

MINUTES of the Workshop
TOWN COUNCIL MEETING
32 WEST AVENUE
February 27, 2024 @ 3:00PM

1. CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Reddington called the meeting to order at 3:00 p.m. with the **Pledge of Allegiance**.

Present: Council Members Colleen Twardzik, and Steve Cobb on Zoom, Police Chief Ken McLaughlin, Finance Director Dawn Parks, Planning, Zoning & Development Director Ken Cimino, Town Manager Carol Houck, Jerrad Steele, and Town Clerk Donna Schwartz were also present. Veronica Faust, Don Walsh, and Jay Tyminski were not present.

2. ADOPTION of Agenda

A motion was made by Council Member Twardzik, seconded by Council Member Cobb, to adopt the agenda as presented. The motion was carried unanimously 3/0.

3. NEW BUSINESS

Mrs. Houck opened the presentation of the FY25 Budget stating that this was the 6th budget her and Mrs. Parks had done together. She noted that they are presenting a balanced budget at \$5,870,245. The tax rate will remain at \$.2378 per \$100. Mrs. Houck noted some other items on page two like salaries, health insurance costs, and part-time employees. She stated that in the five-year outlook the revenue falls short in years 2026 through 2029, meaning a tax increase may be needed. Mrs. Houck reported that the operating expenses for Public Works are reduced in FY2025. CRTF funding will increase in FY25 since we are utilizing this fund for non-OVPD equipment replacements. SRRTF and CIP funds are down because of spreading the work out over multiple fiscal years.

Mrs. Houck noted on page six that personnel costs are up, as are material costs. She stated that property values are holding steady and referred to the tax rate history on page eight. The pie chart on page nine shows that Public Safety is the largest department expense for the Town. Mrs. Houck announced that there will possibly be a 22.8% increase in employee health care costs with the State, which will result in higher premiums for all employees with health care. The **Paid Family Medical Leave Insurance Program** will be new for FY25. The Town will cover 100% of the first year. Mrs. Houck referred to page twelve which shows a comparison of nearby towns on employee benefits.

Mayor Reddington commented that they had done an outstanding job with the budget. It was very understandable and balanced. He questioned whether Mediacom would be laying cable in the developments of Silverwood and Shore Vista. Mrs. Houck replied yes when the time came. Mayor Reddington also noted that he was concerned about the deficit showing on slide three in FY26. He also questioned whether a two-cent increase would be enough.

Council Member Cobb commented on the overtime decrease for public safety employees to 80 hours a week, which is in line with regular employees. He also questioned the amount of building permits for the years 2025, 2026, and 2027. Council Member Cobb said it was reasonable to expect a one or two-cent increase in taxes to cover shortfalls. Mrs. Houck also noted that the Town will do a complete reassessment in 2027.

Council Member Twardzik thanked Mrs. Houck and Mrs. Parks for their diligence and hard work on the budget.

Mrs. Houck asked if the Council felt they needed another workshop on the budget, those present stated no.

4. **CITIZEN'S PRIVILEGE** – None

5. **ADJOURNMENT**

A motion was made by Council Member Twardzik, seconded by Council Member Cobb, to adjourn the meeting at 3:39pm. The motion was carried unanimously 3/0.

Respectfully submitted,
Donna M. Schwartz, MMC,
Town Clerk