

WORKSHOP MEETING OF THE AGAWAM CITY COUNCIL

The following are the minutes from the:

**Agawam City Council Workshop Meeting
FY19 Budget Presentation
Monday, May 21, 2018
Doering School Auditorium
68 Main Street
Agawam, MA 01001**

The meeting was attended by all eleven of the City Councilors. Mayor Sapelli, Laurel Placzek and Cheryl St. John were also in attendance along with the respective Department Heads.

The meeting was called to order at 8:30pm immediately following the close of the regularly scheduled City Council meeting.

Each department was presented by Mayor Sapelli with questions asked accordingly.

IT Department

Mayor Sapelli explained any changes. Councilor Sandlin asked what the three water items were deducted and Council President explained that these are three self-sustaining departments that have administrative support.

Inspection Services

Mayor Sapelli explained any changes. Councilor Mercadante mentioned the removal of the Seal Enforcement Officer and adding an Assistant Inspector. He asked how Mayor came up with the \$63,874 salary. Treasurer Placzek noted the Assistant Inspector will be certified and paid at the same rate as other assistant inspectors (same tier and step). Councilor Mercadante wanted to know if this was a new hire or same person (it will be a new hire).

Planning Department

Mayor Sapelli explained that the Director of Planning will now be the Economic Developer and there will now be an Assistant Planner which will be Pam Kerr who does an excellent job and is performing most of the tasks already. Councilor Mercadante asked how he arrived at the \$56,000 starting salary and was there any additional special training needed – the Mayor responded that she has all the requirements necessary to do the job. The Treasurer responded that this position is the same level as the Assistant Collector and Assistant Clerk.

Fire Department

Mayor stated that four new firefighters were added so Overtime will decrease because of these new hires. The town is changing to LED lighting so we are starting to see savings in the electricity line items. Councilor Mercadante asked if the Fire Chief and Deputy Fire Chief overlapped in duties. Yes, the Mayor stated, they do overlap duties for certain

issues. Councilor Cavallo questioned the ambulance fees covering some of the new firefighter salaries. Mayor responded that we will now be able to run a third ambulance. Councilor Sandlin asked why both the firetruck and ambulance frequently go out at the same time. Mayor stated not every time however some equipment (i.e. Jaws of Life) are not on ambulances so the fire truck would have to go on call as well. Councilor Suffriti asked if the new firefighters were medically trained as well (yes, they are said the Mayor) Council President Johnson asked if the new firefighters' salaries would be graduated since their anticipated start date wouldn't be on July 1st (yes, they would be graduated).

DPW

Mayor stated nothing was out of the ordinary with this line item. Councilor Letellier asked about the Tree Warden and wished the person was more proactive with taking down trees. Mayor said we have taken down a lot of trees and doesn't agree with many of the complaints. Councilor Letellier stated she had a specific complaint and Mayor asked for the information so he could look into it. Councilor Sandlin asked if we contracted out for tree removal and Mayor responded affirmatively as the town does not own a bucket truck. Councilor Magovern praised the DPW as every time he has had a complaint from a resident, Chris Golba has had it quickly remedied. He does think, however, that the tree warden should be an arborist. Councilor Mineo agreed with the swift action of the DPW. Council President Johnson reminded everyone that the law prohibits the town from cutting or removing a healthy tree.

Highway and Grounds

Mayor stated that tree removal increased as well as signs and posts as many signs need to be replaced this year.

Motor Vehicle Maintenance

Most of the changes are contractual and a veteran staff member was replaced with a new lower step.

Water Department

Changes included a purchase of equipment that cuts through asphalt making it much easier. There were also increases due to contractual services for the pumping stations. Road materials also increased mainly due to paving the streets after the water main reconstruction. Councilor Mercadante asked for the definition of water system materials which he was told included pipes, hydrants, valves, meters and the like. Council President Johnson noted that since this was not level funded, he assumes it is not predicated on a rate increase? Councilor Cavallo appreciated the backup information.

Wastewater

Most variances were due to contractual obligations. Equipment Repair decreased from \$17,900 to \$3,900 because the equipment is no longer needed.

Engineering

Mayor stated it was fairly level funded and mentioned he frequently receives compliments of the Engineering and DPW Departments for their work as well as the lack of potholes in our town. He noted that PVPC considers Michelle Chase one of the most respected engineers.

Golf Course

Mayor believes we now have a great team with Tom DiRico and Dan Shay. Council President Johnson realizes how constrained the course is because of prior year's mismanagement. Treasurer Placzek said Tom DiRico has many great ideas and also wants to advertise soon. Councilor Magovern has heard only positive comments so far. Councilor Letellier asked about the audit results. Mayor Sapelli noted it was not an audit but more of a review and a draft of personnel issues. Council President Johnson welcomes Tom DiRico and has also been hearing great things and told Dan Shay that he also heard the course was in great shape.

Treasurer

Increases were due to contractual increases and there was a typo regarding the number of employees. (She really didn't hire 45 additional employees – typo)

Auditor

Contractual increases.

City Council

Councilor Letellier asked in Cheryl had anything to add.

Mayor

Contractual increases.

Law Department

Restructuring.

Administrative Building

Contractual increases due to a Memorandum of Understanding signed six months ago.

The workshop was adjourned at 9:10pm

Respectfully submitted,

Christopher C. Johnson, President
Agawam City Council

cc: Full Council, Mayor, Solicitor