

**Preston Board of Finance
Special Meeting
Wednesday March 14, 2018
7:00 pm
Preston Town Hall**

1. Call to Order

Melissa Lennon, Chair called the meeting to order at 7:05 pm

Roll Call

Members

Melissa Lennon – Chair
Jerry Grabarek – Vice Chairman
Stacey Becker – Clerk
Dan Duprey
Keith Wucik
Ken Zachem

Alternates

Ian Stammel
Lennie Spencer

Also Present

1st Selectman Robert Congdon
Selectman Lynwood Crary
Selectman Mike Sinko
John Spang, Finance Director

2. Public Comment

Andy Depta, Preston resident submitted to BoF members comments regarding Preston's budget titled: **2018-2019 Town Budget comments Andy R. Depta, 6 Young Court, Preston, CT personal opinion on the BOS/Town Budget for 2018-2019 as submitted to the Preston BOF by the Preston BOS on March 6, 2018.** and read his comments to the Board.

3. FY19 General Government (BoS) Expense Budget Proposal Workshop

M. Lennon asked 1st Selectman Congdon to walk the BoF through the budget and requested that members ask questions.

1st Selectman Congdon stated that the Budget is based on a 3% wage increase, which equals the average negotiated across the State

The BoS after reviewing the PRA budget cut it by \$30,000.

The library budget was adjusted to reflect a 3% wage increase, and reduced the heating line item due to savings by going to natural gas.

Parks & Recreation's Director salary was adjusted to the same pay scale as the Town's secretarial staff.

Parks & Recreation's assistant salary was adjusted to the lower end of secretarial staff.

The money for geese removal was removed from the budget.

Fire Department had a \$20,000 increase, which is offset by a revenue of Poquetanuck Fire Department ambulance billing.

The total budget as presented is a \$213,000.00 increase over last year. 6.28% of that is from 3 items. \$160,869.00 for the additional trooper, \$24,035.00 for the added cost of the fire Department, where \$20,000 is offset from revenue and a \$13,000 increase in the PRA budget. Those 3 items increases the General Government budget by 0.45% over last year.

S. Becker asked why money is returned every year and how is it determined.

1st Selectman Congdon explained;

- Salaries – savings due to a long time employee's retirement.
- Public Works – mild winter and chip sealing was not completed – so the money was returned.
- Senior Affairs – lost a driver, Fran Minor did the driving and did not charge for her time.

K. Wucik noted that in 2016 there were 2 State troopers at \$315,000 and now \$370,000 is being proposed, that is a \$55,000 increase.

1st Selectman Congdon explained it is strictly the number the State Police charge the Town.

K. Wucik stated that technically the Fire Department's \$24,000 is not an increase, the increase is \$4,000 because they are returning \$20,000.

1st Selectman stated exactly, but it has to be shown as an expense.

M. Lennon asked about the PRA's proposed funds for a Clerk of the Works position.

1st Selectman Congdon explained that the next 6 to 8 months, work on the property will be going at an aggressive rate. A Clerk of the Works would come in every morning and take pictures, return at the end of the day and calculate cubic yards moved, so the Town knows what it's paying for and that it is done properly.

M. Lennon noted that she asked 1st Selectman Congdon to bring his lap top and excel files so he could answer any questions and explain what every piece is rather than just looking at the high level detail.

K. Wucik asked why the Registrar of Voters is a 7.9% increase.

1st Selectman Congdon explained the Registrar of Voters is an unfunded state mandate that used to be a volunteer position with no required training. It now requires training and certification and the costs have gone through the roof.

K. Wucik asked about Planning & Zoning's 38% increase.

1st Selectman Congdon answered that the increase is to hire an engineer to review the new P&Z regulations.

K. Wucik noted that it would make more sense to take it out of something else rather than put a 1 time cost in the budget.

K. Wucik asked why Public Works wage increase was 4.13% rather than 3% like everyone else.

1st Selectman Congdon answered that it included a step for one of the employees.

J. Grabarek commented that he would like to see the second trooper position cut.

M. Lennon stated the decision should be made at a public hearing where residents could voice their opinion. This would be honoring the BoS original intent of leaving the two positions in so residents could decide if they want the two positions or cut 1 due to the expense.

1st Selectman Congdon noted that it should go to a Public Hearing and the BoF has the opportunity to cut it after the Public Hearing.

4. FY19 State and Local Revenue Estimated Budget Workshop

M. Lennon noted that excess cost for Special Ed was supposed to be eliminated this past year in the original state predictions and they ended up putting it back and changing the formula which is why the money is lower.

1st Selectman Congdon stated that the Board of Ed put in \$245,000 in last year's budget because they weren't going to get Excess Cost.

1st Selectman Congdon stated that last year the Grand List was \$403,000. this year the Grand List is \$428,000 which includes Covanta at 43 million dollars. If you subtract the 43million, it shows the drop in the Grand List.

5. Public Comment

Andy Depta commented that M. Lennon asked the BoF members if they had any more questions and no one answered. Are you going to hold more workshops and get into the details of the line items?

M. Lennon answered that she offered the BoF to ask the B So based on the feedback from the members I assume they are comfortable with the presentation and information that was available.

1st Selectman Congdon noted that this is the first step in the process. Revenues have not been analyzed yet and the BoF has not looked at the BoE yet. Once that is done the BoF can look at it holistically.

6. Adjournment

A motion was made by K. Zachem and seconded by S. Becker to adjourn the meeting at 8:29 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Roberta Charpentier