

York County Budget Committee Meeting Minutes for May 1, 2019

Members Present: John Sylvester, Tiffany Brendt, Chip Harlow, David James, Ed Koytko, Joe Hanslip, Marc Lessard, Kathy Chase, Mike Perro, Marshall Archer

1. **Introductions and Welcome:** John J. Sylvester, Chair
 - a. Swearing in of Members- Joe Hanslip swore in new members.

2. **Review of information packet** (please let John/Kathy know if your contact information is incorrect)

3. **Review of FY'20 proposed budget, Greg Zinser, County Manager (Q&A)**

County Manager Greg Zinser reviewed the budget and informed all that it includes a 2.42% increase. The Commissioners asked for a status quo budget this year. Increases are due to wages, benefits and hiring of additional personnel with hiring dates of 7-1-19 so now this year they are a full year wage(s) in the budget. Then, explained Mr. Zinser, the Commissioners addressed the new requests. The Sheriff had two (requests) and one was approved- the office administrator with a January 1, 2020 start date.

Supplemental information- County Manager Zinser reviewed this section that includes the taxes for each town and the LD 1 assessment which is \$271,000 below our LD1 assessment. He added that the budget does show some loss of revenue on the deeds side.

Chip Harlow asked if the cost of the District Attorney's office is affecting the budget? The County Manager replied, not yet. He added that we don't know what will happen at this point with the D.A. At this point, the DA will be housed in Alfred. David James asked what happen to the proposal that was being discussed? County Manager Zinser stated that "too many hands are in the pot". He added that the Bill is getting hung up in the Governor's office. He believes the State wants to sell the buildings and return the money to the State Treasurer. It won't come without costs keeping the D.A. staff in Alfred as there will be transporting of prisoners and documents to Biddeford.

4. **Election of Budget Committee Chair, Vice-Chair and Secretary**

(Please note: Kathy Dumont, Administrative Assistant to the County Manager has offered to continue as the Committee Secretary.)

Tiffany Brendt nominated John Sylvester as Chairman. Joe Hanslip seconded the motion. Vote: unanimous.

David James nominated Joe Hanslip as Vice-Chairman. Tiffany Brendt seconded the motion. Vote: unanimous.

Chip Harlow motioned to nominate Kathy Dumont as secretary. Mike Perro seconded the motion. Vote: unanimous

5. **Review and possible action by the Committee on the budgets of the following departments:** John asks committee if they wish to proceed with the items below.

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- Contingency- Marc Lessard motioned to approve the contingency line in the budget. Joe Hanslip seconded the motion.

DISCUSSION: Joe asked if the contingency funds are not used in a particular year does it build up? Greg Zinser replied that it goes to fund balance. He stated that in the prior year we used \$25,000.

Tiffany Brendt asked, it wasn't put in reserve? County Manager Zinser replied that it is put into the undesignated fund balance and can be used if the Commissioners vote so. Marc Lessard asked if it has to be a unanimous or simple majority vote. Greg Zinser replied simple majority but there are specific statutory rules to take the funds out: the money can only be used for truly, unbudgeted items. He continued that our policy states that we should raise \$100,000 but we don't.

David James asked how much money is in undesignated? The County Manager replied there is close to \$7 million with \$3 million in reserves, \$1 million in designated for proprietary projects, such as Deeds preservation. The undesignated, unrestricted is approximately \$2.6 million with our goal being \$3million.

Vote: unanimous

- Public Agencies- Marc Lessard motioned to approve the public agencies budget. Tiffany Brendt seconded the motion. Vote: unanimous
- Debt- Marc Lessard motioned to approve the debt service budget. Tiffany Brendt seconded the motion. Vote: unanimous
- Treasurer- Marc Lessard motioned to approve the Treasurer's budget. Tiffany Brendt seconded the motion. Vote: unanimous
- Commissioners/Gov Body- Marc Lessard motioned to approve the Commissioners' budget. Mike Perro seconded the motion. Marc Lessard made an amendment to his motion that the annual payrate (for Commissioners) is frozen with no increase. Tiffany Brendt seconded the motion.

DISCUSSION: Marc Lessard commented that since 1990's, he has been doing city work and has had no pay raise for 30 years. The Mayor's position in his city is a \$10,000 position. To go in line with my city, Marc Lessard commented that he feels they (Commissioners) don't need a 4.2% increase.

Chip Harlow asked when the last time was that the Commissioners got a raise? County Manager Zinser replied- every year. John Sylvester asked if this was consistent with other raises? The County Manager replied, yes. Chip Harlow added that the pay is frozen in his town, too.

Kathy Chase asked for clarification of Marc Lessard's motion and asked that does it mean no increase in the future? Marc Lessard replied, no increase from the past fiscal year.

David James stated that he would be willing to support it but that he doubted it would get approved.

Marc Lessard responded that once passed it would have to go through. He continued that there would be no opportunity for the Commissioners to change the line item. He added that he means no disrespect to what the Commissioners do, but, other elected officials have not received increases.

Mike Perro stated that is not true as several do. Ed Katyco informed all that in Kennebunk, the selectmen voted not to increase their wages but the budget board voted to approve the budget (with their wage increases).

County Manager Zinser reminded the committee that the budget is under their control but, policy is not. He continued that the Commissioners would retain the authority to implement the raise anyway. He commented that he doesn't know what they'd do. It's gone both ways in the past. Sometimes they've found the money from another place to fund items. Mr. Zinser gave the example of when the Budget Committee directed the Commissioners to eliminate benefits and the Commissioners did honor this. David James stated that he would rather reduce the 4.2% rather than give them no raise.

County Manager Zinser explained it is a budgeting issue as it was under budget last year. They are only eligible for a 2% raise. Joe Hanslip replied to the County Manager that he doesn't understand the County Manager's explanation. The County Manager explained that the amount of money that they are actually going to be receiving is only 2% as the line was underbudgeted coming into this budget.

Tiffany Brendt informed all that we voted against getting an increase in our wages but our budget committee said everyone gets a COLA. She continued that they (Commissioners) will give it to themselves regardless so they'll find the money somewhere. County Manager Zinser responded that this is a policy issue.

Chip Harlow asked how is the 2% calculated? The County Manager replied, by policy. Mike Perro stated that he is not opposed to a 2% increase and added that the Commissioners are the best board we've had for a long time. He continued, to say, "Kudos to all three entities. They do a fine job and they're worthy of a 2% increase."

Marshall Archer asked are we debating a \$1,000? County Manager Zinser replied no, the \$2,200. Marc Lessard asked how many official meetings are conducted on an annual basis? The County Manager replied that the Commissioners meet two times a month. Marc Lessard asked how long the the meetings last to which the County Manager replied, about an hour on average. Marc Lessard responded that comes out to 36 hours a year. He continued, "*This is said with no disrespect. Our mayor only makes \$10,000.00 and works full time. He works more in one week than they do one year. I'm not saying they don't do a good job.*"

John Sylvester asked County Manager Zinser is it not accurate that they (Commissioners) have other responsibilities? County Manager

Zinser replied that, yes, a lot of them belong to committees so they put in a lot of time on those committees. He added that one (Commissioner) spends two days a month in Augusta for some of those committees. Another Commissioner drives to Brunswick once or twice a month. We also have a Commissioner who serves on the Board of Southern Maine Regional Planning and Development Commission. John Sylvester asked if the Commissioners are compensated for travel? County Manager Zinser, replied that outside of the county, yes they are.

Tiffany Brendt stated that her Board meets every week but that's not all she does for the select board. She added that she feels 2% seems about right and that the Commissioners will probably vote to give themselves that.

Chip Harlow agreed that 2% seems reasonable but that his concern is that it is 2% every year. He added that his town council has had no raises for 10 years. He stated that he has a hard time with the policy that gives them a 2% raise every year.

Joe Hanslip stated that he feels a 2% policy is reasonable. He added that the Commissioners bear a significant responsibility and he believes it sends a bad message to the Board of Commissioners if we (B.C.) support Mr. Lessard's amendment.

Kathy Chase stated that the 4.2% was a flag and that she didn't realize the policy was 2% every year.

David James moved the amendment. Vote 2 (Chip Harlow and Marc Lessard)-8 opposed . Motion does not carry.

Kathy Chase asked if the Budget Committee can amend the policy.

Joe Hanslip replied that only the Commissioners can.

County Manager Zinser reminded the Budget Committee in the past the Budget Committee has sent a letter to the Commissioners with items they have "heartburn" with. He continued that he thinks they would give the issue serious consideration.

The original motion to approve the Commissioners budget as presented in the budget, was voted on with a vote of 7-2 with Chip Harlow and Marc Lessard opposed. Motion passed.

6. Other matters, Date/Time/Location of Budget Committee meetings, etc.

The Budget Committee decided to keep meetings at 6:30 on Wednesdays and end at 8:30 unless a majority agrees to go beyond the 8:30 time.

John asked the committee which departments they would like at the next meeting?

Kathy Chase stated that she would like the people that run the Layman Way Center to give an update.

County Manager Greg Zinser commented that one of the differences this year is that the budget, as presented, has no controversy. He added that it was a smooth

budget process for us this year. Mike Perro replied that in the past we would find out from the department head that they asked for something more and we never saw that information. He asked the County Manager was anything snuffed out (of the budget presented to the Committee this year)?

The County Manager responded that the Sheriff made two (budget) requests-one for an office administrator and partial funding for a school resource officer. It was an amicable decision that “we are not ready to go down that road” (referring to school resource officer). The Board has maintained that any town wanting a contract deputy should be fully funding the cost. RSU 57 is having an issue and they are looking to reduce the money that they contribute as they don’t need the person during the summer months. Mr. Zinser continued that there have been concerns from other towns in the past about subsidizing contract deputies. The School district was asking for a waiver and they were turned down.

David James agreed that he would like to get an update on Layman Way and the justification for the office manager position from the Sheriff.

Tiffany Brendt commented that the contract deputy in her town is not as smooth as Mr. Zinser described it. She stated that the situation is they don’t have control over his hours. The County Manager replied that he was not saying the contract deputy program is not without it’s issues and that they can talk about issues. Tiffany clarified that it is not the fault of Darren (Cyr-the contract deputy).

Mike Perro stated that he would like to hear why there is a 7+ % increase in EMA. County Manager Zinser explained that is due to a position previously funded for 6 months but now in the budget for a full year.

Marc Lessard suggested that due to possible scheduling conflicts, he would ask the Committee to let the Manager have an “on deck” list of budgets from departments so to speak. For example, Mr. Lessard stated the budgets that have no change from prior year and that way we can “knock out other budgets”.

7. Public Comment

John Sylvester stated, that on behalf of the Budget Committee, he would like to extend his appreciation to Cliff Emery, Jack Reetz and Art Tardif for their participation on the Budget Committee.

8. Agenda for next meeting scheduled for Wednesday, May 8, 2019

As stated above, it was decided by the Committee to invite Sheriff King, EMA Director, Art Cleaves and Bob Dawber and staff from the Layman Way Recovery Center.

9. Adjournment

Chip Harlow motioned to adjourn. Marc Lessard seconded the motion. Vote unanimous. Meeting adjourned at 7:48 p.m.