

January 9, 2024

5:05 pm

Present: Lori Marko, Alison Mrohs, Heidi Aucoin, Tim Payson, Jarod Gleason, Luke Reinhard

Discussion: The Budget Committee believes that an overall budget cut % or shaving budgets that are already lean is not the answer going forward. We need to look deep at saving on large ticket costs to our budget without reducing the level of service.

Cola and Merit

The consensus of the committee is that giving both raises is unsustainable in the budget. The level of service from our town employees has ALWAYS been excellent. Even before the merit policy was instituted. We have seen an 8% increase in the overall budget since the beginning of this budget process. Rarely do employees get a 5.5% annual increase, most are between 3-5% if they receive one at all.

Recommendations:

1. 1.5% Cola for employees earning \$60K or above and 2% for employees earning less than \$60k.
2. Remove merit increases that have only been in place for 2-3 years. In such a small organization with a productive workforce is it possible to give objective employee reviews. This would allow for a more generous Cola each year.

Library – Leave at \$250,000.00

Review hours of service. The library is requesting additional staff to add hours for programs and meetings. There is a respect for what the library offers. Patrons will come when the library is open, it is not a service that needs to be open full time.

Recommendations:

Keep or reduce current hours and schedule these activities during the times that the library is open. Consider part time employees rather than another full time to reduce the cost of benefit packages.

FOR LATER REVIEW

Police Department

There was discussion about the College's financial participation in the need for police coverage. The college does not have an arresting officer so a Henniker PD officer must be called to make an arrest.

Recommendations:

Review the % of calls that are on or related to the college campus and what that cost is to the town.

Health Insurance

This is a large cost to the benefit packages. We need to provide adequate coverage to our workforce while reviewing carefully to maintain cost to both employer and employee.

Recommendations:

Review current plans offered. Identify two that meet the needs of our workforce. There are plans that would benefit the employer and the employee at the cost level.

Educate the employees about the coverage so they see the benefit and savings to them while maintaining adequate coverage. EDUCATION IS THE KEY.

Technology

Independent audit of current workstations.

Recommendations:

- 1. As reported to the CIP / Budget Committee there are multiple workstations throughout the town departments. Some staff have both a PC and a laptop. A review is recommended to evaluate the need for all stations. Though most software is licensed to the user there are other associated costs to each workstation. There may be workstations that would be better served with laptops docking stations. This also allows more flexibility in workspaces.**

The committee respectfully understands that many of these recommendations take research, and time to analyze collected data. As a year-round committee, we are willing to be the “hands to the plow” for the board. We would provide the board with data to make decisions.