

IPSWICH SELECT BOARD
Meeting of Wednesday, January 30, 2019
Ipswich Town Hall | 25 Green Street

Pursuant to Open Meeting Law M.G.L. Chapter 30A, §§18-25, written notice posted by the Town Clerk and delivered to all Board members, a meeting of the Select Board was held on Wednesday, January 30, 2019 at 7:00pm in Meeting Room A.

With a quorum present, Mr. Whitmore called the meeting to order at 7:03pm.

Board Members present: William Whitmore, Vice Chair; Linda Alexson; Edward Rauscher

Board Members not present: Nishan Mootafian, Chair; William Craft

Also present: Anthony Marino, Town Manager; Eileen Page, Recording Secretary

Abbreviations Used: FY20, Fiscal Year 2020; ZBA, Zoning Board of Appeals

Public Information: Agenda, Meeting Packet

Welcome/Announcements

Mr. Whitmore reminded attendees and viewers that the Select Board will meet every Monday through March for regular meeting business and budget hearings for FY20.

Citizen Queries

Phil Goguen (4 Kingfisher Road) would like to see an overall 5% decrease in the FY20 budget. He also encouraged viewers of the meeting to get more involved, and take advantage of Town Meeting by asking questions and voting.

FY20 Budget Review: Planning Board

Glenn Gibbs (Director of Planning and Development) and Ethan Parsons (Senior Planner) appeared before the Board to discuss the Planning Department's FY20 budget. Current projects include development of a Community Development Plan. The Planning Board is unanimously in favor of one particular consulting firm, and is completing a reference check. Major budget changes for FY20 include the removal of funding for the Farmers Market. Mr. Gibbs reported that the Market struggled last year due to lack of investment from the farming community. Mr. Whitmore suggested that perhaps the funding could be rerouted into hiring a student intern to act as a coordinator for the Farmers Market.

Ms. Alexson asked Mr. Gibbs to estimate how much money the Town has taken into the Affordable Housing Trust in payments made in lieu of building just affordable housing. Mr. Gibbs and Mr. Parsons estimated somewhere between \$150,000 and \$200,000 over the last five years. Mr. Marino reminded members of the Board that the Affordable Housing Trust is scheduled to provide the Board with an update at a March meeting.

Mr. Whitmore made note of the fact that Mr. Gibbs will be retiring this year, and asked for the projected director's salary line to be explained. The projection is in line with what an experienced director would be paid. Because Mr. Gibbs will be collecting vacation pay for three weeks in July, the figure allows for flexibility in paying Mr. Gibbs and paying a newly onboarded director at the same time.

Phil Goguen (4 Kingfisher Road) asked Mr. Gibbs a variety of questions regarding the history of his and Mr. Parsons' positions. Mr. Gibbs has been the Director of Planning and Development for 25 years, a title held by his predecessor. Mr. Parsons has held the position of Senior Planner for four years. Mr. Goguen asked if Mr. Gibbs and Mr. Parsons are two people doing the job of one, to which Mr. Gibbs clarified that his position focuses on economic development, while Mr. Parson handles day to day activities of the Planning Board. Mr. Goguen would like to see these two jobs combined into one in an effort to save money.

Heidi Paek (Planning Board Vice Chair) spoke to the value of Mr. Parsons' work, stating that he goes above and beyond, and that Complete Streets and dam feasibility grants that have been brought into the Town have been largely due to Mr. Parsons' efforts. She is in favor of the proposed budget.

FY20 Budget Overview: Open Space

Mr. Gibbs, Hannah Wilbur (Open Space Manager), and Beth O'Connor (Open Space Steward) appeared before the Board to discuss the proposed FY20 Open Space budget. Currently, the department manages over 500 acres of protected land, and oversees more than 1,000 acres of privately conserved land. The Pony Express fields will open to the public in the springtime. In the upcoming budget, Open Space would like to restart their summer internship program.

Mr. Rauscher asked about Ms. O'Connor's process of securing volunteers for projects. Ms. O'Connor stated that she does outreach to volunteers who have expressed interest, and has recently been contacted by a Girl Scout troop leader. In the past, she has worked with Lori LaFrance (Ipswich High School) and her students to focus on environmental sustainability projects. Open Space Committee members are always invited to assist on projects, but their main focuses are land acquisition and protection.

The Open Space bond is currently \$4,000,000. While no specific properties were named to be in the Committee's sights in the next eighteen months, Mr. Rauscher voiced support for acquiring more open space.

Ms. Alexson asked about Open Space funding sources. Mr. Gibbs stated that it is partly funded through outside sources, such as the New England Biolabs, whose last payment will be made this year. The company has been paying \$30,000 annually since 2004. The department has earmarked other funds, such as the Town's \$28,000 a year lease with AT&T. Currently, the department is at risk for draining one of their funds, which would affect the jobs of Ms. Wilbur and Ms. O'Connor in 2023. Mr. Marino stated that he had been made aware of this issue, and that he is working with Sarah Johnson (Finance Director) to find alternative funds. Currently, Ms. Wilbur works 19 hours a week with no benefits, and Ms. O'Connor works 30 hours a week with benefits.

Phil Goguen (4 Kingfisher Road) asked Mr. Gibbs if he would be more willing to cut hours worked or employees. Mr. Gibbs declined to answer the question. Mr. Goguen asked what portion of the hotel tax is applied to the Planning Department funds; Mr. Gibbs reported that it is 4%.

FY20 Budget Overview: Conservation Commission

Mr. Gibbs and Alicia Geilan (Conservation Agent) appeared before the Board to discuss the Conservation Commission's proposed FY20 budget. Ms. Geilan reported her department's most significant challenges to be a lack of sufficient staffing and staffing hours. She stated that if her administrative assistant was increased to full time status, administrative tasks could be designated and Ms. Geilan would be able to spend more time in the field, minimizing construction violations. She also reported doing most of the department's grant work on her own time.

Mr. Rauscher asked about violation tracking, and Ms. Geilan estimated that about one third of construction projects are issued citations.

Mr. Whitmore asked how much of the department's work is seasonal. Ms. Geilan answered that there is typically more work to be done from April through October, but this year there were seventeen new permit applications presented in January. She has previously had a summer intern that was very helpful, but the department would thrive best with full time administrative staff. She will continue to request a full-time admin every budget cycle until the position is filled.

FY20 Budget Overview: Historical Commission

Mr. Gibbs presented the Historical Commission's proposed FY20 budget. The Commission is seeking a \$975 increase to be used towards hiring an employee to digitally catalogue historical records. While the amount will not cover pay to complete the project, it will begin "chipping away." The Commission will also continue to seek out volunteers to contribute to the cataloguing.

Mr. Whitmore suggested that this may be a project better assigned to the Library's current archivist.

Ms. Alexson questioned the requested \$2,100 designated for “plaques and flags,” wondering if new signage should be expected to be purchased every year, as only \$98 was spent on signage in 2018. Mr. Gibbs clarified that some historic interpretive signs have been privately funded.

FY20 Budget Overview: Zoning Board of Appeals

Mr. Gibbs presented the Zoning Board of Appeals’ proposed FY20 budget. Ms. Alexson asked for clarification on the “salary” line. Mr. Gibbs explained that this refers to the Zoning Administrator, and she is referred to as the “Zoning Agent” in the budget. The administrator also acts as the minutes secretary for ZBA meetings.

Phil Goguen (4 Kingfisher Road) expressed concern over a \$2,100 figure relating to signage, asking if the “advertisements” would be paid for by citizens. Mr. Gibbs clarified that the requested funds would only be applied to “historic interpretive signage,” and no advertisements are being requested.

FY20 Budget Overview: Public Health

Colleen Fermon (Director of Public Health) appeared before the Board to present the Public Health Department’s proposed FY20 budget. The department plans to hold a training in March to assist food establishment operators in coming up to code on new regulations. The department also plans to look into existing DNA regulations, and how they will influence New England Biolabs and a high school science lab. The department is also conducting a study in cooperation with other Cape Ann communities to look at tobacco usage. The department also recently prohibited the sale of tobacco products to individuals under 21 in conjunction with a new state regulation. In the FY20 budget, the department is seeking to increase the health inspector’s hours to 5.4 hours a week funded through the General Fund, and 12 hours a week funded by revolving accounts. Additionally, the department is seeking to increase the Public Health Nurse’s schedule from five hours per week to five and a half hours per week, citing a need for more time to follow up on communicable diseases such as Rocky Mountain Fever, influenza, and tick-borne illnesses.

Phil Goguen (4 Kingfisher Road) asked what line item “Other Purchased Services” refers to. Ms. Fermon explained that this covers the 200 greenhead traps placed in the salt marshes every year, at \$78 per trap. The Town does not receive any reimbursement from the state for these traps. Former Town Manager Robin Crosbie secured a three-year contract that will keep this price steady.

FY20 Budget Overview: Code Enforcement

James Bone (Building Commissioner; Director of Code Enforcement; ADA Coordinator) appeared before the Board to present the Building Department’s proposed FY20 budget. He discussed his first few months in the position, stating that a significant effort has been made to improve record maintenance and storage by going primarily paperless, which reduces work duplication.

Ms. Alexson asked why all Building Department employees don’t fall under a “Permanent Part Time” status. Mr. Bone clarified that “Permanent Other” often refers to consultants such as plumbing and electrical inspectors.

Vote: Mr. Rauscher moved to approve the presented budgets with the proviso that they may be revisited at a later date in the budget cycle, and Ms. Alexson seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

Town Manager Report

Mr. Marino is finalizing an agreement with the chosen Public Safety Facilities vendor. He will have a conference call to discuss details of the agreement on Thursday morning.

New Business

None.

Old Business

None.

Miscellaneous and Correspondence

None.

Vote: Ms. Alexson moved to adjourn, and Mr. Rauscher seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

The Select Board adjourned at 9:07pm.

*Respectfully submitted by Eileen G. Page
02.01.19*