

Finance Committee Meeting

Minutes – January 27, 2014

Town Hall, Lower Level Hearing Room, 7:30 P.M.

Members Present: Patricia-Lee Achorn, William Brack, Arnold Cohen, Gordon Gladstone, Charles Goodman, Ira Miller, Edward Philips (Hamilton)

Absent: Aaron Agulnek, Alexander Korin, Laura Nelson

1. The first item on the agenda was two requests for Reserve Fund Transfers.
2. Cliff Towner, Chair, Lake Management Committee; Greg Meister, Conservation Commission Administrator; and Peg Arguimbau, Chair, Conservation Commission were there for a Reserve Fund Transfer request from the Lake Management Committee.
3. Cliff Towner stated that when the fanwort was found in two different areas, we submitted a price for both fiscal years. The process would start in spring and finish in summer. There is a committee to protect the shoreline and boat launch. If the committee is successful, we will keep the lake. It is healthy. A lot of parking passes from out of town. The lake is fine, just the shoreline. We would need \$30,000.
4. There was some discussion on the request.
5. A **MOTION** was made by Ira Miller and **SECONDED** by Pat Achorn to approve a Reserve Fund Transfer to the Lake Management Committee for the removal of fanwort in the amount of \$30,000.
6. **VOTED:** 7-0-0. For: Achorn, Brack, Cohen, Gladstone, Goodman, Miller, Philips.
7. The next Reserve Fund Request was from Paul Bergeron, Veterans' Agent.
8. Paul Bergeron stated that it is for the line for the benefits, not the entire Veterans' budget. The benefit is based on need. They cannot have more than \$3,200 in assets, excluding home or automobile. There was an increase in claims. The town receives a 75% reimbursement that is used and provided for the next fiscal year budget. His request was for \$29,047 from the Reserve Fund.
9. There was some discussion on the request.
10. A **MOTION** was made by Ted Philips and **SECONDED** by Gordon Gladstone to approve a Reserve Fund Transfer to the Veterans' Agent for Veterans' benefits in the amount of \$29,047.
11. **VOTED:** 7-0-0. For: Achorn, Brack, Cohen, Gladstone, Goodman, Miller, Philips.
12. The next item on the agenda was the Healthcare Insurance Consultant, Peter Savage.
13. Peter Savage reported that last year we had a depleted trust fund. This year is better. We didn't have enough money in the trust to cover claims. Claims are down and we're using almost \$1.2M in positive balance. Very modest increase for next year, 2% or 3%. The trust is back to fairly sound position.

14. There was considerable discussion regarding the town's health care coverage and the new plan design, the Affordable Care Act, and the cost to the town.
15. The next item on the agenda was a review of the Priorities Committee and the Revenue Forecast with Bill Fowler and Ben Puritz, then go into the budget process.
16. Bill Fowler stated that the Revenue Forecast documents were the same and would be updated soon. There was a 3.9% increase in taxes.
17. The Committee reviewed the Revenue Forecast with Bill Fowler which had the projected budget increase of 2.38%.
18. Ben Puritz stated that the budget is the operating budget, and that Fixed and Uncontrollable was 2.7%.
19. There was some discussion regarding the Priorities and Revenue Forecast.
20. Ben Puritz summarized the Selectmen's Sector budget. The budget was predicated on Priorities 2.38%. This is just the operating budget, \$12,608,714. Single option that computes 2% increase. Selectmen's budget reduced 4.92% based on change in Town Administrator compensation. The Executive Performance Review Merit Program is the same as current fiscal year, \$13,000, ten executive positions.
21. There was some discussion regarding the Town Administrator retiring and the process for a new Administrator, and also the Treasurer-Collector/Finance Director retiring.
22. There was discussion on the next meeting for February 10, and a suggestion to have the Police Chief and the Fire Chief review their year and their goals for the upcoming year, and to spend more time on the DPW and Water Department budgets. At the meeting to be held February 24, the Committee would invite the School Department to discuss their budget.
23. The next item on the agenda was the Warrant articles.
24. Ben Puritz went over the draft articles. The first article related to Rattlesnake Hill and Brickstone. In terms of Brickstone, they are proceeding with cluster zoning, under 100 homes. Article 1 was zoning; Article 2, zoning map; Article 3, Development Agreement, if necessary in terms of placeholder. Town Counsel will provide opinion. Broken into three categories.
25. There was some discussion regarding the articles on Rattlesnake Hill and Brickstone and if it will be ready for Town Meeting.
26. Ben Puritz continued Warrant articles with the library in regard to feasibility study and design plan. Next medical marijuana. Back on for consideration. Article 22 and Article 23 Community Preservation Committee, CPC. Four potential projects. Public Safety building. Report they have Selectmen preferred site which is DPW site. More formalized cost. Placeholders for reservation for funding of combined police and fire at DPW site. If this is approved by Town Meeting, it will need ratification for 2.5% debt exclusion. The cost could be \$25M.

27. There was some discussion regarding the Public Safety building.
28. Ben Puritz continued with the Warrant articles. Article 26. Accessary housing. There is a need to find housing options for elderly to stay in town. It could be in-law apartments. Not sure it will be on Warrant. Article 27. Selling the interest in the existing cellular facility. Change in technologies. It may be time to sell leases to third party or renegotiate.
29. There was some discussion on the Warrant articles, Brickstone, public safety, and the library.
30. The next meeting will be February 10, 2014.
31. It was **MOVED** and **SECONDED** to adjourn.
32. **VOTED:** 7-0-0.
33. The meeting was adjourned at 10:20 p.m.