

Finance Committee Meeting

Minutes – March 9, 2015

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

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

Absent: Aaron Agulnek

1. The first item on the agenda was the Town Clerk's FY'16 budget presented by Marlene Chused.
2. Marlene Chused announced that they will be hosting Open Meeting Law Training with the Attorney General's office, on Thursday evening, March 26, at the Community Center.
3. Marlene Chused stated regarding codification that \$13,100 taken out of the budget and put in as line item at the Annual Town Meeting in May. The other half will be due in May 2016. They have until August to complete the editing then send back to General Code. They will get ready for May Town Meeting, 2016. When it is completed, there will be a copy at the Library and Town Hall to be read.
4. There was some discussion regarding the codification.
5. Marlene Chused continued the budget with salaries. 2% increase is contractual for staff and 3.5% for Town Clerk. Everything is level funded. Some more unfunded mandates: Vital Records of Death. 2016 is election year. Starts in March, 2016. Starting an expanding process. No room for anything. Keep all ZBA records and applications. Get boxes in vault and put someplace secure. Preservation of documents. In 2000, \$15,200. Rebind and preserve records. Since that time, no preservation. Seeking funds from CPC to have conservation survey for all archival records. Historical as well as library. Conservationists will come in to do survey.
6. The next item was the library budget review. Bob Levin was the representative since Lee Ann Amend had a conflict.
7. Bob Levin stated that the Library was trying to get things digitized. Submitted 5,000 pages of historical documents to Boston Public Library to scan.
8. Bob Levin stated there was a major roof problem. Covered through encumbrance. Over \$8,000 to clean roof. Use state aid funds. Lot of problems with grounds and maintenance on emergency basis; water heater, pump on furnace. FY'16 net drop in the salaries lines because replacing high step people with step 1 and 2 people. 2% increase contractual. 2% for director. How state grant program works is that 15% of budget must be in materials. Professional development. Reimbursement for tuitions must be in courses related to the work. Go to seminars run by Massachusetts libraries. Bringing in people to staff meetings. Customer service meetings to improve operation of library. 2.07% on total budget, \$18,000+.
9. There was some discussion on the library budget.

10. Fred Turkington stated that he had met with the Personnel Board last week. 3% to 3.5% for department heads. Several contracts. Two employees 3.5%, 3.25% and balance on 3% line. Include salary adjustments for Fire Chief and Deputy Fire Chief.
11. There was much discussion on the Personnel Board's determination of salary percentages for department heads.
12. Special Within the Annual:
13. Article 1. Transfer of funds for codification project. Going from annual operating to special fund.
14. Article 2. Bond money. Premium going back to Public Safety project. Lower cost. Surcharge on cost of bond.
15. There was some discussion on Article 2.
16. Article 3. Snow & Ice. \$5,000 a day for this week. Even with \$125,000 reimbursement would be a \$100,000 shortfall. Fred Turkington to get update and then keep the committee informed.
17. Article 4. Transfer of funds to close capital project deficit. Remaining balance of cell tower did close that debt. Closed projects being reallocated and appropriated.
18. There was considerable discussion on Article 4.
19. Ira Miller suggested adding something to special. Use cell tower revenue as revenue source for FY' 16 as a placeholder.
20. Annual Town Meeting:
21. Article 1. Finance Committee Members. Standard article.
22. Article 2. Act upon Reports. Standard article.
23. Article 3. Accept a deed in lieu of foreclosure – 20 Tracey Lane. For small strip of land.
24. Article 4. Personnel By-Law. Send e-mail for write-up.
25. Article 5. Budget & Compensation of Elected Officials. Be reviewed on Monday.
26. Article 6. Capital Outlay Requests.
27. Capital meeting on Thursday, March 19th. Doesn't show up until FY' 17 budget. Draft budget eliminated some requests. \$350,000 debt payment. An actual \$226,900. Paul Linehan should come in to work through.
28. Article 7. Norfolk County Retirement. Town gets an annual certification from pension fund. Need current amount.

29. There was some discussion on Article 7.
30. Article 8. Unemployment Fund. Part of budget.
31. Article 9. OPEB Funds. Part of budget.
32. Article 10. Stabilization Fund.
33. Article 11. Revolving Fund Authorizations (new revolving fund for water service replacement). Water part of Article 11.
34. Article 12. Property Tax Exemptions – Veterans, Blind, Disabled & Others Qualified. Standard Article.
35. Article 13. Sharon Friends School Fund Records & Appointments. Standard Article.
36. 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; Community Center Pergola; document preservation (Historical Society, Library & Town Clerk). CPC meeting Wednesday, March 18.
37. Corey Snow to come Monday, March 23, to discuss CPC article.
38. There was some discussion on Article 14.
39. Article 15. Annual Audit. Standard item.
40. Article 16. Petition to Legislature re: abatement for 9 Glendale Road (FY'07-FY'10=\$5,401.77). Request from daughter of estate 2007. Property to be subdivided. It wasn't enough of change. Homeowner's frontage was incorrect on Assessor's records. Only allow three years. This is seven years. Special Act of Legislature. Town gave check of \$5,401.77. Fixing assessment.
41. Article 17. Existing cell tower lease authorizations. Authorizes Selectmen to negotiate leases up to thirty years. Only allows ten years without Town Meeting vote. Paid up front for thirty years pending Town Meeting.
42. Article 18. Civil Service Rescission. Bargaining intended to negotiate for removal of Civil Service.
43. Fred Turkington stated that the Town voted to repeal civil service in 1978.
44. The next item regarded financial planning for FY'16 and FY'17, joint meeting of all sectors, and Priorities.
45. Ira Miller and Chuck Goodman presented a spreadsheet with numbers from Priorities meeting of February 13, and showed some revisions.
46. Ira Miller suggested lowering the tax rate from 6.7% to 5.5%.

47. There was considerable discussion regarding ways to reduce expenses, keep tax rate down, and not have deficit spending. Suggestion to increase Reserve Fund by \$100,000-\$150,000 to cover Snow and Ice deficits. There was a suggestion to show the cost of running some departments by putting it into the introduction in the Warrant. Also, a suggestion to combine services with other towns.
48. The consensus of the committee was to have a decrease in expenditures using some one-time revenue. Tax relief to get to 1%.
49. The next meeting will be on March 16, 2015.
50. It was **MOVED** and **SECONDED** to adjourn.
51. **VOTED:** 9-0-0.
52. The meeting was adjourned at 11 p.m.