

MIDDLEFIELD BOARD OF FINANCE
405 Main Street
Middlefield, Connecticut 06455

Minutes of the March 18, 2021 Budget Workshop Video Conference

Jim Irish started the meeting at ~7:06 pm.

Attendance:

Members

Others

X	Irish, Jim	X	Rusilowicz, Al
X	Kowal, Melissa	A	Bailey, Ed
X	Lowry, David		
X	Nick, Joel	X	Anne Olszewski
A	Skelps, Michael		
X	Wolak, Mary		

A=Absent

X=Present

Discussion for clarification of proposed FY22 budget items including tax collection rate - Al Rusilowicz / Jim Irish

- Budget for potential salary increases has been included in contingency item; not in salary numbers because this is contract negotiation year.
- State statutes limit (caps) year to year, town expense growth to be no more than 2.5% of last year's total municipal expenses [both calculations are less debt service and small miscellaneous items]. The 1st selectmen's FY22 budget as presented comes in at 102.57% of last year's. Implication - the BOF needs to present a budget that is consistent with the state statute cap on any total increase.
- The tax collector has consistently collected between 98-99% of each yearly, adjusted, collectible taxes. Yearly total uncollected taxes has been reasonably constant, with a slight increase in the last two years.
- Collecting back taxes more than one year old has proven to be difficult; collecting last year's back taxes has been more successful.
- This current FY21 year will see a number of foreclosures and actions that may reduce the back taxes collectible as we go into FY22
- Overall, our tax collector continues to do an excellent job of achieving town tax revenue at or above yearly mill rate billing.

Discussion regarding DMIAAB: meeting or not? sticker cost and out-year garbage collection plans

- BOS has requested joint meeting with DMIAAB and BOF - Jim to schedule with Dom. Issues to be discussed will include alternate options for truck purchase (as indicated in the proposed DMIAAB budget), the method of funding current and potential increases in tipping fees (sticker increase/ other) , and general discussion of the need for out-year plans - given MIRA's plan to modify their operation.

Discussion of other miscellaneous budget topics

- It was agreed that we should invite Inland Wetland and Emergency Management to join us in a workshop to understand each organizations' recent FY21 activities and plans in FY22. Therefore, Jim will invite Rebecca Adams Reider and Rob Poturnicki to a workshop.
- Give a discussion about re-energizing the Economic Development Commission and the Conservation Commission at our recent Public Hearing, it was suggested that Middlefield create (potentially semi-annual) advertisements for the Town Times that describes the open commission positions we have, with a description of the particular responsibilities and duties of the each commission, and a tease for the value of volunteering time and expertise to those purposes.
- Al routinely uncovers/encounters potential changes to the budget. He wondered how often he should present those to the board. It was decided, given the cap on town expense spending increases that we are near/over, we should update the budget item numbers with changes, and implications on the spending cap, each week - to have status available for the Thursday workshops.

The meeting was adjourned at ~9:12 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Jim Irish