

At a Budget Public Hearing of the Town Council holden in and for the Town of Gloucester on April 23, 2019:

I. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m.

II. Roll Call

Members Present: George O. (Buster) Steere, Jr., President; Walter M. O. Steere, III, Vice-President William E. Reichert; Julian (Jay) Forgue. and Patricia Henry;

Member Absent: none

Also Present: Jean Fecteau, Town Clerk; Diane Brennan, Finance Director;

III. Pledge of Allegiance

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

IV. Public Hearing

A. Proposed budget for Fiscal Year 2019/2020

Councilor G. Steere stated this Public Hearing was advertised in the Observer the week of April 8th, 2019.

Councilor G. Steere DECLARED the Public Hearing OPEN.

1. Review of proposed budget (as needed)

No review. Councilor G. Steere questioned if anyone present had any questions and/or discussion regarding the proposed budget.

Councilor G. Steere stated there are a few issues which need to be discussed.

Councilor G. Steere brought up for discussion the work that was determined to be needed at the Police Station.

Councilor W. Steere stated there is a lot of work to be done on the building and site work at the Police Station.

Councilor G. Steere noted that there was a “walk through” with a company, that does HVAC engineering, at both the Senior Center and the Police Station. Councilor G. Steere stated it appears the Senior Center is all set with the current set aside fo funds but more funds will be needed for police department.

G. Trembl stated we will need another \$125,000 for the work at the Police Station. G. Steere stated we already have \$34,000 set aside.

G. Trembl stated a contractor walked through with PRISM and we now have a solid number for the Police Department at approximately \$159,000.

Councilor Henry stated we had discussed needing approx. \$217,000 in Capital for the Police Department and asked if that was a “good number”.

Councilor G. Steere elaborated on fixes needed at the Police Station due to a lightning strike years ago. Council and G. Trembl discussed that this was the first they were aware of a lightning strike after all these years.

Council consensus was to do a one time transfer from surplus to have the problems at the police station repaired (\$125,000)

Councilor G. Steere asked D. Brennan if the number under: Financial Administration, Treasurer’s Office, Financial Analyst/Sr. Accountant should be adjusted to reflect the actual salary of a new hire. D. Brennan stated that number should be increased to \$52,000 to reflect the actual salary.

Councilor G. Steere asked if anyone in the audience would like to speak.

1. W. Steere, Jr., 1318 Putnam Pike, questioned what we are using from Surplus in this proposed budget. D. Brennan stated the number is \$645,000 which doesn’t include the \$125,000 previously discussed. Councilor Henry stated \$770,000. W. Steere questioned what that would bring Surplus down to. D. Brennan stated the 16% range.

W. Steere, Jr. stated there were two pots of money for Gloucester Schools \$90,000 for two years and last year \$100,000 was set aside. W. Steere asked how much did we use and how much was going to be replenished.

D. Steere stated on page 1 there is \$107,000 (Prior Year Set Aside funds for loss of State Aid) taken from \$180,000 in that account and we put \$75,000 back (Special Appropriations, GPS for loss in state aid). W. Steere questioned how much was left in that account and D. Steere stated you will have approx. \$150,000 left in that account. D. Steere stated the School is also getting the 4%. W. Steere asked if that 4% was fully taxable, D. Steere answered in the affirmative. W. Steere questioned if the \$200,000 was still there, set aside.

W. Steere, Jr. asked how much was set aside for the Foster/Glocester proration and how much did we use in this budget. D. Steere stated we had \$200,000 set aside and we are using \$100,000 to offset and in Special Appropriations we put \$100,000 back to keep that account whole.

W. Steere spoke about the efforts the local school committee and the Superintendent made while working on budget.

Councilor G. Steere questioned if the efforts he is talking about are reflected in the budget and W. Steere, Jr. stated he believed they were included.

W. Steere, Jr. questioned how much the 3.5% increase was between the region, the local school and the town and how much the tax rate was going up. Councilor Henry stated the increase for the town in dollars was \$115,000.

Discussion followed on growth in town and tax rate estimates based on the State’s actions.

D. Brennan spoke from her seat about the Governor's proposed budget and other factors.

Councilor Henry stated that the Finance Director is working towards a better method of financing the "swing" between Foster and Gloucester as the swing is just getting greater for Gloucester. Councilor Henry stated we need to come up with a more stable plan so we can better anticipate our share in the future.

Councilor G. Steere again asked if anyone from the public wished to be heard. None

Councilor Henry questioned if this was the time to consider other adjustments. Councilor G. Steere stated he had one he wanted to bring up. Councilor G. Steere spoke regarding the EMA Director and the work he has accomplished. Councilor G. Steere stated that when the salary compensation study was done the consultant had said he couldn't compare the EMA because each town does different jobs. All Councilors spoke regarding this position including the grants G. Mosca has obtained, the work towards creating a shelter in town, and the State required reports he has completed on behalf of the Town. Council agreed to raise that salary up to \$15,000.

G. Steere and the Clerk reviewed the proposed changes to be voted at next meeting:

1. Transfer from Surplus for Police Station (\$125,000)
2. Addition to Financial Administration, Treasurer's Office, Financial Analyst/Sr. Accountant should be adjusted to reflect the actual salary of a new hire (change from \$48,221 to \$52,000)
3. Increase EMA salary (\$11,165 to \$15,000)

Councilor G. Steere stated the Budget Board did a great job and thanked D. Steere.

Councilor Henry stated both schools worked very hard with everyone on the budget and thanked them.

D. Brennan will work on the numbers and present to Council.

Councilor G. Steere DECLARED the Public Hearing CLOSED.

Councilor G. Steere stated the Budget Referendum will be held on May 21, 2019 at the Senior Center from 8:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m.

Councilor W. Steere stated the Council will adopt the budget at our next meeting, May 2nd, and it will include all changes proposed tonight. Councilor W. Steere stated that is the budget that will be voted on at the all day referendum. Councilor W. Steere stated he hopes the budget passes but if not we will have to operate at the current budget. Councilor W. Steere stated we will still have to pay the Region the amount they asked for. Councilor W. Steere stated there would then have to be wholesale cuts throughout the town if the budget does not pass. Councilor W. Steere stated we have not asked for anything extravagant. Councilor W. Steere also stated our Capital is to care for our buildings and be fair to our employees, as the Region does.

Sending a robo-call reminder was discussed.

V. Adjourn

MOTION was made by Councilor Henry to ADJOURN at 7:42 p.m.; seconded by Councilor Henry

Discussion: none

VOTE: AYES- G. Steere, W. Steere, Reichert, Forgue and Henry
NAYS-0

MOTION PASSED