

APPROVED  
MINUTES OF THE MILFORD BOARD OF SELECTMEN WORK SESSION  
December 7, 2015

**PRESENT:** Mark Fougere, Chairman  
Kevin Federico, Vice Chairman  
Mike Putnam, Member  
Katherine Bauer, Member  
Gary Daniels, Member  
Mark Bender, Town Administrator  
Darlene J. Bouffard, Recording Secretary

**This work session was not televised, but was recorded (audio).**

**1. CALL TO ORDER:** Chairman Fougere called the work session to order at 5:00 p.m. The purpose of this work session is to discuss budget items and then move on to the Warrant Articles, whatever does not get finished will be carried over to the meeting next week.

MACC Base – Selectman Putnam indicated the \$58,000 increase includes a 3% salary increase, and \$50,000 is for the new equipment line to enhance fire and police by getting their own frequency. The current equipment is old (1988-1992). If the town goes with a 2% wage increase, the same will be done for MACC Base employees. Chairman Fougere asked if Jason Johnson can provide the funds spent to date as of the end of November. Selectman Bauer asked if the part time coverage could be done more efficiently. There are six people that are full time and then there are part time people. There is also the possibility of Lyndeborough joining, which would help with the cost sharing. Mark Bender would like to check on the cost sharing for MACC Base health insurance. If MACC Base can get on the town insurance, that might save some money. Selectman Putnam said MACC Base has been on their own, they are not considered town employees. Vice Chairman Federico said that salaries came up at the Board of Governor’s meeting. There are some things that must be done according to the inter-municipal agreement that they fall under. Chairman Fougere asked if there is a way that the insurance can be changed to include them on the town plan to save money. Vice Chairman Federico said there are road blocks with that because the employees are not paid by the town, they are paid by MACC Base, so the town insurance will not allow that. Selectman Putnam said that has been look at in the past. Chairman Fougere said it would only be worth it if it saves money. Selectman Putnam knows that Bill Drescher drew up the municipal agreement years ago and we looked at that. Chairman Fougere would like to look at it for next year, to see if it would save any money or if it can even be done. Mark Bender is looking at the MACC Base insurance plans, which are significantly higher than the town employee premium.

SALARY INCREASE – Do all Board members support a 3% wage increase? The employees over the past five years have had either a 1 or 2 % increase; it is about \$40,000 per percentage point. Vice Chairman Federico said there are department heads that might only give 2%, but let’s leave it at 3% and the department head can reward those employees that do an exceptional job and leave it to their discretion. Selectman Bauer agreed to leave it at 3% at the discretion of the department heads. Selectman Putnam has no problem with a 3% as long as it is not automatic. Selectman Daniels noted the budget needs to be built up from the bottom, it is not sustainable the way it is. Chairman Fougere would rather go with a 2% increase; there are only so many things that are flexible and this is one of them. The tax base is not growing fast enough. Vice Chairman Federico said maybe we could cut the paving line item in the budget to a lower number since there is the \$5 million warrant article for paving roads, but we need to leave the money for paving in the budget in case the warrant article does not pass. Vice Chairman Federico asked what the Cost of Living increase is this year? It was stated the COLA is 2.1%. Vice Chairman Federico asked what part of the proposed increase is salary and what is flexible.

TIME CARD MANAGEMENT – Chairman Fougere said the new system for payroll would cost \$42,000 for this year. Jack Sheehy has projected the cost savings in staff time, but no one particular budget item will go down. Selectman Daniels asked how many bids were obtained for this software? Are there other companies that can do this for less? Selectman Bauer asked if the Board could get information on the current system. Mark Bender indicated currently employees keep track of their time on a weekly basis and identify when they use vacation hours, or sick hours, etc. This new system uses biometric thumbprint which allows employees to clock in and out, the advantage is there is no manual calculation involved as is currently used, so it would improve accuracy. Selectman Daniels asked if employees are not following the rules that are in the employee handbook, if they are not, they

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12/07/15**

1 should not be here. It seems the errors being made should be brought up to someone, \$35,000 in errors is a lot of  
2 errors. Chairman Fougere indicated that moving to an electronic system will save staff time. Selectman Daniels  
3 said the accuracy will save errors but would each work station need to have a biometric computer reader? Mark  
4 Bender said the biometric thumbprint reader is the small cost of the system, but there are other costs. Rick Riendeau  
5 and Mary Dickson handles payroll and people punch in when they get there, they have to enter if it is a call in, cal-  
6 culate the hours, which is written on another sheet that comes to payroll to process. Once it is on that, Rick checks it  
7 and Kathy Townsend checks it. Mr. Riendeau noted the electronic payroll can be tailored for the use. Vice Chair-  
8 man Federico asked if MUNIS can handle the payroll system electronically? Selectman Daniels would rather try to  
9 get the cost down on the payroll system, rather than approve this. Jack Sheehy needs to provide additional infor-  
10 mation on this when he is back from vacation.

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12 Vice Chairman Federico asked what percent would be acceptable to Selectman Daniels for a payroll in-  
13 crease. Selectman Daniels said he would like to get some costs down by thinking outside the box. There are some  
14 costs that cannot be reduced. Mark Bender said when the budget was built, we talked to the Department Heads  
15 about each item, that all gets built and then you add taxes, benefits, etc. and continue building. There are debt pay-  
16 ments as well that are added in. We look at staffing first and fixed expenses. All of the fuel items were looked at as  
17 well (gas, diesel, natural gas). We did not start with the 2015 budget as the base and just add a percentage, we chal-  
18 lenge what each department wants to put into the budget. Selectman Putnam was on a committee years ago that  
19 looked at the school and town expenses and everything was looked at and we could not find any place to cut, 9 peo-  
20 ple were on that committee. Selectman Bauer said it seems the budget has been fully analyzed by the Town Admin-  
21 istrator and the Department Heads; she does not see a reason to re-analyze it. Mark Bender said there are a few  
22 things that could be considered to lower the budget, including the \$4,000 for cruiser retrofit to ambulance. The  
23 cemetery irrigation system would be nice to have but if we have to pull it out, that would be another \$47,000. That  
24 will help and the project will get done over the next 2-3 years instead. Mark Bender can keep looking for other  
25 items but wants to know how much money he is looking for. A \$100,000 reduction in roads and bridges paving in  
26 the operating budget would also help. Mark Bender said if the Board approves those changes, that would be  
27 \$147,000 off the budget, but if the Board wants more cut, Mark Bender can keep looking; with those cuts it would  
28 be a 3.6% increase from the 2015 budget.

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30 Selectman Daniels wants to see the priorities, the Town Administrator should be able to tell the Board what  
31 the departments need to have and what would just be nice to have. Mark Bender said every line item of the budget  
32 has been scrutinized. Selectman Daniels is not sure we have looked at some different ways to do what needs to be  
33 done and how it can be accomplished. Mark Bender feels that we have, for example, a truck was taken and re-built  
34 with parts; we will get maybe 3-4 years out of it now. Selectman Bauer said the department heads know their peo-  
35 ple, their budget and their needs and now the town will scrutinize the budget. Selectman Bauer trusts the department  
36 heads. Rick Riendeau said the staff is constantly seeking pricing and does not just buy from one source; they are  
37 always scrutinizing the costs and looking at different vendors and good used auto parts.

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39 Vice Chairman Federico feels this is a fully vetted budget and it comes down to what we do and don't want  
40 to spend money on. What Vice Chairman Federico is considering is do you think there is a possibility that we  
41 would present a budget that all five of us might support? Selectman Daniels is hearing that some people sitting here  
42 are perfectly fine with this budget and we should just stop wasting time and vote. Selectman Daniels feels the bud-  
43 get is not perfect; the Board of Selectmen's job is to take the information from the Town Administrator and determine  
44 what we need in order to function. Some things may need to get dropped. Selectman Daniels wants to look at the  
45 list of priorities. The Town Administrator did his job and now the Board of Selectmen needs to decide what is ac-  
46 ceptable to the town. If we can get to that point, we might be unanimous, but it needs to be affordable. What are we  
47 willing to give up that are higher priorities? Chairman Fougere suggested if Town Administrator Bender could look  
48 at the departments that might have a little room and the big spending items, the Board can talk about everything next  
49 Monday.

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51 Town Administrator Mark Bender stated the staff has provided the budget information and done the presen-  
52 tation but the Board still needs to scrutinize and decide what the residents can afford. We can go back and look for  
53 additional savings and what has to be cut. Vice Chairman Federico asked what the drop dead date is for the Board  
54 positions on warrant articles. Darlene Bouffard, Recording Secretary, stated the drop dead date is Monday January  
55 25 when they must be posted with the Board positions.

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57 **2. ADJOURNMENT:** There being no further business to come before this Meeting, Selectman Putnam moved to  
58 adjourn at 6:50 p.m. Selectman Bauer seconded. All were in favor. Motion passed 5/0.

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