

SPECIAL BOARD OF SELECTMEN'S MEETING
May 29, 2014 5:30PM

Quorum noted

5:30 PM: Meeting called to order by Chairman Moynahan.

Roll Call: Mr. Moynahan, Mr. Murphy, Mr. Beckert and Mr. Hirst.

Absent: Mr. Dunkelberger.

Pledge of Allegiance recited

Moment of Silence observed

This is a Public Informational Meeting on the Town's Budget and Referendum Articles.

5:31 PM Mr. Moynahan read a handout that highlighted how the Board achieved the proposed budget.

Mr. (Dana) Lee discussed his, the Board's, and the staff's concern with the Budget Committee's (BC) recommended levels of funding in seeking to cut almost \$500,000 out of a \$5.2 million budget and that that is more than a flat-funded budget back to 2013/2014 levels. He said that, while everyone understands the desire to keep taxes down, everyone needs to remember the entirety of Town services and capital improvements, including maintaining some \$30 million worth of roads, represents just 23% of the tax bill. He added that it feels a bit as though the BC is trying to hold taxes down, Town-wide, on the backs of the municipal services. He said that school taxes are 71% of the bill and county is 6%. He added that, in 2005, the State started breaking the Revenue Sharing Law in denying towns and cities the sales tax money they were entitled to and that has contributed to property tax increases; that Eliot is facing a loss of another \$132,700 this year, a fact barely discussed by the BC. He added that the State is distributing around 10% of what they are supposed to distribute to municipalities; that that has greatly contributed to property tax increases in the past few years. Given the Town population, traffic at the Town Office, service demands, State and federal mandates, and the need to have sustainability in long-term services and capital assets, he felt the BC recommendations were not realistic. He discussed specific examples, including Old Fields Bridge and the mandated 5-year Stormwater Plan that must be followed. He also discussed the impact to cutting reserves. He cautioned everyone to really think through what kind of budget was realistic to maintain Town services and infrastructure. He had several handouts that went into more depth and they are available at Town Hall. At this time, he introduced Ms. Kristie Rabasca from Integrated Environmental Engineering (IEE) to discuss the stormwater requirements that Eliot faced and potential problems if the Town does not meet those requirements.

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5:42 PM Ms. (Kristie) Rabasca, IEE, discussed the federally-mandated Stormwater Program, giving its history and what it was trying to accomplish; which supported the rationale for supporting the 35th article request of \$90,000 for Town Meeting vote. She said that this program came under the MS4 Stormwater Permit overseen by the EPA and was enforceable with the possibility of fines and penalties. She added that the Maine DEP came out to audit the Town's program last fall and found quite a few inadequacies with drainage, which prompted them to do a more formalized assessment of the stormwater drainage system and led to the issues that the Town would have to start addressing. Handouts with more detailed information are available at Town Hall. She stressed that, now that the program is 10 years old, the EPA is showing that they are serious, by implementing fines, about meeting the requirements of the MS4 Stormwater Permit all over the nation, not just in Eliot.

5:49 PM Ms. (Rosanne) Adams asked for clarification on the \$13,500 for engineering services regarding public education, etc.; that that didn't seem like an engineering service.

Ms. Rabasca said that it was not; that she probably put this together a little too quickly.

Ms. Adams asked for clarification on what Stormwater implementation entailed, asking if that was something the public took part in.

Ms. Rabasca said no. She explained that these had to be written for municipal facilities that have operations that might pollute stormwater – like the Transfer Station or the Public Works Department; that there were impacts from the operation of Town Hall, Police Department, and even the Parks Department.

Mr. Moynahan said that all the department heads were present for any clarifications for the public to any specific recommended budgets. He asked if there was anyone from the public who wished to speak to the Selectmen's recommended budget.

5:51 PM Ms. Adams asked for clarification regarding the \$20,000 reduction to the ECSD budget.

Mr. Moynahan said that because of the change to gross budgeting, accounting was much cleaner and that was a reflection of that.

Mr. Lee added that part of the answer was that they included the fringe benefits in each department; the standard benefits that they paid any of their employees; that those came out of the budget, not the Enterprise Fund.

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Mr. Moynahan said that, moving forward, this was a good baseline for all departments because he thought they had cleaned up a lot of the accounting issues.

5:53 PM Ms. (Rebecca) Davis, speaking as the Chair of the BC, discussed her concern that she didn't think the Town was putting in a concerted effort to address the increases in spending; that residents don't, generally, have the option of increasing their spending but cut their expenditures. She disagreed that employees had not gotten COLA increases in past years nor did the unions dictate how much the Town appropriates for salaries. She discussed her frustration that there was to be a vote to replace, not repair (as voted on last year), the bridge. She also discussed that she thought the paving line was a reasonable number as recommended by the BC of \$375,000. She also discussed her frustration with what she called charges made against the BC tonight and the effort the BC has put into the recommendations they have made.

6:01 PM Mr. Moynahan said that this Board has been accused, also, of not providing information, etc., but that was a conversation to have at another time; that the job tonight was to share how the Board came up with their recommended budget. He added that all department heads were here if there were any clarifications needed on any items.

6:02 PM Mr. Pomerleau strongly disagreed that any lack of raises led to union development or legal fees and payouts. He also discussed revenue sharing and the LD1 Cap; that the point of the Cap was to keep control over rising taxes. He voiced his concern for keeping taxes down to not unduly burden people.

6:04 PM Mr. Moynahan said that that was why the Board showed a break-down at the bottom of their handout of the \$447,240 in increases so that residents knew where they came from and could make informed decisions on what they wanted to vote for or against. He asked if there were other questions from the public.

There were no other questions for the Board or department heads.

Adjourn

There was a motion and second to adjourn the meeting at 6:08 PM.

VOTE

3-0

Chair concurs

DATE

Mr. John J. Murphy, Secretary