

**Minutes**  
**Special Town Council Meeting**  
**March 28, 2016**  
**Town Hall Annex**

1. The meeting was called to order at 7:00 PM.  
Present: Julie Blanchard, Lisa Thomas, Richard Williams, Thomas Pope, Matthew O'Brien, Hannah Pietrantonio, Andy Brodersen  
Also present: John Elsesser, Town Manager; Beth Bauer, Finance Director

**2. Unfinished Business: 15/16-69: FY 2016-2017 Budget:**

- a. Human Services Department:  
Courtney Chan, Human Administrator, Carrie Concatelli, Senior Center Coordinator and Crystal Morawitz, Youth Services Coordinator, were present to discuss the Human Services Department budget. Courtney gave an overview of the Department's activities for the past several months.

The heating assistance program just wrapped up in mid-March. We processed 94 applications. It was a warm season – we usually get over 100 applications. We are still taking applications for electric heat until May. We are still doing Operation Fuel and the Clergy Fuel Fund program and have had 14 applications. It was a very good heating season. People have been doing really well with the oil they have been getting.

The Holiday program served 251 families and seniors from Orchard Hills with meals and gifts for kids. Our interns helped with the program and it went well.

The other successful program is the Food Bank, which continues to go strong. We moved the Food Bank to Patriots Park Community Center and we get help from the community-based program at the high school. Food Bank service is by appointment on Tuesdays and Thursdays and we do emergency assistance at the office.

The Salvation Army Bell Ringing program had 212 volunteer hours and raised over \$10,000. Funds from that program continue to help year-round.

Thomas Pope asked if someone wanted to make a contribution to the Fuel Bank where would they send it. Courtney replied to Human Services. Make the check out to Coventry Fuel Bank. It is processed by the Finance Department. The program is in partnership with the churches.

Hannah Pietrantonio asked about emergency-based assistance for people in crisis. Courtney replied we try to start people in September so people are all set when oil deliveries begin, but sometimes they are already out of fuel by then. Sometimes if they only get small allotment they run out in January. Or sometimes they need it for hot water. Matthew O'Brien asked if the maximum amount is contingent on the price of fuel. Courtney said no; it is dependent on income levels and size of families. John Elsesser noted that a lot of those guidelines are set by outside programs. We try to use those funds first. The Clergy Fuel Fund is program we have the most control over. Courtney said 150 gallons is our maximum and this year we were able to do that.

John Elsesser said there are a lot of day-to day-walk-ins for counseling. We are trying to help

people access a network of social services resources. Once we find out their full needs it could be the Fuel Bank, Food Bank, etc. Courtney said we are doing a lot of work with Eversource now. They are relying on municipalities to administer their assistance program. Now we go into the Eversource portal and help the client on the spot. This is different than in the past. We do the same with the Department of Social Services. It is hard to get through but we can help the client right away.

Andy Brodersen asked how people know to come to you. Courtney replied in a variety of ways: word of mouth, Facebook, the Town website, newsletter, brochures, flyers. John Elsesser mentioned we are also on the statewide 211 system. Courtney said this year we have been doing a lot of inter-agency referrals. If someone needs more elderly help will send them to the Senior Center and in return we get a lot of seniors who need fuel help. It has been a big help having Carrie at the Senior Center. People see friendly faces at both sites. We work with churches too. Crystal is in the schools a lot so if a family is coming to see her we run them through the checklist.

Carrie Concatelli said she has been working on enhancing Senior Center programs. We are growing the Choices program, which is a national program known as SHIP nationwide. We participate in 5 full days of training about Medicare and affiliated programs including an exam. There are four trainings per year including one on open enrollment. The purpose of the program is so someone can come in and receive unbiased information about Medicare programs - they can come in and meet with me, bring their prescriptions and a list of what doctors they need to see and we can help them make comparisons about the best plan for them. Open enrollment is the heaviest time of the year and runs from October-December. A lot of people were coming in with plans they had not changed in years. We saved some of them thousands of dollars. Even saving a little bit helps. We look at whole person at same time, in terms of what else is going on with their healthcare. Another service is our tax program. We have an affiliation with AARP to do tax aide. It is run by volunteers and is a great benefit. We already exceeded filings by household and there are still two sessions left. A lot of our numbers are higher this year due to Coventry's changing demographic. The senior population is increasing. We are trying to attract the Boomer population. Massage and podiatric programs fill up quickly.

Crystal Morawitz said the Youth Services programs are primarily funded through a State grant and the Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services. We offer counseling, parenting programs, and work closely with school staff to identify parent and student needs and work to fill gaps. Parents are asking for help with difficult behaviors. We are putting programs in place at no charge to families. We spend a lot of time with the Juvenile Review Board, which helps keeps kids out of juvenile court. We convene the Juvenile Review Board to come up with solutions and connect families to programs without getting them involved in DCF. We make connections that offer high-level services without deterring them from seeking help. Participation in this program has gone up over the past year. It addresses the needs of high-risk kids. We also offer divorce groups, and boys and girls groups. Our programs are needs based and we engage in continued dialogue with the schools as to what is currently needed. We implement services that make the most sense at the time. We are expecting and have already gotten some cuts from the State Department of Education grant. In the past we have received State Youth Services grant. We used to receive \$5,000 based on population, - it is down to \$4,6000 and still dwindling. They took another \$52,000 out of the statewide funds. This whittles away our resources for counseling, mentoring, Juvenile Review Boards and other services. We are mandated to provide services from birth to age 18, either direct services or connections to services. The STEPS program is more focused on

birth to age eight. STEPS falls under Youth Services and we have worked collaboratively for eight years. John said he wants to make it clear that our services start at birth.

Andy Brodersen asked where the office is located. Courtney replied downstairs at Town Hall. John Elsesser noted that all of the staff members in the office are cross-trained. Courtney said we collaborate a lot - a family might come in with children who also have elderly parents that need services.

Julie Blanchard asked if there is anything new the Department is looking for in their budgets. John Elsesser replied the largest increase in the budget is Windham Region for Dial-a-Ride services. They had to make a mid-year adjustment that overspent the budget. We looked at providing the service ourselves but we don't have enough volunteer drivers or equipment. We recommend continue payment this year and evaluating it again next year to see if things improve. We joked about paying Uber instead and discovered there are six towns using Uber for Dial-a-Ride services. Memphis might be out to bid for their whole region. For on-demand services Uber is better, at least in urban areas where drivers are already there. With Dial-a-Ride people have to call the day before and make an appointment. They mobilize from Manchester and see if they can pick up anyone else along the way. You might have a pick-up at 10:30 and they don't get there until 2:30. It is not convenient and they can only transport within the Windham region, so people can't go to Vernon, Manchester etc. This is why we run our own volunteer van.

Andy Brodersen asked if people pay anything for Dial-a-Ride. Courtney replied it is a discretionary donation. Carrie said we do not charge for the elderly van program. We go to Hartford Hospital, St. Francis Medical Center, etc. It allows people also to remain active in the community and run everyday errands too, such as getting a haircut, going to the bank, etc. Courtney said we also have seniors going to the Food Bank with the van program too. There is less of a stigma now that it is not at Town Hall. Andy asked how this program is funded. John replied through a CT DOT grant, which pays Leigh Wadja's salary. Andy asked if volunteer drivers are paid for fuel. Carrie replied most of time they are driving our van. We can reimburse for mileage for private cars. Our drivers cover a day or two per month.

Lisa Thomas said we have had a lot of feedback about dissatisfaction with the Dial-a-Ride program in terms of difficulty in scheduling and length of time on the van. She would be interested in finding ways to increase the service of our van in future, especially heading west. Also, she had heard concerns about the exercise program at the Senior Center and whether that would need additional funding. How is it going and is it paying for itself? Carrie replied the program started in August. Year-to-date we have more participation than the entire last fiscal year. It has worked out to be a 60-40 split, 60% by participations and 40% by program budget. The goal was to average out to 50-50, so it is very close. Lisa asked whether participants are using tickets or punch cards. Carrie replied that participants can purchase a 10-card pass for \$30 or pay \$3 at each class. We keep track via a spreadsheet. Lisa asked if people seem satisfied. Courtney replied yes. Richard asked how long the class is. Carrie replied about an hour. It has different areas of focus like strength, balance, etc.

Thomas Pope said he read about the new TWIN program. He is happy to see that put in place. Carrie replied it is brand new and we just announced it in our spring newsletter. The idea is to form connections between seniors to develop mutually beneficial relationships. It includes things like friendly phone calls, safety checks, outings, or a safety network, which we used during the recent storm. We knew immediately who to ask to follow up on a person. We have several generations of seniors now – this is an opportunity to pair people who might not have

gotten together before.

Hannah Pietrantonio mentioned the crosswalk of Human Services programs provided for the Council's review. When she looks at the list of things accomplished with two people and an administrative assistant, she is flabbergasted they can do so much in a climate where so many people are in crisis. Human Services is the department where they turn for help and it is amazing what they can do. She knows STEPS was cut and the organization is in jeopardy due to funding. Is there anything they can't do under the current budget limitations, such as outreach? Courtney replied that outreach is hard to do with the staff we have. We have an intern and there is only so much she can do. It is hard to leave the office. When one person leaves someone else has to staff the office. An outreach person would be wonderful – a lot of times we don't know what is going on in the home. Sometimes a home visit tells a very different story. Hannah gave kudos to the staff for their initiatives.

Julie Blanchard asked if there are students of high school age willing to blend with senior citizens. Crystal replied one program that happens annually is the Spread the Cheer program, where students in grades K-2 “shop” for holiday gifts for their family members at the Senior Center. High School students and the seniors assist the elementary school students with their shopping and wrap the selected gifts. There are some other programs where students come to the Center and teach the seniors how to use Wii, etc. We have the Youth Bob Bank as well.

The Council thanked the Human Services staff for attending the meeting to discuss their budget needs.

**b. Parks & Recreation:**

Wendy Rubin, Director and Caterina (Cat) Merriam, Recreation Supervisor, were present to discuss the Parks & Recreation Department budget. Wendy Rubin introduced several members of the Parks & Recreation Commission in the audience: Todd Messier and Jen Rogers. Wendy is going into her 9th summer here. We plan our lives around summer – it is the busiest time of the year. Cat is the Recreation Supervisor. We split duties in the summer - Cat runs the summer camp and sports league. Wendy chips in with special events, as well as oversight of lifeguards, beaches and park maintenance. It is a good split.

We rely on the Human Services Department and work with them closely. They offer scholarships to summer camp to get kids into our programs. There are also a lot of times when we find families in crisis first. Through that collaborative process we able to refer them to Human Services to get help.

The department is two major departments - Parks and Recreation. We do a lot with social media, technology, marketing and promotion. Cat has a background in communication and does a lot of great work. We distribute three brochures a year. The newest is at the printer for spring/summer activities. We also produce a facility rental catalog. Facility rentals are one of our biggest time-consuming activities. We rent out two buildings at Patriots Park, the pavilions at Lisicke Beach and Creaser Park, the market barn at Hale Homestead and the buildings at Creaser Park for weddings, bridal showers, reunions, etc. It is an extensive process that is really important to people. Matthew O'Brien asked if the brochures are mailed to every household. Wendy replied yes. Matthew wondered if it would be possible for Human Services to get a page. John Elsesser noted the *Chronicle* develops the brochure and the number of pages is dependent on advertising revenue. The brochure used to be combined with the Town newsletter but our timing was slightly different.

Wendy said we are also working on getting community collaboration in place for a combined interactive calendar that is mobile and can be used instead of looking at 5 different websites. It will be opened up to all organizations in town. Our social media is reaching out to about 1000 members and linked to other departments for cross-sharing. Cat noted that all Recreation programs are available to residents and non-residents.

Wendy said our main core services – the things we do best and are most important are achieved at very little cost to members of the community – that is making parks available to citizens, maintenance and stewardship. We changed our bylaws to make them more user-friendly and easier to maintain. We oversee trails, parks, and playgrounds - places where people can go. Also water safety – we have a very strong program where we provide lifeguards at two beaches and a swim program that teaches 400 people per year. We have great staff. They are conscientious, caring people who watch our kids. The after school and before school program has expanded greatly and is in high demand. We are looking at opening the community center for it instead of the youth center to expand it further and make more revenue. We took over the youth basketball program this year. It involves 500 kids. It is a lot to take on. It is a five-town regional program with shared computer scheduling. We share the cost of referring. In spite of the work it has been a joy to work with the volunteer coaches – there are at least 60 coaches who get paid nothing and take a lot of aggravation from people. Matthew O'Brien asked where they play. Wendy replied local gyms. Kids in grades 4 and up get to travel to other towns. It is a nice opportunity for kids.

Wendy said the most important thing the Council needs to know is how we're funded and how we operate. When she got here eight years ago it was when the economy sank. Revenue had a healthy balance and we decided to take on more building maintenance and park maintenance responsibilities. We took that out of the budget and put it into program fees. It has stayed steady with no growth. It covers her salary and a portion of the subsidy that pays for lifeguards - \$33,701. The Recreation Commission is planning to restructure lifeguard staffing to be more efficient. There is less demand in the mornings. That's why we lowered the budget line item. We are also anticipating being able to cut costs with new software for credit card processing. We are almost done with research and demonstrations and expect to see good savings. The return on investment vs. services provided to community by the Parks & Recreation Department is \$388 to \$1. We hope people feel that value. Overall our funding is less than one-tenth the entire line item. The biggest issue we have is our cost recovery rate. It is something we are trying to improve on by being more efficient. We put high efficiency heating in the buildings, and LED lighting. We are raising 87% of our operating budget and the Town is putting in the balance. In other towns it is more like 40-50%. In lower income communities some towns pay 100%, such as New London. We do not have that luxury. We don't fall into that category so we are constantly looking to find a balance. The biggest cost area has been maintenance of facilities and we expect that to come to a head.

Lisa Thomas said because Recreation Daze is doing so well they will be moving to the community center and we were talking at our last meeting about work that needs to be done there, such as painting, bathrooms, etc. - we should look at that budget again. The facility will get a lot more use. John said we are hoping to replace the lighting there with LED, and put in motion detectors. Lisa mentioned sensors on faucets as a possibility worth considering. Wendy said we have already begun reducing paper towels in favor of air dispensers. We are phasing out some appliances such as toilet paper dispensers to standardize them. John noted the walls at the community center need work. Long-term we would like to get paneling with a chair rail. We got prices for carpet cleaning which seem high. Lisa asked if the carpet could come out. John replied right now it is over a plywood surface that moves. Tile would crack.

Wendy said we were able to get rid of the carpet at the Lodge. It has made a big difference. John said in the classroom area we might be able to go with alternate flooring like laminate or tile, but the big room moves.

Hannah asked if the department has service contracts for the furnace. Wendy replied we have standard contracts for carpet cleaning, dumpsters, portable toilets, furnaces, custodial, electric, heat, and some phones. Hannah asked if they get interns. Wendy said yes. One is starting in a month and will be the first one we have had in a few years. Public Works does what they can and more on maintenance – it is hard to ask them to pick up the pieces but they are often our first call if there is a leak, etc. The biggest piece that is hard to generate revenue for is repairs. The caretaker's house and the Senior Center need to be re-roofed. We have had well issues. John said we do put LOCIP money into parks too. Wendy said that goes a long way. We just put new solar lights in Patriots Park. John said over the next few months if we can get a quote from a contractor we will be replacing the deck at the Senior Center. It is hard to get contractors. We have \$10,000 to do it and first quote was \$11,000 – so we have to get it down a bit.

Thomas Pope said he wanted to replay a question from a constituent about a promise that was made for a trip to Yankee stadium this year. Is a date available yet? Cat replied not yet. Wendy said when we do our trips we collaborate with towns in the region. We have some great volunteers – it is great to work with people – and they come through in ways that are not expected. Julie Blanchard said Recreation is an interesting department because they have a Commission.

Richard Williams asked how you increase revenues. Wendy replied in a lot of different ways – we try to be reasonable and subtle. Camp fees haven't gone up in several years and beach fees have never gone up. Richard said his son has participated in camp for several years - it's reasonable. How much more can you increase those fees? Wendy said that is the hard part – we don't want to overprice and have people leave. The main goal is to service the community by keeping prices low. Swimming lessons and camp can be tough if families have siblings – it can really add up. Yankee stadium trips and specialized sports camps with a lot of specialized expenses are higher. We don't think the gap can be covered by the amount we could raise. Richard asked if they have thought of a credit card surcharge. Wendy said we are looking at it - some companies charge a transaction fee and people are used to it. It is not a huge impact on people to pay for that convenience. People can register online and they are willing to pay for that. We are looking at putting the burden back on the customer for that. When we first started accepting credit cards it was a very low percentage but since we went to online registration it has risen to 40%.

Matthew O'Brien asked how scholarships are funded. Wendy replied the churches always step up. We have done various other events like the tag sale, talent show, etc. Crystal does a fundraising mailing in Feb/March. John said we have never had to turn down a family needing a scholarship. Wendy said the United Bank Foundation has sponsored the summer concert series for the past 6 years and we never have a problem getting sponsors for the road race – we at least break even. We offer programs for healthy eating and active lifestyles. In collaboration with Beth Pratt at the school will begin offering yoga to students. It is tough to compete with little leagues, etc. - every business gets hit with sponsorship requests. We try for grants but it is hard to compete with urban communities.

Hannah Pietrantonio suggested increasing the facility rentals fee. To rent for \$30 is very reasonable. She would pay \$45. Patriots Park is a beautiful location and if we can upgrade the

facility it would be more appealing. Wendy said that rental fees year to date already have exceeded last year by about \$20,000. The trend is going up. The Lodge is solidly booked months out now. The Recreation Commission is looking at it. We wanted to keep resident fees low. We charge a lower rate to nonprofits but we don't rent to them on weekends to save the premier time slots for full fee bookings. It is on the Recreation Commission agenda for next month.

Wendy said the impact of increases in minimum wage has been huge. Since 2008 it used to be \$7.65 and it is up to \$10.10 this year. That is a huge increase. If we did one 25-cent increment now we are looking at \$8,000 for the summer. John noted that summer camp is going to have to increase to cover it. Wendy said people don't understand all the work that has been done – at Miller Richardson Field, Laidlaw Park, etc. If not for the Council prioritizing it we wouldn't have been able to do it. People don't understand you can't have it all. Some things should be supported by the Town. Frisbee golf is coming – a survey is being done by a local resident to have it at Creaser Park. There is a huge tournament in Wickham Park (East Hartford). Richard Williams suggested getting Pickleball.

Wendy said we are applying for the 6th year as a Playful City. A lot of people don't understand the value of the designation. Hats off to all for saying that play is important, getting outdoors is important. Now people are realizing it isn't frivolous; it is just as important as classroom time. We are one of only 250 communities in the nation to be named a Playful City and the only one in the state. John said a lot of towns are doing mandatory no smoking regulations in parks. We started a voluntary campaign last year and think it is sufficient. If compliance fades we may have to do more but so far is working. Wendy said there are a lot less cigarette butts around park benches.

The Council thanked Parks & Recreation staff for attending the meeting to discuss their budget.

**c. Budget discussion/deliberation:**

John Elsesser said tab 8 is where Parks & Recreation items can be reviewed. Memorial Day on page 8.6 provides funding for 3 events: to the American Legion Post for the parade, Fifes and Drum Corps, and soda & ice. Veterans Programs provides funds for the Memorial Green for monument maintenance. We are setting aside \$500 per year for the next big Town anniversary celebration. Thomas Pope asked if some of the money we provide is used to put flags out for Memorial Day. John replied yes. Thomas said several years ago someone approached me and gave me dozens of flags that were left along the parade route. Now he was told the Town no longer provides the money for flags. John replied that we do. Laura orders them and the American Legion puts them out on Veterans' graves. There are rules about flags and how long they are supposed to be out.

The Library budget is on page 8.2. The major change there is salary. There is no additional staff. They are about 30% below market for their director. They had co-directors and only have one director next year to get that salary more towards market level. Matthew O'Brien asked about things like heating fuel, etc. We adjustments made? John replied they were already adjusted downward. The changes should show. We took \$2,000 off their request. Matthew asked how they did for performance on their budget this year? John replied it is hard to tell because we don't pay their bills directly. Beth said we have not gotten their third quarter statement yet. At the end of the quarter we get a reconciliation. Richard Williams asked if the \$16,000 increase is for one person. John said no, the whole staff but one person is

getting more than a cost of living adjustment – we are making a market-based salary adjustment and that position will still be below market. Julie Blanchard asked if fringe benefit increases are attributable to something specific. John said social security is included on this line item. As salary goes up social security also goes up. Thomas Pope asked how many employees are there now. Beth replied their organization chart shows 4 full time, a custodian that is probably part time and library assistants, pagers and shelvers with no number associated with them.

John Elsesser asked if Council members have any questions on the budget.

General Administration. Tab 4: Richard Williams asked about the Assessor, item. 4.12. In 2015 the amount was \$111,000 and now it is \$135,000 but the actual year to date is only \$47,393. Did we not have someone in the position? John said yes but he was on military deployment. Richard said from 2015 to this point it has gone up in a short period of time. Beth said what he is looking at is actuals. The Assessor has not been here during a portion of that time. Matthew asked what our obligations are when he is gone. John said he is paid nothing but had to have other staff. We replaced him with two part time people, a part-time assessor and part-time office staff. John said changes happen for a number of reasons. When staff comes in they get step increases. Sometimes they go from an “assistant to” to the “assistant” level. He thinks this time it is just a step increase. We are asking for a 1.72% increase in the budget. All the salaries are done on a person-by-person basis based on the number of work hours in an actual year. Richard said it seems like the jump is excessive. It is the same person? John replied there are two people in the office.

Thomas Pope said the first line shows a manager's increase of only \$200. Didn't he intend to make that \$400? John said it could be typo. He will correct that.

Thomas Pope asked if there is a trend that activity is going down in the Planning Office. John said it depends on activity. Matthew O'Brien noted line 4.19 zoning inspections. John replied that the number of subdivisions is down. Zoning permits are consistent and complaints are down partly because they are more complicated with the advent of blight enforcement. There is a revenue number missing there that we will correct. Some of the local permit fees are coming back up. Right now subdivisions are flat but there is still an inventory of lots. Things to watch are the health lines for tests. Some of the new subdivisions are going faster than we thought they would, including Windy Hill and Dunn Road. The ones that are actively managed are moving. Others have been sitting for 20 years but we think they will pick up this year. We don't expect a whole bunch of new subdivisions over the next year – we don't see land on the market that would make that available.

Richard Williams asked about item 4.40 52160 - Building Repairs and Maintenance. John said we are hoping because we have the new boiler that some of these big overruns will go away. We spent a lot of money trying to keep the old boiler going. It is under warranty right now and we hope we don't have the continual bad luck we were having.

Matthew O'Brien asked for an explanation of item 4.26 Economic Development regarding the service contract increase. John said our hope is to pick two locations and do a charette to create a vision of what could go there, with the hope of getting sewers in at the town line in Bolton. We would put a marketing package together to paint a picture of the site. This will allow for two of those types of sketches. Matthew asked if this type of work was somewhere else? John replied yes, for part of the Rt. 6 Study. We did one for the Rt. 6 parcel so people could see how a holistic center on the site and the roads would look. Matthew noted the

center didn't come - did it work? John said we were trying to create a better vision of how it could look - sometimes people can't see beyond how it looks today. It is the Council's choice whether to fund this initiative or not. Matthew said trying a new approach is fine with him. Andy remarked that the old approach didn't seem to work. Matthew asked if there are budgetary impacts of extending the sewer? John said unlike some communities where you have to buy capacity, this is metered so it is calculated by the number of gallons used. Whoever picks it up would pay for it. Expenses to date have been covered by the WPCA. Thomas Pope asked how far up Rt. 44 it would go. John replied not very far - maybe to just short of Brewster St at the end of Edmondson's. We are still looking at the possibility of a phase one/phase two project that would pick up the residential area of Twin Hills. We don't believe the residents are keen on it. There are some sewer problems there but they have community water so individual septic issues are not as much of a problem. They have a study showing it could ultimately go there. We would like to at least get to the 7-11 which has porta-potty outside.

Richard Williams asked page 5.4, line 51030 Overtime in the Police Department budget. He is looking at total for the year-to-date and estimated to end of year and doesn't see how they are going to get to it. With the new police officer the overtime number is probably high compared to where they should end up. John noted that the other line has not increased and probably should increase to \$1700. We haven't increased either of those and there is one additional person that is eligible for holiday overtime. We have an officer out on extended illness so that affects overtime because we have to backfill shifts. Richard said next year's budget shouldn't have that problem because of the new person. John replied that a person is retiring and we will have to pay severance. Richard asked if that line too large or not. John replied that Chief Palmer has managed overtime very well - we haven't raised it - it doesn't actually impact the budget, and we have a person out on medical so we are starting to burn through overtime now. You don't know when the need for it will hit. If there is a major case we could go through \$10,000 in a week. Richard said he would propose to reduce it by \$25,000 because they haven't spent it and probably won't this year. John said he would recommend strongly against that because the Chief doesn't spend it and tries to manage it as best as he can, but it could be needed. Lisa Thomas asked what happens if the line item is not adequately funded and goes over - where would the funds come from? John replied he doesn't know - we would probably have to do a supplemental appropriation. If we have a shooting or a murder, we go through massive amounts of overtime in a few weeks. He strongly urges that the Council not cut that line - it is why we had the Police Chief in to meet with the Council. You didn't ask that question when he was here. Matthew said he asked the question but it didn't seem like he was sure - there might be some small savings. He is fine with it as is.

Page 5.10, Service Contracts: Matthew O'Brien said he doesn't see how we're going to hit the \$17,500 that is budgeted. John said service contracts are a little different. It might be a lump sum that is paid all at once. We have to be careful that a lump sum might come in the spring. He will research it.

Page 5.25: Richard said we appropriated \$20,870 but year to date only spent \$12,800 - are we going to hit that number? Beth Bauer replied there is not going to be excess. It is going to be even. The way that the Emergency Services Director was budgeted that year is going to be handled slightly differently this year. After we get to April and can make transfers between departments we will do some, so the budget matches the way we are actually paying it out. John said next year the portion of the Emergency Management Director's salary in the Building Officials account is not being charged there. It is going somewhere else. Matthew

said if he remembers right with all those changes we saved \$20,000 and put it toward ambulance.

COVRRRA 6.14: Richard Williams said he would still like to still go back to how that should be allocated. Beth said we looked at overall costs that are associated with COVRRRA that are not directly charged to COVRRRA, like the cost of tax collection. We allocated out the proportion that COVRRRA is of the total. Matthew O'Brien asked if it is calculated by the volume of bills. Beth replied yes. In the operation of the tax office you don't have one person specifically assigned to one area. She would look at and evaluate whether the amount we are currently charging through the salary is in the ballpark. John said we know how many bills we generate. We are taking the total time and allocating a percentage. We asked the person how much time she estimates she spends on COVRRRA and she estimated 50%. We thought that was too high and put it in at 25%. He probably spends 4-5% of his time on COVRRRA oversight himself but doesn't apply it. It is complex. Richard said he thinks it should be part of town property taxes. Then it would be deductible. Those expenses were never charged to the COVRRRA fund and now they are. Whether it is right or wrong he is bringing it up as a point of reference. Matthew said he would like to allocate it properly but is not sure of the best way. Richard said if we could wind up eliminating people that would be kind of cool. John said all he can say is this is probably a fair estimation of the value of time spent by that person. Thomas Pope said he would venture to guess that more people come in to pay for their COVRRRA because it is not escrowed as part of their property tax.

Item 5.2010, Architect Engineering: John said we are transferring money here. We had budgeted based on planning for an intern and we actually need professional services so we shifted back.

6.3. Regular FT Building Official: Estimated Actual and Town Manager's budget goes from \$82,000 to \$137,000. John said we talked about this as part of Emergency Management Director and Assistant Building Official. In the budget we are eliminating the salary allocation of the Assistant Building Official and instead there will be fees under Temporary because we will bring in building officials as needed. We haven't been charging salary the way it was budgeted due to shift in the Emergency Management Director's responsibilities. Matthew O'Brien asked which departments are affected. Beth replied Emergency Services, Fire Marshal, Joint Fire and Building. Andy said if we are moving money from someplace to here, where is it moving from? The figures should stay the same. John yes they are. Splits are always difficult because we haven't changed the allocation but we know the budget is ok. After we go through the budget year we adjust the cost allocation. Last year was the first year we had a joint fire budget. If the Council wants to see a specific allocation we can get it for you tomorrow night. Beth said she can do it for tomorrow night, but we will also be doing transfers at the next Finance Committee meeting. Emergency Services departments stand on their own – there are three or four different places where that position was charged. It's not being paid out the way it was originally budgeted so we are going to have to do appropriation transfers to get it into alignment, and that has to be a Council action.

Page 9.4 FICA: It was pointed out that to hit the budget amount of \$142,000 would be almost impossible where you are based on payroll. John said the way this is done is by actual payroll. We have a spreadsheet that calculates it. Will we have extra money this year? If we haven't done payroll the answer is yes, like the Assessor who wasn't here. This is a good point because those area areas we will be looking to transfer out of.

Matthew O'Brien asked if there has been any more discussion about ambulance and whether

the department wants to go to 5 days. He is hearing different stories. John said he is hearing mixed opinions. Some people don't want Vintech at all. The department is doing a massive campaign to get people to sign up but as of right now we're not seeing it. Matthew said perhaps we should go to days and see how that goes. John said we could do that. Thomas Pope said it is not an area we can gamble on. John said in some ways would rather have it in budget and not use it. We could allocate a certain number of dates with trigger date to go to five days. Leadership thinks we have to go to five. Hearing from membership they think they can get it done but we're not seeing the commitment. Matthew said once we go to five we have to use it. Thomas said they are making an effort to do a recruitment campaign. John said the worst-case scenario would be to get to the point where we feel we need it and have to do a supplemental appropriation. He will get a figure for tomorrow.

Capital Budget: John said there is a Capital budget considerations sheet in the packet. The top section is a chart right out of the budget. He has a couple ideas. We got prices on from the Houston Area Buying Consortium that could address item 5, the police admin vehicle. Their pricing for a police interceptor is \$20,953 so if we added \$5,000 we could get an all-wheel-drive vehicle and have money for a radio. Matthew said he would be in favor of that. Secondly, we would substitute VOIP phones for the boiler system. Summary sheets on VOIP show a capital price for handsets of \$29,188. We would ask do the \$30,000 so we could have a little latitude. It leaves unresolved the issue of getting the fuel tank out. We think we can do that with our forces as long as there is no environmental contamination. It doesn't include putting propane back in – we are still seeking that cost. Matthew said we could take some of the \$20,000 for the Laidlaw fence that is being donated. John said we don't have an estimate to install it yet; we don't have the fence on hand because it has been too wet to get it. It costs more to install used fence than new fence. Matthew said we could take \$9,000 and leave money for the flyboard study.

Other capital adjustments:

- Move dump body to Misc Hwy funds.
- Reduce air compressor and bid the item through HGAC leaving \$5k for installation.
- Change language to Fanwort match and put in Hydrilla match (cost TBD) and the flyboard study. If we want to do whole study add \$22,587. Matthew said even if we find something we can't do anything? John said we could ask for a ban – we would need state permission. Matthew said it should be the State doing study. John said he agrees and so does Dr. Kortmann. He doesn't think we can get a ban without the study. The agency has a joint mission. One is recreational and one is preservation. Matthew noted you can't have one without the other. John said when the Town wanted to ban jet skis altogether we proposed a ban, which they rejected. We didn't have any evidence that said it is detrimental. Matthew asked if we could isolate the restrictions to certain areas of the lake. Or say no powerboats at all? John replied the way the process works is they ask that we have discussions with them. A public hearing is required, the Council adopts an ordinance and then they require amendments, which require another ordinance. It is a State body of water and they hold the regulatory authority. Matthew said but they don't take care of it. Richard said clearly we have to do the study if we are going to try to do the ban. Hannah said she is really concerned. We only studied the impact of one flyboard. What if there are 10 at once? Matthew said it sounds like we want to do the study but are not happy about having to pay for it. Lisa said she would rather have the Hydrilla study so if we have to pick and choose she would pick that. John said we have to do Hydrilla. Matthew said there is \$15,000 in LOCIP. We could do something else

with LOCIP funds. Thomas said Hydrilla is in shallow water and those flyboards will blow it down so it seems one issue is connected with the other. John said in terms of flyboard prohibition in shallow areas of lake, we think we can get that because they are pursuing it. But the study surprisingly showed the shallow area wasn't the problem - that area has enough vegetative matter. It is the area right past that where the thrust goes down 23 feet that is getting stirred up, and there is less vegetation except for Hydrilla and Fanwort which go deeper. He thinks at some point there will be a ban in the no-wake zone but he doesn't think that addresses our problem. Thomas said he knows of a similar situation in another town where people were using hydraulics in salt water to go after clams. The environmental impact on life in that area was shown to be extreme and they were able to defeat the State even though it was in deeper water. John said we don't know if there is another group that might fund it, but he doesn't think the Town should fund 100% of it. The safest thing would be to do that, but from a national perspective it should not be our burden. Matthew said if we do all the transfers we would only have a \$7,587 increase and it wouldn't be too major. Thomas said he thinks it is a no-brainer that the full amount needs to be there. Matthew said we need to build CNREF as well.

- Patriots Park refreshing: \$10,000. Hannah said she likes that a lot. John said if the Council doesn't want it here, it could be a potential LOCIP item.
- Page 11.3 Laidlaw soccer fence: \$24,000. John said we could probably take at least \$14,000. Matthew said we should take \$15,000. Lisa asked where it would be going. She would like to put some in the open space fund to get it where it used to be at \$30,000. Matthew said he is looking for something in Capital that could be LOCIP. John said it could be used for building capital improvement like flooring but not for schools. Matthew asked about the Lodge furnace replacement. John said probably but funds won't be available until next spring. We can shuffle some but can't go too high. We have to be careful. Thomas said we could take care of some of the Police station work. John said Patriots Park refreshing could go in. If we are cutting \$15,000 we could do something for Patriots Park and something for Police. That takes \$10,000 out of proposed Capital adjustments, which would get us down to a reduction. Richard asked why not do it in the current year where we have excess in overtime. Matthew said we would have a better picture after April. John said it is a possibility. We have significant overages in legal and they are growing. Lisa said she was thinking of our conversation with the Police Chief and how he said people are learning to walk around the problem flooring areas. Richard said clearly it is something that needs to be taken care of immediately. The Council agreed by consensus that they are in favor of Patriots Park refreshing and Police flooring. Matthew said it won't take care of the whole problem but it can at least get us started. So the net change would be subtract \$2413 from the \$7587 additions in the proposed budget.

Natural gas: John said he talked with CNG on Friday – we hope to get more information but if not he will provide the best information he can get. He will try one more time in the morning.

### **3. Adjournment:**

**Motion #15/16-335: The meeting was adjourned at 9:44 PM on a motion by Thomas Pope, seconded by Matthew O'Brien and unanimously approved.**

Respectfully submitted,

Laura Stone  
Town Council Clerk

*Note: These minutes are not official until acted on by the Town Council at its next regular meeting. Those meeting minutes will reflect approval or changes to these minutes*