

**MINUTES
EIGHTH UTILITIES DISTRICT
BOARD OF DIRECTORS
BUDGET WORKSHOP
MONDAY, APRIL 5, 2017
DONALD WILLIS HALL
18 MAIN STREET
MANCHESTER, CT 06042**

The Board of Directors of the Eighth Utilities District of Manchester, Connecticut held a Budget Workshop on Monday, April 5, 2017 6:30 p.m. at The Donald Willis Hall, 18 Main Street, Manchester, Connecticut.

Mrs. O'Marra called the meeting to order at 6:45 p.m.

Mrs. O'Marra stated that this is the second review of the Administration and Public Works budgets and the third review of the Fire Marshal budget.

Administration

Mr. Napoli explained that the only difference in this version of his budget is the \$17,000 increase in the insurance proposal. Our insurance broker indicated to Mrs. O'Marra that the insurance will be increasing by 5%.

Mr. Topping said that he would like to discuss the President's stipend. He asked Mrs. O'Marra if she would like to recuse herself during the discussion. Mrs. O'Marra recused herself. Mr. Topping assumed the chair.

Mr. Topping stated that he is not comfortable with the stipend that Mrs. O'Marra is currently receiving in lieu of the work that she performs. Mr. Topping stated that he is planning to bring an increase in Mrs. O'Marra's stipend to the electorate at the Annual Meeting on May 24th. Mr. Napoli stated that he is not in favor of increasing the stipend because when Mrs. O'Marra decides not to run again the stipend would remain at the increased amount. He feels that it would not be right for a new president to receive the same stipend as Mrs. O'Marra because he/she might not continue to put in the hours that Mrs. O'Marra currently works. He said that he wanted to add it to the Stipend Contingency with specific verbiage citing the condition that any increase in the new president's stipend has to be authorized by the Board of Directors.

Mr. Tyler stated that he felt that the money should be put in the Stipend Contingency so that it can be awarded without a vote. If a new president is elected and does not dedicate the same hours, the money will remain in the account. Mrs. Gionet agrees that the stipend that Mrs. O'Marra receives is too low. She asked for a job description, what the job entails, and how many hours the president is expected to work so that the compensation is not specific to one person but to the position. Mr. Topping said that he is going to ask Mrs. O'Marra to write down everything that she does prior to the Annual Meeting.

Mr. Luzusky had concerns about Mrs. Gionet's using the verbiage "what she is expected to do." He stated that she is not expected to do anything more than what is noted in the by-laws. Mr. Topping stated that if the president's stipend is not increased, he plans to make a

BUDGET WORKSHOP

APRIL 5, 2017

PAGE 2 OF 5

recommendation to hire a full-time operations manager. He said that Mrs. O'Marra is doing the work of an Operations Manager. All department heads report to her. She is a member of the union negotiating committees. She works with the insurance brokers. She is involved in the yearly audit. Mr. Topping said that he feels that the District is saving over \$100,000 per year because of the hours that Mrs. O'Marra works. He continued that when the President decides to retire from the Board there is no one else who is ready to step in and do what she does. Mr. Topping believes that we will then have to hire an Operations Manager at a much more competitive rate of pay.

Mr. Luzusky stated that the by-laws and the District's charter state that the department heads report to the members of the Board of Directors not the President. He believes that the specific commissioners should be reporting on their individual departments at the monthly meetings. Mr. Luzusky stated that every member of the Board of Directors has the ability to reprimand or any employee regardless of division. Mr. Topping responded that members of the Board are all fire commissioners. They all have the ability to suspend any member of the fire department. However, they do not have this ability with any other employees. He also noted that all commissioners on the Board of Directors are equal; Mr. Luzusky agreed.

Mr. Topping recognized Stephen Hilinski, 156 Loomis Street. Mr. Hilinski voiced his concern on taxes going up. There was a brief conversation on a tax increase.

Mr. Luzusky called for a motion.

Mr. Tyler asked the difference between a stipend and a salary. Mr. Napoli responded that a salaried employee receives an hourly rate for the hours that they work. A stipend is a set compensation to do what the job entails. Mr. Tyler questioned why the fire chief receives a salary, but the fire marshal receives a stipend. Mr. Luzusky responded that the Board of Directors had authorized the paid position of Assistant Chief because the need for a chief during the daytime hours was identified. The position was advertised, employment applications were received, and there was an oral panel consisting of area chiefs, and finally an interview with the President. A contract was negotiated with Acting Chief Moore to work 40+ hours per week with no overtime. When Chief Russo resigned Chief Moore was appointed Acting Chief. All other officers in the department receive a stipend.

Mr. Topping polled the Board regarding increasing President O'Marra's stipend. It was the consensus of the Board to increase the Stipend Contingence to \$8,500.

Mrs. O'Marra returned to the meeting and assumed the chair at 7:20 p.m. Mr. Topping informed Mrs. O'Marra that it was the consensus of the Board to increase the Stipend Contingency to \$8,500.

Public Works

Mr. Topping reported that the only change in his budget is that the Social Security budget was changed to \$21,452. This was based on the change in salaries. The total Public Works budget is now \$2,394,119.

Fire Marshal

Mr. Tyler reported that the salary increase had been changed from 3.5% to the 2% increase that has been proposed for all other employees. Social Security was lower because of the change in salaries. He stated that \$6,000 has been moved from Extra Duty to the Fire Marshal Stipend to compensate the fire marshal for the extra work that he has done on a continuing basis. Mr. Tyler said that the increase had based the increase on a study of Marshal Roback's extra duty for the past five years.

Marshal Roback noted that the proposed budget for Computer Maintenance had also increased. Mrs. O'Marra explained this was due to a server upgrade which will provide more storage for the Fire Marshal's office and the Fire Department.

Mr. Luzusky stated that he had questions on the increase in the stipend for the Fire Marshal.

Marshal Roback recused himself.

Mr. Luzusky asked if the Fire Marshal's current stipend is based on 25 hours per week. He wondered if the hours would increase if the Fire Marshal's stipend is increased. Mr. Topping stated that he had met with Marshal Roback to see how many hours he thought would be adequate to perform his job. Mr. Topping said that adding \$6,000 to the stipend would eliminate the requests for Extra Duty pay. He continued that Marshal Roback would not request any extra pay regardless of the hours he works if this increase is approved by the Board.

Mr. Luzusky asked if the \$6,760 increase included the proposed 2% increase or if the increase would be added to the \$60,000. Mr. Topping said that the 2% was included in the \$60,000. Mrs. O'Marra asked what the minimum hours per week would be if the increase was approved. Mr. Topping said that he and Marshal Roback had agreed upon a minimum between 27 and 28 hours per week.

Mr. Napoli asked what the staffing level in the Fire Marshal's office was when he received the stipend increase a few years ago. Mr. Topping said that it was lower, and the office is fully staffed today. Mr. Napoli stated that because the office is fully staffed there should be no need for extra duty by the fire marshal. He said that he will not vote in favor of an increase. Mrs. Gionet stated that the final amount of compensation is the same. It is cleaner to have it all in the stipend.

Mrs. O'Marra noted that Marshal Belliveau never received more than \$3,000 in a year for extra duty pay. Mr. Luzusky stated that in his 43 years with the fire department he does not remember any member of the fire department being compensated for extra duty.

Mr. Napoli asked if stipends are covered in the by-laws. Mrs. O'Marra stated that all elected and appointed officials receive a stipend. The Fire Marshal, Deputy Fire Marshal and one Fire Inspector receive stipends. The other inspectors are paid hourly. She stated that if the stipend is approved the requirements should be raised as well.

BUDGET WORKSHOP

APRIL 5, 2017

PAGE 4 OF 5

Mr. Napoli reiterated that extra duty pay should never have been approved for a stipend position. Mr. Topping stated that he is confident that when Marshal Roback brings in his hours that they will exceed 30 hours per week.

Mr. Tyler stated that he feels that the Fire Marshal's office is highly organized, and that the District saves money because the entire staff works part time. Mrs. Gionet noted that Marshal Roback is managing seven employees. Mrs. O'Marra stated that the Town of Manchester Fire Marshal's office is staffed with two full-time and one part-time employee. They are responsible for 75% of the town and have fewer man hours than we do.

Mr. Luzusky stated that he agrees with Mr. Napoli 90%. However, the Board set a precedent when we voted for extra duty pay. Mrs. O'Marra stated that the requests for extra duty pay did not come before the Board of Directors because they were being paid through payroll. Payroll requests do not come before the Board. Mr. Luzusky stated that he would not vote in favor of this increase unless a firm number of hours are established, and there is a method of accountability. Mr. Napoli requested that further discussion be postponed until the full Board is present.

Mr. Tyler stated that the Board agreed to a substantial increase for the Fire Chief, and he feels that the Board is not being fair to the Fire Marshal. Mr. Luzusky answered that there is no comparison between the two departments. The Fire Chief supervises approximately 140 volunteers and employees. It is a 24-hour operation. He also is working a 70-80 hour work week and being compensated for 40 hours per week.

Mr. Napoli again requested that this discussion be tabled until the full Board is present.

Mrs. O'Marra stated that the monthly reports show that Marshal Roback only does on plan review to every 20 that the Deputy Fire Marshal does. Mrs. O'Marra stated that it is her belief that the staff of the Fire Marshal's office is doing the bulk of the work.

Voted: Mr. Napoli made a motion to table the discussion on increasing the Fire Marshal's stipend until all members of the Board of Directors are present.
Seconded by Mr. Luzusky.

Mr. Tyler would like a comparison of three or four Fire Marshal's offices be done prior to the next workshop on the Fire Marshal's budget.

Mr. Luzusky asked for clarification of the motion on the floor. Mrs. O'Marra said that Mr. Napoli had moved that the discussion on the Fire Marshal's stipend be tabled until all members of the Board of Directors are present.

Mrs. O'Marra stated that Mr. Tyler will get the comparison information that he is requesting prior to the next workshop.

VOTED: Mr. Luzusky made a motion to adjourn.
Seconded by Mr. Napoli.

There being no other business the meeting adjourned at 8:04 p.m.

BUDGET WORKSHOP

APRIL 5, 2017

PAGE 5 OF 5

DIRECTORS PRESENT:

Mary O'Marra, President

Karen Gionet

Leonard Luzusky

Gerard Napoli

John Topping

Joseph Tyler

DIRECTOR(S) NOT PRESENT:

Deberah Bowen

FRANCES McCARTER

CLERK

EIGHTH UTILITIES DISTRICT