



Legislation Text

File #: 22-647, Version: 1

FINANCIAL BUSINESS REQUEST (FBR)

Motion/Request:

MOTION to approve a supplemental appropriation of \$25,000 to Account #10140107-56306 (Tree Removal) from Undesignated to provide adequate funding for ongoing removal of hazard trees in the Town rights-of-way.

Background:

In 2018 the region was struck with a significant gypsy moth infestation, which resulted in a substantial kill of oak trees in particular. The eventual impact of this extended into 2020 and is still being seen. The impact of this to our trees was augmented by the spread into our area in 2019 of the Emerald Ash Borer that dramatically affected our ash trees. The progressive effects of this continue to unfold.

As a result, substantial funding beyond the traditional \$4,000 annual budget amount have been required to tackle the needed removals in our rights-of-way. The following details this:

	<u>Supplemental Appropriation</u>	<u>Budget Transfer</u>	<u>Total Additional</u>
FY19	\$25,000	\$ 3,400	\$28,400
FY20		\$49,000	\$49,000
FY21		\$11,400	\$11,400
FY22	\$25,000	\$ 6,400	\$31,400

This amounts to an average additional annual funding need of more than \$30,000. The need for removal of hazard trees persists and we have assembled a list so far of more than twenty (20) trees that need to come down in our road rights-of-way. We have spent \$760 on spontaneous needs related to storm damage, leaving \$3,240 in the account, which is wholly inadequate to meet the present need, full identification of which remains ongoing.

Department Comment/Recommendation:

Not knowing where the public works budget at large is headed at this stage of the fiscal year, and yet recognizing the immediate need for tree removal, I request a supplemental appropriation of \$25,000, as was granted in FYs 2019 and 2022.

Finance Director Comment/Recommendation:

Tree removal expenses have averaged in excess of \$34,000 over the last four years. Given past history and future needs identified by the Public Works Director, a significant increase in the appropriation for Tree Removal appears necessary in the next budget cycle.

Mayor Comment/Recommendation:

I concur with the request. Further, I recommend budgeting \$35,000 for FY23 to reflect a more accurate line item need.

Meeting Action Detail:

Town Council Meeting 11/9/2022

File #: [22647](#) Version: 1

Type: Financial Business Request (FBR)

Title: MOTION to approve a supplemental appropriation of \$25,000 to Account #10140107-56306 (Tree Removal) from Undesignated to provide adequate funding for ongoing removal of hazard trees in the Town rights-of-way.

Moved: Ryan Seconded: Irwin

Action: Approved

Minute Note:

Moved by Councilor Ryan, seconded by Councilor Irwin

Discussion: Councilor Ryan stated Public Works Director/Town Engineer Steve Masalin attended the Finance Committee's November 2, 2022 and provided a brief summary regarding the request for the additional \$25,000 for tree removal. He noted that Mr. Masalin explained that this year's request for an additional appropriation was similar to amount that was requested last year.

Councilor Ryan went on to state the data showed that tree removal expenses have averaged in excess of \$34,000 over the last four years and that both he and the Mayor agreed that they should increase the appropriation for Tree Removal in the next budget cycle.

Mayor Allyn stated in speaking with Louis Tree Company, who was one of the two contractors Eversource used to remove trees, that the Tree Company commented that Ledyard's annual \$4,000 appropriation was probably the lowest budget amount in any of the town's he has worked in throughout Connecticut and Western Massachusetts. He noted as Councilor Ryan explained the town has had to add money each year for tree removal, which indicated that the town was not funding Tree Removal at the correct level from a budgetary perspective. He stated there were still a number of oak trees and hemlock trees that have died as a result of the Gypsy Moth infestation that occurred in 2018 and from Emerald Ash Borer that came into our area in 2019.

VOTE: 7 - 0 Approved and so declared

Action: Approved

Finance Committee Meeting 11/2/2022:

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Title: MOTION to approve a supplemental appropriation of \$25,000 to Account #10140107-56306 (Tree Removal) from Undesignated to provide adequate funding for ongoing removal of hazard trees in the Town rights-of-way.

Moved: Saums Seconded: Ryan

Action: Recommend to Approve

Minute Note:

Moved by Councilor Ryan, seconded by Councilor Saums

Discussion: Public Works Director/Town Engineer Steve Masalin provided some background noting in 2018 the region was struck with a significant gypsy moth infestation, which resulted in a substantial kill of oak trees in particular. He stated the eventual impact of the gypsy moth infestation extended into 2020 and was still being seen.

Mr. Masalin went on to explain that the impact to our trees was augmented by the spread Emerald Ash Borer that came into our area in 2019 and dramatically affected our ash trees, noting that the progressive effects of the Emerald Ash Borer continue to unfold. Therefore, he stated as a result, substantial funding beyond the traditional \$4,000 annual budget amount has been required to tackle the removal of trees in the rights-of-way areas.

Mr. Masalin reviewed the following details, which was also attached to the Agenda packet on the meeting portal for tonight's meeting:

<u>Supplemental Appropriation</u>		<u>Budget Transfer</u>	<u>Total Additional</u>
FY19	\$25,000	\$ 3,400	\$28,400
FY20		\$49,000	\$49,000
FY21		\$11,400	\$11,400
FY22	\$25,000	\$ 6,400	\$31,400

Mr. Masalin stated these supplemental appropriations amounted to an average additional annual funding of more than \$30,000. He stated the need for the removal of hazard trees persists and that a list has been developed that has identified more than twenty (20) trees that needed to come down in our road rights-of-way so far. He stated the town has spent \$760 on spontaneous needs related to storm damage, leaving \$3,240 in the account, which was wholly inadequate to meet the present need and the full identification of the on-going work. He stated they have been working closely with Eversource to identify dead trees that were in the fall zone of the electrical wires and that Eversource has been taking those trees down at their cost. He stated these trees were not only hazardous that they were also unsightly.

Mr. Masalin stated not knowing where the Public Works Budget at large was headed at this stage of the fiscal year, and also recognizing the immediate need for tree removal, he was requesting a supplemental appropriation of \$25,000, which was the same amount that was granted in Fiscal Years 2019 and 2022.

Mr. Masalin noted in the backup information on the LF #22-647 that Finance Director Matthew Bonin reported that tree removal expenses have averaged in excess of \$34,000 over the last four years. The Finance Committee noted that given past history and future needs identified by the Public Works Director, that a significant increase in the appropriation for Tree Removal appeared to be necessary in the next budget cycle.

The Finance Committee agreed to add the words “*from Undesignated*” as a “*friendly amendment*”.

VOTE: 2- 0 Approved and so declared

Action: Recommend to Approve