

Finance Committee Meeting
Minutes – February 23, 2015
Town Hall, Lower Level Hearing Room, 7:30 P.M.

Members Present: William Brack, Arnold Cohen (late), Gordon Gladstone, Charles Goodman (late), Ira Miller, Edward Philips (Hamilton)

Absent: Patricia-Lee Achorn, Aaron Agulnek, Alexander Korin, Laura Nelson

1. The first item on the agenda was Fred Turkington updating the FY'15 review.
2. Eric Hooper, DPW, Superintendent, gave update on Snow and Ice first. As of today \$270,000 in the red through February 14. Approximately \$30,000 a day for contractor services. Sunday/Monday will add \$60,000 to cost incurred to date. \$3,000 worth of salt today. \$5,000 a day for cleanup. Adding in overtime, \$400,000 in hole. First blizzard, \$125,000 of FEMA reimbursement, but don't know when we'll see that money.
3. There was much discussion regarding the Snow and Ice information and what can be done to avoid another deficit.
4. Fred Turkington went over information regarding the levy, tax revenue, impact of Public Safety Building, 2.89% paid by property taxes, \$80,000 turn back, FEMA reimbursement for Snow and Ice and using all Reserve Fund for Snow and Ice.
5. There was some discussion not to deficit-spend in FY'16 and where money didn't need to be spent.
6. The next item was the draft list of Warrant articles.
7. Fred Turkington went over the articles.
8. Special Within the Annual: Article 1. Transfer of funds for codification project. Ongoing project.
9. Special Within the Annual: Article 2. Bond money. To spend the bond money.
10. Special Within the Annual: Article 3. Snow & Ice. Being worked on.
11. Special Within the Annual: Article 4. Close capital project deficit (\$ from various accounts). Being worked on.
12. Annual: Article 1. Finance Committee Members. Traditional item.
13. Article 2. Act upon Reports. Traditional item.
14. Article 3. Accept a deed in lieu of foreclosure – 20 Tracey Lane. Deed in lieu of foreclosure for water line.
15. Articles 4 – 13. Traditional items.

16. Article 14. CPC Annual Funding & Projects. Projects: Hammershop Pond Dam Repair; Repairs to the fascia and soffit at the Sharon Water Department building; wall reconstruction at Brook & N. Main Streets.
17. Article 15. Annual Audit. Traditional item.
18. Article 16. Placeholder – Potential Abatement for 9 Glendale Road (FY'07-FY'10=\$5,401.77). Estate. Passed away. Would like refund of estate. Town Counsel spoke to Attorney General. Would require Act of Legislature. Three year statute of limitations. Assessors higher value for building. There is an error on the frontage. Wasn't enough to do this project. Rebated three years' worth. This would be an Assessors error.
19. Article 17. Existing cell tower lease authorizations. Cell tower RFP. Gave lease. Ten years without Town Meeting vote.
20. Article 18. Civil Service Rescission. Negotiate removing new hires from Civil Service. That process hinders getting the best officers. Beneficial to Police and residents. Don't think it requires Act of Legislature.
21. There was some discussion regarding the timing to get the Warrant out in the required time before the Town Meeting date.
22. The next item was the Police Department budget with Chief Joseph Bernstein.
23. Chief Bernstein gave an overview of the budget. 93% to 94% is for salary items. Some savings by replacing experienced officers with new hires. If a development like the Sharon Commons comes in, he would need four officers, one a detective.
24. There was much discussion regarding the Police budget, cost of training to Police Academy and some domestic issues if residential development is like Avalon Bay.
25. Both Chief Bernstein and Fire Chief James Wright updated the committee on the Public Safety Building.
26. Chief Wright explained they are through design development and working on the construction documents. Public meeting on March 5 at 7 p.m.
27. The next item was Fire Chief James Wright presenting his budget.
28. Chief Wright explained that the overall scope of equipment and supplies unchanged from this year. Salary side 90% of budget. Firefighters contract 2% increase for year. Looking to add one position. Day Captain Fire Inspection for training.
29. There was considerable discussion regarding the need for this position this year when the town is having financial problems and another big tax rate increase is expected for next year.
30. The next item was the Department of Public Works.

31. Eric Hooper stated that the budget total was \$3.18M for FY'16. DPW budget is looking to replace and refill people that were let go. Replace assistant engineer. Filled by Town Engineer for last number of years. Facilities Manager responsible for buildings in town. Community Center, Public Safety, and 1 School Street. As Fire Department moves to Public Safety, then existing Fire Department building would be DPW responsibility. Three new buildings coming under DPW. \$158,000 for all three people. Forestry and Grounds, Assistant Engineer, and Facilities Manager, new position.
32. There was considerable discussion on the DPW budget regarding all the increases with all the other expenses, including new positions, high tax rate, deficit on Snow and Ice that Reserve Fund doesn't cover, and how to maintain sustainability.
33. There was a suggestion to have a joint meeting with the Selectmen, School Committee and Finance Committee to discuss the financial condition of the town.
34. The next meeting will be March 9, 2015.
35. It was **MOVED** and **SECONDED** to adjourn.
36. **VOTED:** 6-0-0.
37. The meeting was adjourned at 11 p.m.