

**TOWN COUNCIL BUDGET WORKSHOP - MONDAY EVENING - MARCH 21, 2011**

PRESENT: Marshall, Barboza, Teixeira, Herreshoff, and Parella

ALSO PRESENT: Diane C. Mederos, Town Administrator  
Julie Goucher, Town Treasurer

The Council met in special session for the purposes of a workshop to consider the 2011-2012 Town Budget on Monday evening, March 21, 2011 beginning at 7:09 o'clock PM, Council Chairman Marshall presiding:

**Town Administrator Overview**

Town Administrator Mederos transmitted the budget to the Council and provided highlights of her annual budget letter.

Councilwoman Parella stated that she was pleased regarding the Administrator's comments concerning the Town's reserves and also noted that this budget will be difficult since State aid has been essentially eliminated.

Town Treasurer Goucher presented certain graphs illustrating the elimination of the State's revenue sharing and also indicating that the Town's share of financial support to the School District has increased proportionally every year.

Councilwoman Parella asked to know if there was any anticipated State revenue sharing with Town Treasurer Goucher explaining that the Town is planning to receive the meal tax revenue and the PILOT payment only. She added that there is no general revenue sharing anticipated.

Town Administrator Mederos also provided a leaflet testifying that Bristol is a "best place to live" in Rhode Island.

Councilman Herreshoff asked to know the anticipated sewer use fee rate with Town Treasurer Goucher explaining that the budget assumes that the rate will be the same as it was last year.

A discussion ensued regarding the school budget, debt service and also the spending cap.

Councilman Herreshoff asked to know if the budget recommends that the schools should get approximately one-half of the request submitted with Town Treasurer Goucher responding affirmatively.

**TOWN COUNCIL BUDGET WORKSHOP - MONDAY EVENING - MARCH 21, 2011**

Town Treasurer Goucher reported that the budget recommended the allocation of \$500,000 of fund balance (surplus) to be utilized as a capital improvement fund.

Councilman Herreshoff asked to know the remaining surplus after the proposed expenditures with Town Treasurer Goucher agreeing to provide this information at a future workshop.

Councilman Herreshoff asked to know the spending plan for the \$500,000 capital account with Town Treasurer Goucher reporting that capital needs will be assessed several times during the fiscal year with the department heads having a "common goal" in mind. She added that the overall capital requests exceeded \$2 million and there is a plan to fund long-term projects over time.

Town Treasurer Goucher added that the capital item requests are found in the departmental budget details.

Councilman Herreshoff observed the proposed tax increase and stated that the amount of the increase must be explained relating to the revaluation.

Councilwoman Parella asked to know the actual increase when taking into account the revaluation with Town Treasurer Goucher responding that this would be approximately \$.50.

Councilwoman Parella suggested that the Town Administrator should provide an op-ed newspaper article explaining the increase relating to the revaluation and also the amount needed to offset the loss in State aid.

Councilman Herreshoff noted that \$300,000 was allocated in last year's budget for capital projects and asked if all of this had been expended with Town Treasurer Goucher responding that a large portion of the capital budget had been expended.

Councilwoman Parella cautioned that the Town might be "painting itself into a corner" regarding its capital budget if this is not funded adequately. She also expressed concern that future budgets will have unacceptably large tax increases if capital projects are inappropriately deferred.

Councilman Herreshoff noted that the debt service likely increased due to the completion of the library and other capital projects. He suggested that these "distinctions" should be clarified.

**TOWN COUNCIL BUDGET WORKSHOP - MONDAY EVENING - MARCH 21, 2011**

Town Treasurer Goucher stated that the status of Town funds will be evident in the annual audit and also that these reports may be expanded to highlight the details.

**Police Department - 701/Animal Control - 702**

**Josue D. Canario, Police Chief**

Council Chairman Marshall noted that the police budget proposal is requesting a 3% increase.

Police Chief Canario informed the Council that he concurred with the recommended budget as proposed by Town Administrator Mederos. He added that the proposal is "bare-bones."

Councilman Herreshoff asked to know the status of the fuel account based upon the recent price increases with Police Chief Canario responding that the department has replaced some cruiser patrols with bicycles and motorcycles in the warm months whenever practicable; these saving on both fuel and vehicle maintenance.

Councilwoman Parella noted that she still sees the cruisers around Town with Police Chief Canario explaining that the bicycle and motorcycle patrols cannot transport detainees and that the cruisers must be dispatched for this purpose.

Councilman Barboza noted that Police Chief Canario is painting his own office in order to save money.

A discussion ensued regarding the cost of fuel and gasoline with Police Chief Canario noting that the spending has been within 2-3% of budget and he expects that the figures presented will be adequate. He added that the heat thermostats have been closely monitored.

Council Chairman Marshall asked to know when the new high-efficiency furnace was installed with Police Chief Canario responding that this was installed in June of last year.

Council Chairman Marshall asked to know if the Town has a no engine idling policy with Police Chief Canario informing the Council that the manufacturer advises against it due to the operation of the electronic equipment.

Council Chairman Marshall asked if there were new Federal Regulations preventing long-term idling with Police Chief

**TOWN COUNCIL BUDGET WORKSHOP - MONDAY EVENING - MARCH 21, 2011**

Canario responding that he was not aware of these but would make inquiries.

A discussion ensued regarding maintenance costs with Police Chief Canario explaining that he met with the vendors and parts suppliers and will "shop around" if the rates become unfavorable.

Councilman Teixeira asked if the department plans to hire two (2) new officers with Police Chief Canario responding affirmatively. He added that there are five (5) potential retirements of senior officers.

Police Chief Canario added that the earlier possible police academy is in August and that this training takes one year, at best, before an officer may be "put on the road."

Councilman Teixeira asked to know if there was a salary increase in the budget with Town Administrator Mederos explaining that the union contract calls for 3.5% and that the budget includes 1.5% for the non-union. She added that the 1.5% is a cost of living adjustment.

Councilman Herreshoff asked to know if there were many step-increases with Police Chief Canario responding that there are not. He added that the increase is contractual.

Councilman Herreshoff asked to know if anything in the current year's budget is over-budget with Police Chief Canario responding that he monitors a monthly tally and thus far, the budget versus actual is within 2%.

Council Chairman Marshall asked what becomes of the outdated bullet-proof vests with Police Chief Canario responding that these are used for experimentation at the Police Academy.

A discussion ensued regarding the capital request with Councilman Herreshoff asking if the three (3) cruiser request was consistent with past practice with Police Chief Canario stating that this has been the practice for some time.

Councilman Teixeira asked why the Town does not utilize Public Works Department workers for police vehicle repairs and maintenance with Police Chief Canario responding that the Town has had a "program" with Safeway Auto for years. He added that using the Public Works Department for maintenance and repairs has its limitations for time and personnel and that the Police

**TOWN COUNCIL BUDGET WORKSHOP - MONDAY EVENING - MARCH 21, 2011**

are able to obtain needed "priority" service from Safeway. He added that work is completed at a favorably negotiated rate.

Councilman Herreshoff stated that he supports the policy to use the private contractor since the use of Public Works didn't work in the past. He added that the situation was "always tense" when the Public Works Department held this responsibility.

Concerning his Animal Control department, Police Chief Canario provided an overview of same.

Councilwoman Parella noted the increase in veterinarian service costs with Police Chief Canario reporting that there is no longer a veterinarian in Town.

There were no additional comments or questions concerning Animal Control.

Councilman Herreshoff referred back to the Police capital request and asked to know if there was a trade-in considered for the police cruisers with Police Chief Canario stating that the most-utilized cruisers are sold and that these bring little revenue.

Councilman Herreshoff commented that the vehicle policy seems to be working well.

Councilwoman Parella asked to know the mileage of the replaced vehicles with Police Chief Canario responding 110,000 - 160,000. He added it is sometimes less if the vehicle had been in an accident.

Councilwoman Parella asked to know about the use of smaller vehicles and hybrids with Police Chief Canario responding that the first-line vehicles need to be full-size due to the nature of their usage. He added that the supervisor vehicles are not full-size.

Councilwoman Parella asked if the "industry" is looking at hybrids with Police Chief Canario responding that these are not yet "appealing" since the power source is not always available.

Councilman Barboza noted that he has received complementary messages concerning the Police Department's "professionalism."

Councilman Herreshoff agreed with Councilman Barboza and explained that he has observed a high level of courtesy being

extended to the public by the police force and credited the leadership with this.

Councilman Teixeira asked to know how longevity pay is calculated with Police Chief Canario responding that this is calculated based upon a formula as specified in the Police Contract.

The Council made no changes to the Police and Animal Control as budgets recommended by the Town Administrator.

**Harbor Patrol - 703**  
**Joseph Cabral, Harbormaster**

Town Treasurer Goucher recommended that the Council may wish to evaluate the harbor fee structure.

Harbor Master Cabral agreed and explained that he recommends increases to the harbor fees since these have not been adjusted in over ten (10) years. He added that the Town's fees are the "cheapest." He also added that the Town charges \$5 for a pump-out and that the Harbor Commission "chewed his head off" when he recommended a fee increase.

Councilman Barboza noted that the Town provides a better marina than others for substantially less in fees.

Council Chairman Marshall noted the potential for additional dock space within the Town's riparian area near the Robin Rug complex. He added that the Town may wish to loan itself the cost of development and receive a payback in dock slip rentals. He added that a potential development could satisfy the Town's waiting list of 45-46 boat owners.

Harbor Master Cabral explained that he would like to provide for additional renters on a year-to-year basis in order to accommodate residents.

A discussion ensued concerning auditors recommendations for harbor related receipts with Harbor Master Cabral agreeing to meet with Town Treasurer Goucher and Town Administrator Mederos regarding this matter.

Councilman Teixeira asked to know if the Harbor Master's Office accepts cash payments with Harbor Master Cabral explaining that the Office encourages payments by check or on-line.

**TOWN COUNCIL BUDGET WORKSHOP - MONDAY EVENING - MARCH 21, 2011**

A discussion ensued regarding revenues with Harbor Master Cabral suggesting a phase-in of increases over the next few years.

The discussion returned to the proposed marina with Councilwoman Parella asking to know if 105 slips would constitute a "huge marina." Harbor Master Cabral stated that 105 slips would not be consider as "huge."

Councilman Teixeira asked to know if the revenue projection was based upon the proposed increase to harbor fees with Town Treasurer Goucher responding affirmatively.

A discussion ensued regarding the cost of pump out services with Harbor Master Cabral suggesting that this should also be raised incrementally perhaps raising the current fee of \$5 to \$10.

Councilwoman Parella stated that she did not believe that \$25 would be unreasonable for the pump out service.

Council Chairman Marshall asked who must approve permits for new dockage with Director of Community Development Williamson responding that CRMC, DEM (for water quality) and perhaps the Army Corps of Engineers.

Councilman Teixeira asked to know the current dock/mooring revenue with Harbor Master Cabral noting this revenue at approximately \$265,000.

Councilman Herreshoff asked about the cost of software with Town Administrator Mederos reporting that this is for the annual license to utilize a software package. She noted that the software provides for a more streamlined operation of the Harbor Master's Office.

A discussion ensued regarding the Church Street Armory with Council members noting that the use of this building will diminish with the acquisition of the Quinta-Gamelin center as a recreation center.

It was noted that the State retains ownership of the building with a permanent lease to the Town for recreation purposes.

Suggestions were made about the use of the building as a sailing school, a boating recreation center, and a mixed use building.

**TOWN COUNCIL BUDGET WORKSHOP - MONDAY EVENING - MARCH 21, 2011**

Council Chairman Marshall noted that there was a \$500,000 grant "in limbo" in Newport which may be available for rehabilitating this building.

Town Administrator Mederos agreed to investigate this grant.

Councilman Herreshoff asked to know about the budget amounts for moorings with Harbor Master Cabral explaining that these funds will be used to replace chains and repair channel markers.

The Council made no changes to the Harbor Patrol budget as recommended by the Town Administrator.

**Community Development - 601/Building Inspection - 602**

**Diane M. Williamson, Director of Community Development**

**Richard Pimenta, Building Official**

**Alan Crisman, Economic Development**

Responding to questions regarding the fuel accounts, Town Administrator Mederos noted that she reduced non-public safety related fuel accounts by 10%.

Councilman Teixeira questioned the appropriation for line item 450 (Center for Economic Development).

Director of Community Development Williamson reported that, "historically," the Town does not fully fund this position. She added that Mr. Crisman's current contract is for \$36,050 per year. She also explained that Mr. Crisman is paid as a consultant and is not included in the salary line.

Council Chairman Marshall asked if the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) could pay a portion of Mr. Crisman's fee with Director of Community Development Williamson reporting that the committee has met on this issue and finds that Mr. Crisman's program is broader than the CDBG.

A discussion ensued regarding the CDBG.

Councilwoman Parella asked to know if it would be sufficient to fully fund the \$36,050 with Mr. Crisman responding that the office requires \$4,000. Town Administrator Mederos suggested that this amount could be financed through existing Town Hall accounts.

A discussion ensued regarding the workforce development program with Mr. Crisman noting that the State needs a system for this -

**TOWN COUNCIL BUDGET WORKSHOP - MONDAY EVENING - MARCH 21, 2011**

perhaps on a regional basis. He added that there are "39 systems in this dinky state."

Councilwoman Parella stated that she was of the opinion that a regional workforce development program was a good idea.

Mr. Crisman stated that he has been talking about this issue for 5-7 years with Council Chairman Marshall, to find a grant for workforce development. He added that there has been no appreciable change in the local census tracks since he began.

Councilwoman Parella suggested that the line might be changed to \$36,050. It was agreed to make this change with an asterisk (\*) in order to revisit same prior to the adoption of the Provisional Budget.

Mr. Crisman again stated that a workforce development program will require some grant funding and also the Governor's advisory board should be "tapped" for assistance.

Council Chairman Marshall asked to know the status of the Stormwater Phase II line and also asked if the funds are paid to BETA Group. Director of Community Development Williamson reported that the funds are for testing at RI Analytical.

Councilman Teixeira asked to know the type of test with Director of Community Development Williamson responding that this is a test on the water coming from the various outfalls. She added that high school students, in cooperation with Save Bristol Harbor, collect the test specimens.

Town Administrator Mederos explained that she did not feel it appropriate to fund new initiatives this year.

A discussion ensued regarding the capital budget items with Director of Community Development Williamson explaining that there is \$174,000 now available for the State Street Dock rehabilitation project but \$100,000 more will be needed for Phase I. She added that the phase may be ready for bid within the next few months.

A discussion ensued regarding the "step down" on the dock with Director of Community Development Williamson noting that the engineers will have to study the structure in order to determine if the additional load will be problematic. She added that the cost to re-engineer the structure would be costly. Councilman

**TOWN COUNCIL BUDGET WORKSHOP - MONDAY EVENING - MARCH 21, 2011**

Herreshoff state that he would prefer if the "step down" would be eliminated.

Councilman Herreshoff stated that he would prefer if the "step-down" were eliminated.

Council Chairman Marshall asked to know the basis for the building permit projected revenues with Building Official Pimenta explaining that these revenue were based upon those received during the twelve months prior to the submission of the budget estimates. He added that the Town does not foresee any marked increase in permit revenues since there are no large projects anticipated.

Council Chairman Marshall asked to know if Building Official Pimenta had any particular concerns with Building Official Pimenta responding that the Town may wish to reconsider the proposal to upgrade the inspection software since this would allow the various disciplines "to be all on the same page."

Councilman Teixeira asked to know the purpose of the \$16,600 in operating with Building Official Pimenta responding that this was for data conversion and training.

Council Chairman Marshall asked to know the status of the Land Trust with Director of Community Development Williamson noting that the Land Trust is a separate 501 (c) (3) organization. She added that the Town did assist the Trust with a legal problem and also that the Trust did apply for a RWU community grant in order to consider the establishment of a "regional" land trust.

The Council made no further changes to the Community Development and Building Inspection budgets as submitted (except as noted above - Center for Economic Development).

There being no further business, upon a motion by Councilman Herreshoff, seconded by Councilwoman Parella and voted unanimously the Chairman declared this meeting to be adjourned at 9:57 o'clock PM.

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Louis P. Cirillo, CMC, Council Clerk

