

Town of Saugus Finance Committee

Kenneth DePatto, Chairman

Ronald Jepson
Carl J. Mirabello
Theresa Katsos

Louis Rossi
Frank Perella

George DeDomenico, Vice-Chairman

Steven DiVirgilio
Stephen Horlick

April 18, 2018 7 p.m.
Town Hall Conference Room

The regular meeting of the Finance Committee was held on Wednesday evening, April 18, 2018, at 7 p.m. in the Town Hall Conference Room.

Members present: Chairman Ken DePatto, Vice-Chairman George DeDomenico, Ronald Jepson, Carl J. Mirabello, Frank Perella, Stephen Horlick, Theresa Katsos

Absent from the Meeting: Louis Rossi, Steven DiVirgilio

Chairman's Update: Chairman DePatto announced that the Finance Committee will combine agendas for their April 25 and May 2 meetings and complete both agendas on April 25 to make up for lost time due to inclement weather. Chairman DePatto said the Committee received the annual warrant and there were some financial articles on there, so he asked the Town Manager to get any correspondence or documents related to financial Town Meeting articles to the Finance Committee by May 2 since Town Meeting is May 7.

Saugus Department of Public Works FY19 Budget Review

Forestry

Chairman DePatto asked if all the salary increases under forestry are contractual. Town Manager Crabtree confirmed that they are. Chairman DePatto asked if there is an approximate percentage of most of the increases. Town Manager Crabtree said it depends on the union, but that they average 3%. Chairman DePatto asked how many employees are in the forestry department. Town Manager answered that there are two.

Town Manager Crabtree told the Committee that within the last 5-6 years, the Public Works Director has done a great job of identifying residents' needs and addressing backlogged issues. Overall, he said the department has made a dramatic improvement in the confidence of the public.

Mr. Jepson mentioned that he has noticed a lot of debris after storms and older trees in Town. He asked if the Town could institute a program to determine which trees need to be removed. Town Manager Crabtree said the DPW takes an active role in examining problem areas and suspect branches prior to the winter season. He also noted that the Tree Warden analyzes trees to see if rotted or need to be trimmed. Town Manager Crabtree said the Tree Committee does their best to maintain trees rather than take them down. DPW Director O'Regan said that in the summer of 2016, the DPW had tree issues that dated back to 2011 and 2012. This January was the second year in a row that every tree issue prior to the previous January had been completed. All current tree issues are now 2017 or later. Town Manager Crabtree advised Mr. Jepson to reach out to his office or use SeeClickFix to report any tree issues.

Chairman DePatto noted only one increase in professional and technical general under forestry expenses. Town Manager Crabtree explained this line item is used for vendors to address larger trees or fallen

limbs/trees. Vice-Chairman DeDomenico asked if \$25,000 had been expended to date, and Ms. Hatch answered that \$25,000 had been expended by mid-December. Mr. O'Regan said that number is currently approximately \$32,000.

Administration

Under salaries, Ms. Katsos asked why the uniform stipend line item went up from \$600 to \$1,200. It was determined that the line item should be \$600, not \$1,200, and that it likely goes to the Assistant Director.

Mr. Mirabello noted that the overtime seems light at \$1,000. He asked if that number is consistent. Town Manager Crabtree answered that this is for when clerks come in to work during storms.

Vice-Chairman DeDomenico asked who the recipients of the differential emergency duty are. Town Manager Crabtree explained this would be union employees who are on-call and go out to assess emergency situations during off-hours. Mr. Jepson asked if Mr. O'Regan is at Town Manager Crabtree's on-call 24/7, and Mr. O'Regan answered yes.

In looking at administration expenses, Chairman DePatto noted that it is level-funded.

Engineering

Town Manager Crabtree explained that this is not part of the DPW budget. This salary position would replace the existing part-time engineering position. Right now, the Town has a part-time engineer who works four hours a week. Mr. O'Regan has been handling all engineering needs. Town Manager Crabtree said this salary in the budget is a placeholder number to gauge the market. Mr. Horlick asked if this position would be involved in the engineering of any DPW work within the Town. Town Manager Crabtree explained that this position would not be doing design work for water and sewer. Instead, they would work with the planning department, planning board, and DPW on projects such as the parks and playgrounds and new developments in Town. Right now, Mr. O'Regan is doing all of this.

Highway Division

Chairman DePatto asked how many employees are working within this department. Town Manager Crabtree answered that there are five.

Mr. Jepson asked what is going on with the Chapter 90 funds. Town Manager Crabtree said the funding is \$632,000 this year. He said it's on the warrant but that it does not need additional appropriation since it's a grant.

Mr. Jepson asked how many times a year we are street sweeping. Town Manager Crabtree responded that the Town has it done twice a year, and part of the contract includes 18 sweeps on main roads each year to be used anytime. During the summer, the Town sweeps main roads about twice a month. Mr. O'Regan said the Town is about 50% done with the spring cleaning, and that this is the most debris the Town has collected in his four years here. Chairman DePatto asked where debris collected during street sweeping are disposed of. Mr. O'Regan answered that there are numerous uses, such as for back fill or as a back-up for berm.

Mr. Horlick asked when catch basins are cleaned. He commented that many are clogged or covered with debris. Mr. O'Regan said every catch basin is cleaned once every three years, and they are swept when the roads are swept. Mr. Horlick asked about catch basins on side roads that are only swept twice a year. If those are clogged, Mr. O'Regan said to call them in.

Parks Division

Chairman DePatto announced that this division is all level-funded. Town Manager Crabtree said the Town could use more money in these areas, but that it's consistent with the maintenance of the parks and safety issues. He reminded the Committee that there was previously a \$17,000 budget for the parks and playgrounds that wasn't used for what it should have been. He explained that each year the Town is chipping away to deal with the structural and safety issues. He said he will be looking at a fields master plan with the new schools coming online.

Mr. Mirabello asked if there would be an increase or decrease to the parks maintenance. Town Manager Crabtree explained that he is looking at the manufacturing requirements for cleaning with the new parks, especially with the new rubber. He said these costs will gradually increase because the Town is protecting our investment. Mr. Mirabello said he can see the difference with the parks and that they are looking very nice. He said the increase is understandable and he thanked the Town Manager.

Snow and Ice

Chairman DePatto announced the snow and ice salaries are \$20,000, which he said is the same as the previous year. He asked for an exact number of where we are now. Ms. Hatch said it's around \$875,000, but that only very small bills are still coming in. She estimated that it would be under \$900,000 this year.

Street Lighting

Mr. Horlick asked if a company changes out light bulbs. The Town Manager answered that there is a vendor that replaces street lights. Mr. Horlick asked if the vendor replaces the lights with the most cost-effective lighting so that the cost of electricity goes down. The Town Manager explained that the vendor uses the best lighting out there that fits into the existing fixture. The Town Manager clarified that this is not LED. Mr. Horlick asked if this option was included in the contract or it is at the discretion of the vendor, and Mr. O'Regan answered that there is an option in the contract to switch out to LED lights. The Town Manager said that the Town is looking into this, but there were many complaints regarding the first generation of LED lights, including that they are extremely bright and may shine into residents' homes.

Mr. Jepson made a recommendation to prepare a statement for Town Meeting since the energy electricity street lighting was doubled and the energy electricity street light repair and maintenance was about cut in half. Chairman DePatto said the Committee could include a footnote at the bottom of the page, or just be prepared to answer the question at Town Meeting to explain the disparity.

Motor Vehicle

Chairman DePatto noted that motor vehicle maintenance division expenses has decreased. Mr. Jepson explained that the Committee has periodically requested an updated version of the vehicle list. Chairman DePatto requested an updated version of the vehicle list.

Waste Collection

Chairman DePatto asked if this is for one full time employee, and Ms. Hatch clarified it is for one full-time employee and one part-time employee.

Chairman DePatto asked if that was a contractual increase under other prop related rubbish haul going from \$775,000 to \$875,000. Town Manager Crabtree explained that the industry is changing with hauling issues and the contract is up in July so the Town is expecting an increase. Mr. Perella asked if they are looking at a 3-year contract instead of five. The Town Manager said some companies are looking at a 10-year contract, and others are looking at a one-year contract. He said there is a lot of flux right now, but that we are expecting quite an increase. Mr. Perella asked if the community gets any incentive for greater recyclables. The Town Manager answered that in the past they would, but now it is not as profitable with certain recycling restrictions so it becomes a direct hauling cost to them. Mr. Horlick asked what would

happen if laws go into effect to remove organics from collection. The Town Manager said the hauler would need to do whatever is necessary to abide by that.

Cemetery

Mr. Jepson asked if 2019 is the last year for union contracts. Chairman DePatto said he planned to ask for a contracts update at the end of the meeting.

Mr. Jepson asked why office supplies are doubled up under cemetery division expenses. Ms. Hatch explained that they are trying to do more computerization and other upgrades in the office, which leads to the cost of toner, among other items.

Parks

Chairman DePatto asked if there are two full-time employees in this department, and Town Manager Crabtree confirmed that there are. Chairman DePatto announced this division is level funded. Chairman DePatto said that parks expenses were already covered, so the Committee is all set there.

At the end of the meeting, Chairman DePatto asked for a verbal update on what the Town has enforced for contracts and for how many years. Town Manager Crabtree said that all six Town-wide contracts are in agreement and they go through next June 30, 2019. Chairman DePatto confirmed that we have one year left on all labor rests on the municipal side and are currently negotiating out. Town Manager Crabtree said we would be negotiating next fiscal year.

In closing, Chairman DePatto said the Committee will be taking up the Annual Town Meeting in two weeks. He asked the Town Manager to get any pertaining information to the Committee. Mr. Jepson and Chairman DePatto planned to discuss the possibility of marrying two more weeks of meetings in order to make up for lost time.

The meeting adjourned at 8 p.m.