

IPSWICH SELECT BOARD
Meeting of Monday, February 4, 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 Monday, February 4, 2019 at 8:00pm in Meeting Room A.

With a quorum present, Mr. Mootafian called the meeting to order at 8:00pm.

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

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

Abbreviations used: DPW, Department of Public Works; FY20, Fiscal Year 2020; ERRB, Essex Regional Retirement Board;

Public Information: Agenda; Meeting Packet

Welcome/Announcements

Mr. Mootafian reminded residents of upcoming Select Board meetings.

- Monday, February 11: Budget business only.
- Tuesday, February 19: Full meeting, with budget items on the agenda.
- Monday, February 25: Budget business only.
- Monday, March 4: Full meeting, with budget items on the agenda.

Citizen Queries

Phil Goguen (4 Kingfisher Road) asked for a status update on the Town's use of Open Checkbook. Mr. Marino expects to have it ready by the end of February. Mr. Goguen asked for an update on the use of Dude Solutions. Mr. Marino stated that it is already in use, and will be available to all Town staff once a Facilities Needs Assessment is completed. Mr. Goguen asked when the School budget will be available to the public. Mr. Marino advised that the School departments are still working on their budgets, and they will be presented to the Select Board in March. Mr. Goguen asked if the DPW has a Board or Commission. Mr. Rauscher clarified that because the DPW is not an independent authority with the ability to set and raise fees, they do not have a commission. The Town Manager regularly meets with the staff for updates.

FY20 Budget Review: Purchasing

Frank Antonucci (Purchasing Director) appeared before the Board to present the Purchasing Department's proposed FY20 budget. The department's budget is level-funded and contains only what it costs to run the office. Mr. Antonucci is responsible for handling procurement, insurance claims, and employee safety trainings.

Ms. Alexson asked for clarification of the "selling of unused/surplus property" listed under the department's accomplishments. Mr. Antonucci stated that he has sold an unused Library television for \$53 on Municibids.com. He also sold an unused piano from the Council on Aging. Ms. Alexson asked if this practice could be applied to Town vehicles and police cruisers. Mr. Antonucci stated that cruisers are typically repurposed for other departments, and the DPW vehicles and plows are disposed of using a competitive bidding process. Ms. Alexson asked if the purchase of keypad voting devices should be something put out to bid. Mr. Antonucci stated that this would depend on the amount of money being spent, but he would be happy to assist in any way.

Mr. Craft asked Mr. Antonucci about his involvement in identifying potential grants for the Town. Mr. Antonucci answered that while he assists in grant writing, departments are typically cognizant of grants available to them and begin the process on their own. He did, however, assist the ReCreation Department in the compilation of a logic model to be presented to funders for The Switch Rideable Artscape. Mr. Antonucci extended an open offer to any department heads that would like assistance in grant writing.

Phil Goguen (4 Kingfisher Road) asked for clarification regarding the paperwork process for the approval of a Town purchase. Sarah Johnson (Finance Director) was present and explained that any purchase over \$1,000 requires a Purchase Order, which is signed at various thresholds verifying that Best Business Practices were followed. Purchases under \$1,000 are still signed by a department head and reviewed by the Town Accountant. For all purchases, department heads must sign a cover sheet that includes the accounts that a purchase should be charged to. This Schedule of Payments is passed to the Accounts Payable Clerk and entered into the Town's software system. A warrant is generated, and signed by both the Town Accountant and Town Manager.

FY20 Budget Review: Assessor

The Assessor was unavailable. The department will be rescheduled to present at another meeting.

FY20 Budget Review: Treasurer

Kevin Merz (Treasurer/Collector) appeared before the Board to present the Treasurer's Office proposed FY20 budget. The office is made up of four staff members. Mr. Merz has been the Treasurer for 15 years; Corinna Warner (Assistant Treasurer/Collector and Parking Clerk) has been with the Town of 17 years, and Ann Wright (Collections Clerk) has been with the Town for seven years. Mr. Merz praised his staff's work ethic, attention to detail, and exceptional customer service. In the past year, Mr. Merz has attended classes and led classes to train new municipal Treasurers, taken over the payment of all municipal debt, and been reelected for a tenth year on the Essex Regional Retirement Board.

Going forward, the department's goals include minimizing liabilities for outside fraudulent activity, and supporting staff development. Mr. Merz informed the Board that Ms. Warner has recently passed the Treasurers Exam. While he doesn't mean to imply that a succession plan should be on the Board's radar, Mr. Merz values having educated staff and the contribution Ms. Warner's education adds to the functionality of the department.

Ms. Alexson asked why the "permanent wages" percentage increase was almost doubled for FY20. Mr. Merz explained that this is due to a Leap Year in 2020, which brings employees from a 52 week pay to a 52.4 week pay, adding two additional days to their paychecks. Ms. Alexson asked if the Parking Clerk is an additional part time position. Mr. Merz clarified that Ms. Warner works an additional two hours a week and receives a stipend for the Parking Clerk position, and holds dispute hearings. Ms. Alexson asked how much money is being taken in through the sale of beach stickers to Ipswich residents. Mr. Merz reported \$30,000 annually, with about \$160,000 taken in from the Trustees. Techniques to streamline services between purchases at the Town Clerk office and the Treasurer's office were discussed, but Mr. Merz expressed concern that having a one-stop purchase location would increase wait times for residents.

Mr. Rauscher noted that when the beach sticker agreement was written, the fee of the sticker was intended to only cover the upkeep of boardwalks and parking lots.

Phil Goguen (4 Kingfisher Road) asked what the dollar amount increase was from FY19 to FY20, and how it compared to previous years. Mr. Merz answered that the operating budget is level-funded. The salary budget for FY19 was \$203,463 and the proposed salary budget for \$207,194, for an increase of \$3,731. Mr. Goguen asked if that increase could be cut out completely, and Mr. Merz replied that to effectively run the department, it could not. Mr. Goguen asked Mr. Merz to bring the Board up to date with changes made at the ERRB over the last few years, and Mr. Merz declined, requesting that the questions be kept on topic with the budget discussion.

Mr. Whitmore asked Mr. Goguen to be conscious of asking repeated questions. He assured Mr. Goguen that the Board understands he would like to see the budget cut by 5%, but that is not possible, and questions should be kept to line-specific inquiries.

FY20 Budget Review: Information Technology

Greg Parachojuk (IT Director) appeared before the Board to present the IT Department's proposed FY20 budget. The department consists of Mr. Parachojuk, one other full-time employee, and one part time employee who is in the office two days a week. In 2018 the department implemented email archiving using Microsoft Office 365, increased backup system capabilities, and averaged about 73 work requests per month. One of the larger projected expenses for FY20 is a security audit to examine the Town's computer systems. Mr. Parachojuk mentioned that in the future, hiring a GIS specialist should be on the Board's radar.

Mr. Whitmore asked for clarification regarding the IT Specialist's salary allocation. Mr. Parachojuk explained that because the position is shared between Town offices and the Utilities offices, the salary is paid out of various accounts. The Utilities department paid a larger portion of the salary in FY19, so for FY20, the Town will take on a larger portion. The actual salary figure will not be changing.

Mr. Craft asked when the Town last conducted a security audit, and Mr. Parachojuk reported that this will be the first one. He stated that much of the IT industry today is centered on cybersecurity, and Mr. Craft voiced support for the audit, stating that this line item should not even be considered when looking for budget cuts.

Phil Goguen (4 Kingfisher Road) expressed displeasure at being "belittled" for advocating for budget cuts. Mr. Rauscher assured Mr. Goguen that that was not the Board's intent, and noted Mr. Goguen's helpful suggestions in the past. He asked that Mr. Goguen's questions be kept to line specific items. Mr. Goguen also expressed that he feels new computers will be beneficial to the Town's productivity.

FY20 Budget Review: Town Clerk, Election and Registrations

Pam Carakatsane (Town Clerk) appeared before the Board to present the Town Clerk's proposed FY20 budget. In 2018, Ms. Carakatsane was able to implement Poll Pads at both Town Meeting and early voting, which checked in 2,900 voters. She also purchased new voting booths that are easier to assemble and disassemble. In FY20, Ms. Carakatsane would like to establish an online dog registration, and is waiting for the reports of other Clerks in the area before settling on a platform. She would also like to improve meeting posting procedures, and would like to begin using platforms outside of Civic Plus to do so. The Town Clerk FY20 budget is level-funded. There was \$1,250 added to the Elections budget for a maintenance fee of the Poll Pads. She also reported that the Town received a \$1,300 stipend for opening on a Saturday to accommodate Early Voting.

Mr. Craft expressed his support for the Poll Pads, as they have saved time and increased accuracy.

Mr. Whitmore asked who qualifies as a "temporary, part-time" employee. Ms. Carakatsane replied that these are the election workers. Although election workers are exempt from a minimum wage, the Town pays \$11 an hour to most workers, and those with more responsibility are paid \$12 an hour. Anyone can sign up to be an election worker, and Ms. Carakatsane noted that when voters write-in illegitimate candidates, it costs the taxpayers additional funds, as the workers are paid hourly and must count all write-in candidates.

Ms. Alexson asked about the difference between "temporary part-time" and "other pay." Ms. Carakatsane clarified that temporary part-time workers are poll workers, and "other pay" refers to the police officers hired to work the polls. There are three officers stationed at the polls all day.

Phil Goguen (4 Kingfisher Road) asked if the Poll Pads and new voting booths were purchased to save time. Ms. Carakatsane stated that while the Poll Pads save time and increase accuracy, the booths were purchased because the old ones were falling apart, and were in danger of collapsing if voters leaned on them. Mr. Goguen asked how much time has been saved with the implementation of Poll Pads, and Ms. Carakatsane referenced Annual Town Meeting, in which eight people were used to check voters in, instead of the usual twelve or thirteen. The Poll Pads cost the Town an initial \$5,000 purchase, with \$1,200 yearly updates.

FY20 Budget Review: Accounting

Stephanie Frontiera (Town Accountant) and Sarah Johnson (Finance Director) appeared before the Board to present the Finance Department's proposed FY20 budget. As the Finance Director, Ms. Johnson oversees the Town Accountant, Treasurer, Assessor, Purchasing, and Town Clerk departments, and assists the Town Manager's office with Payroll and Benefits. The Finance Department is made up of Ms. Johnson and Ms. Frontiera, as well as an Accounting Specialist and Accounts Payable Clerk. In 2018, the department transferred payroll operations to Harpers Payroll, as well as combining the School and Town payroll departments. The department also implemented the Open Gov website, and accomplished a clean FY18 audit. Going forward, the department plans to track revenue growth opportunities, support staff development, and submit the FY20 budget to the Government Finance Officers Association within 90 days following an approval vote. The Town Accountant also hopes to streamline vendor maintenance in Munis, and provide all necessary documentation to the Town's auditing firm by August.

Mr. Mootafian asked how long the Town has used this particular auditing firm, and Ms. Johnson replied that they are currently in their second three-year contract with Powers & Sullivan, LLC. Powers & Sullivan have held a stable rate. Mr. Craft commended the work of the firm, speaking towards their professionalism, communication, and educational presentations.

Ms. Alexson asked for clarification regarding salary allocation, which pays a portion of Accounting salaries from the Recycling department. Ms. Johnson clarified that any employee who handles a task regarding the Enterprise Fund must receive a portion of their salaries from the fund. Because the AP Clerk pays bills from the Enterprise Fund, and the Finance department assists in budgeting for the Recycling department, a small portion of their salaries must be allocated.

Phil Goguen (4 Kingfisher Road) would like to see a system set up within Town Hall that requires two signatures on invoices, and suggested a Select Board member may be designated to sign the invoice in an effort to keep a closer eye on spending. Ms. Johnson explained that both the Payroll and Accounts Payable Warrants are always signed by the Town Accountant and Town Manager. Ms. Frontiera added that Schedule of Payments are used to request an invoice be paid, and are signed by both herself and a department head to ensure that goods or services have been received before payment is sent.

Government Study Committee

Gary Champion and Craig Saline appeared before the Board to provide an update on the Government Study Committee. They reported that, similar to their efforts with the Town Charter, they will be working to bring gender-neutral language to the Town Bylaws at Annual Town Meeting. Mr. Marino has been involved with this process.

Additionally, the Committee has been investigating following a citizen's petition from the 2018 Annual Town Meeting asking that the Town begin electing Planning Board members, versus appointing. The Committee found that of 146 towns examined, 65% elect their Planning Boards. The Committee also surveyed 43 towns, and received 22 responses providing feedback on an elected versus appointed Planning Board.

Discussion followed weighing the pros and cons of appointments versus elections.

Consent Agenda

One Day Liquor Applications:

- i. All Alcohol Liquor Application, Ipswich Masonic Temple for a Birthday Party on 2/9

Vote: Mr. Craft moved to approve the Consent Agenda, and Mr. Rauscher seconded. The motion carried 4-0, with Ms. Alexson abstaining.

Town Manager Report

Mr. Marino has scheduled a phone conference with the architects for the Public Safety Building.

New Business

Ms. Alexson cited a citizen petition from a previous Annual Town Meeting asking that a ballot vote be required for Open Space purchases over \$500,000. She suggested putting an article on the 2019 Annual Town Meeting warrant to put a non-binding question on the spring election ballot.

Ms. Alexson announced that the Shellfish Committee will meet on Tuesday, February 5th at 7:00pm, and the Veterans Board will meet on Wednesday, February 6th.

Mr. Rauscher will not be able to attend the Select Board meeting on Monday, February 11th.

Old Business

None.

Miscellaneous and Correspondence

None.

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

The Select Board adjourned at 10:51pm.

*Respectfully submitted by Eileen G. Page
02.05.19*