily required should not be fee supported. Looking at the fees to see if they are reasonable is okay, but she would never

expect that department to be covered by their fees. Selectman Weinstein continued with a second question. He mentioned that Building Commissioner Braun had stated that there were 11 single family residential permits issued in 2016, with three of them being Habitat for Humanity homes. He wished to know how many of the permits were for homes in the seashore, which were tear-downs for larger residences. Building Commissioner Braun stated that the number was zero.

Finance Committee member Lema asked if there was a process for checking businesses on a yearly basis. She owns a business and would even entertain a fee for such an inspection. Town Manager Palmer mentioned that the licensing process, as a whole, is being looked at. Building Commissioner Braun added that there is a yearly inspection process but that businesses are typically excluded. The inspections are done on motels, schools and places of assembly but retail businesses are not included. Selectman Weinstein took the opportunity to compliment Building Commissioner Braun, and his staff, for being consistently accessible and easy to work with.

Next on the docket was a review of the Health/Conservation budget, with Health/Conservation Agent Patricia Pajaron. She started with a review of the Conservation Commission budget which includes services and memberships to professional organizations. They have one staff member, the recording secretary. The Conservation Commission is a regulation entity which looks at local bylaws, the wetland protection act, and the rivers act. Each year, Health/Conservation Agent Pajaron looks at where increases and decreases can be made. She has looked over the past three fiscal years in regards to staffing. Minutes can now be taken from the recording or from Truro TV, therefore greatly reducing the hours a staff is being paid. There was a minor addition to 5100:

- Membership for the Association of Flood Plain Managers. The Assistant Conservation Agent took the classes for certification as a Flood Plain Manager, and membership will be a service to the public along with technical assistance.

Now that there is a full complement of staff, the vernal pool certification project is ongoing. There is also a “wetlands 101” public education project with contractors. Contractors that work in the town are called in and are shown how to access information on the Assessor’s map (which has a GIS layer to it), and how to determine if they are working in a wetland area. They would also like to extend this education to homeowners in 2017. The goal with this education is to lessen enforcement. Health/Conservation Agent Pajaron did mention that she’s looking into whether the Conservation Secretary position is really needed. The minute taking can probably be absorbed by the part time office assistant position. Onsite minutes could be taken by one of the Conservation Commission members, or by the Assistant Conservation Agent, Emily Beebe.

Health/Conservation Agent Pajaron then went on to discuss the Board of Health budget. The Board of Health handles regulatory items for public health rules and regulations. The majority of the budget is staffing; Health/Conservation Agent, Assistant Conservation Agent. Included in their duties are community sanitation, traditional health agent services, support for the Conservation Commission, as well as serving on various other Boards/Committees. Changes in the budget include:

- Minimal money added for overtime (off-hours inspections and issues which arise on weekends)
- Mileage (at times both vehicles are out and use of personal vehicle is necessary)
- Some mandated services; bathing beach testing for semi-public and public beaches
- Maintenance and testing of our public supply well
- Household hazardous waste and VNA service contract are not mandated, but are services which are provided for a number of reasons (Health/Conservation Agent Pajaron listed many services which the VNA provide to the Town)

There was a discussion among the group regarding VNA services, costs, etc.

Town Manager Palmer asked that Health/Conservation Agent Pajaron talk a little bit about her projects.

- On the Board of Health side, she is helping the Board update their regulations
- Having another full time staff person is allowing her to manage the Pamet River Restoration project, Eagle Neck Creek, and East Harbor.

Selectman Burgess asked if the Board of Health was allowed to update the regulations.

Health/Conservation Agent Pajaron explained that this pertained to Town regulations. The Board of Health Regulations, under Chapter 111-Public Health, allows the Board of Health to make reasonable regulation changes.

Selectman Weinstein asked about a figure in the 5200 line for maintenance and testing of the public water supply at the Town Hall and wanted to know if that dollar amount was for the year. Health/Conservation Agent Pajaron stated that it was. Selectman Weinstein then asked if there had been any complaints from the DEP, to which she replied “no”.

Chair Wisotzky asked if there was any conversation regarding changing fees at the Transfer Station. Health/Conservation Agent Pajaron said that the changing of fees would be discussed along with the update to regulations.

Chair Wisotzky asked if there was anything related to the CIP in regard to Health or Conservation. Unanimously, Town Accountant Brazil, Town Manager Palmer, and Health/Conservation Agent Pajaron, stated “no”. Town Manager Palmer added that they were not ready to add anything in other than the culvert at East Harbor.

Chair Wisotzky continued by asking if there was anything the group needed to be aware of for the next meeting. The next departments going over their budgets will be the Council on Aging and Recreation & Beach.

Chair Wisotzky asked for a motion to adjourn the Board of Selectmen meeting at 9:05am

Selectman Weinstein made the motion to adjourn.

Selectman Burgess seconded.

So voted 4-0 in favor.

Respectfully submitted,

Noelle L. Scoullar

Paul Wisotzky, Chair

Jan Worthington, Vice-Chair

Maureen Burgess, Clerk

Jay Coburn

Robert Weinstein