

Legislative Council Questions and Clarifications Edition #3

PURCHASING

- LINE 0550 why is postage expense increasing?

We are anticipating additional mailing increases in every department and planning for a revaluation.

- Line 0590 Centralized health/safety/sanitization why this new line? Is this an attempt at cost savings?
- This line was added to the budget in an attempt to budget appropriately for the COVID-19 pandemic. This allows the Town to have an appropriate accounting of the supplies centralized, as the essential need for purchasing PPE and related health safety items will continue through much of FY21.

STATE OF CONNECTICUT-TOWN REVENUE

- State Grants are way off anticipated numbers

All State Revenue accounts are directly taken from the State when they publish Town by Town revenues, and barring a mid-year change, should be accurate to the penny. If there is an account that looks off, please feel free to inquire.

- COVID-19 5.1 million is not guaranteed - Need Justification

States and Local Governments across the nation are seeing and planning for an unprecedented amount of lost revenues resulting from the extreme health and safety measures COVID19 has demanded of all of us. Just as the Federal Government has “bailed out” large sections of the business community to protect the economy, State and Local Governments need to be part of this relief, for two main reasons: 1) we need to be able to continue providing the very front line necessary services we provide our residents and 2) leading Economists have states that recovery efforts related to the economic recovery must include States and Locals to be successful. That said, do, there is not a guarantee, but we have to fight for this for our residents or they get hurt the most with unfair tax increases at the worst possible time.

STATE OF CONNECTICUT-EDUCATION REVENUE

- How sure is the administration that we are getting 985,224 more than last year in ECS funding?

The ECS funding is from the State of Connecticut. The State determines how much municipalities will receive. This is the next year in ECS Reform increases for Alliance Districts, which is being implemented over a 10-year period.

- Municipal stabilization: When do we receive this?

There is nothing in YTD. This is a state grant that help towns that do not qualify for either of the Urban Act Grants Program or the Small-Town Economic Assistance Program (STEAP) to apply for grants-in-aid under the provisions of the Urban Act Grants Program. We usually get the funding in October 31, 2020.

A State Revenue that Hamden will receive a solid increase in, based upon verified State estimates is the following, located under State of CT Revenues:

10495- 9642 MRS MOTOR VEHICLE PROPERTY TAX 945,574

TAX COLLECTOR

- Back taxes- provide justification for 1,000,000 million more above department request?

The Tax Department produces models of back tax collections based on three years, five years and 10 years. The Departmental request was based off a three-year average. Back Taxes are expected to increase as the percentage of payments made in the traditional Tax Revenue line reduces by X percent. These “lost” funds are not actually lost, but they move to Back Taxes, with the State Mandated Interest Requirement.

That said, Tax Revenues are being evaluated on a daily basis and along with the State and other municipalities to come up with the best estimates we can with the many uncertainties we are experiencing. A spreadsheet from CCM distributed to the Council last week shows the highlights of what roughly 60-70 communities in CT are doing at this time and we are monitoring for changes.

- Provide justification of the increase of Motor vehicle taxes?

As of February 2020, the Town of Hamden collected 87% or \$12 million of the \$14 million budgeted. With only four months remaining in the fiscal year, the Town was on track to achieve this number before COVID-19 pandemic.

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TOWN ATTORNEY

- Average salary for a paralegal with 10-20 years' experience is 54-58,000.

Collective Bargaining Agreement dictates this salary.

TRAFFIC

- Electric sign and Technician each making 83,000/year. Why do we need a sign maintainer for 55,000??? Is the Mayor considering funding this at half a year for 20,000?

Please see Mayor's Adjusted Budget Recommendations.

ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS:

1. What would each department look like as far as functionality, etc. with a 5% to 10% cut?

The essential ones would not be able to provide the level of service our residents expect. It's important to remember just how much of our budget is strictly contractually driven. We are working on expenditure reduction recommendations in areas that will take away some programs and functions, but protect all essential services.

We will also work to provide the Council with a document that illustrates what portions of the Departmental budgets are actually discretionary.

Arts budget

Will the summer concerts be held this year and can this line be eliminated?

Traditional summer concerts, with large gatherings, will not be possible in the Summer of 2020.

Will the manager be full time the next year given limited?

The value of the Arts in such times can hardly be calculated. While the delivery of programs and services will be different than previous years, there will be more work for the Arts Department than there was in previous years in many ways.

Assessor

Do we need to hire assessor?

The short answer is: Yes. The Assessor's position is critical to the function of the Finance Department. An assessor determines the value of properties for local real estate taxation purposes. The figures assessor derived are used to calculate future property taxes and helps creates the Grand List. Without a full-time assessor, the town has struggled to: fully evaluate properties for a complete grand list, prepare Hamden for our Revaluation and additional revenue increase functions.

Community Garden

Will this be open this year? Can we cut?

It will be open, and could be more essential than any other year given financial challenges.

Elderly services

Can we raise more revenue by renting out the room more often?

In regular times, possibly. This year, with limited large functions, unlikely.

Registrar

Why is the typist raise so high?

Collective Bargaining Agreement and Department Recommended Upgrade.