February 6th, 2017 Minutes

219 Massapoag Avenue Sharon, MA

**Present:** Patricia Lee Achorn, William Brack, Ira Miller, Charles Goodman, Arnold Cohen, Alexander Korin, Edward Phillips, Gordon Gladstone and Hanna Switlezowski

**Absent:** Laura Nelson

1. **Review Capital Outlay Budget FY 18 and receive input from Capital on relevant Warrant Articles, including discussion on funding options on School 1-1 program.**

Paul Linehan, Chairman for the Capital Outlay Committee, discussed their budget plan for FY 18 including the $1.5 million dollars in retiring capital debt. The historic use os 6.5% of budget as capital; this year the total is 5.67% of budget

* Civil defense radio control flashing warning signs request was deferred for future consideration with AM station signal upgrades.
* Three replacement Police Cruisers ($120,000) and tasers ($33,000) are funded as cash capital.
* Animal Control van deferred to FY19 due to low mileage.
* Committee would like additional information re grant funding to offset $57,000 for Council on Aging van.
* School Department has been asked to confirm the budget for Heights Elementary School generator. Should this project be funded as a separate Article due to Massachusetts School Building Authority (MSBA) requirements?
* Town office rehabilitation or new facility deferred pending information from Standing Building Committee and Board of Selectmen (the debt model includes $8 million for that project).
* Committee deferred vote on 1:1 laptop initiative pending presentation by Dr. Marcus. Input pending from Priorities Committee and Finance Committee regarding financing of laptops (cash capital, School Committee operating budget, etc.)
* Committee did vote to fund the Fire Department bunker gear for $135,000. Other Fire Department requests are funded thorough the Ambulance Response Fund (ARF).
* Recreation Department, the netting for Ames Street netting ($14,800) is a safety item and will be cash capital. Other Recreation Department requests are Community Preservation (CPA) funded.
* Two items yet to be voted for the DPW include two pieces of equipment (dump truck and a lower deck) and storage structures.
* Eric Hooper, Superintendent for the DPW detailed construction on Norwood Street and East Foxboro Street beginning at Beach Street and ending at the town line; redo of part of Massapoag Avenue with added sidewalk; South Main Street to Pond Street as far as the playground due to safety concerns.
* Other technology requests include computers for Sharon Middle School and laptops for teachers as well as for the SPED program.
* Cottage and East Street fire alarm panel replacement has not been approved at this time.

John Marcus, Assistant Superintendent for Information Services, discussed the request for 1:1 MAC book air computers. They are looking to reduce the original request for $260,000. The computers purchased for replacements overage can be dropped saving them $12,000; the family purchasing can save an additional $35,000; broadening student’s choices and allowing them to use other high quality devices they will save approximately $20,800. Lastly, because of savings from FY 17 they are able to recapture about $21,000 of unused money to roll over. The overall savings for the laptops will be $88,800 bringing the cost down to $171,200.

1. **Review Police for FY 18 and receive input on any relevant Warrant Articles**

Tilden Kaufman, Sharon Police Chief, indicated that the FY18 budget is current services with budget increases and less the building expenses transferred to the DPW. There will be six supervisors attending the six-week FBI leader training course. With the new station they have the ability to have the class in Sharon saving on time, energy and costs. The Police Department will be getting grants for $35,000 for dispatch, $10,000 for dispatch training and $10,000 for traffic safety programs.

The staff of 31 is where they need to be. There will be one retirement in January of 2018 and as of now there is one sergeant on medical leave and a patrolman who will be returning in the next month or two. New recruits are currently on field training. One officer is in the schools and effective proactively. The Police staff with an “Officer in Charge” program which substitutes for a Sargent and serves as a Sargent training program. Staff are training for the “Metro Unit,” an exchange program that allows cross support. A study done in 2008 for the shopping area on South Main Street determined that 4 new positions would be required. There would be more complicated cases: Internet fraud, credit card fraud, larceny, etc. and investigation of suspicious persons.

1. **Review Fire FY 18 Budget and receive input on any relevant Warrant Articles**

James Wright, Fire Chief, discussed two major personnel changes including reinstating the Lieutenant grade (between Firefighter and Captain) permitting succession planning and supervision opportunities. The proposal is to promote of four Firemen to Lieutenant level. There is a request to add an EMS Lieutenant moving the current EMS Coordinator to full time days at Captain due to the complexity of medical care services and state mandates. Their needs surpass the help they currently have and having a daytime staff person across the two rotating groups would be beneficial. The Assisted Living complex on South Main Street is expected to add 250 calls per year. EMS response is two on ambulance, two on fire truck and a police cruiser.

Mutual Aid this year has been net giving; using a callback system to backfill staff Sharon is more efficient than some neighbor towns. Chief Wright also discussed the potential of “Mobile Integrated Healthcare,” maintaining individual in their homes (targeting chronic readmissions) for ambulance services but there is currently no billing mechanism. Norfolk County Control has increased charges for dispatch services in the current agreement. Every year Chief Wright evaluates the cost effectiveness of dispatch with in-house staff.

1. **Review DPW and Water Budget and receive input on any relevant Warrant Articles**

Eric Hooper, DPW Superintendent said the DPW will absorb the building costs of Police and Fire Public Safety Facility; there will be an increase in DPW utilities, ($80,000 electrical estimated by the architect). Forestry and Grounds significant increase of $80,000 is allocated for contracted services. The Field Study Committee reviewing playing fields has come up with this number to cover half the fields. This does not include any school fields except East Street Elementary. Personnel salaries are up by 2% plus cost of living; there are no new personnel or layoffs in FY 18. No structural changes to the budget.

The DPW is reviewing the Mass Department of Transportation “Complete Streets” program providing State funding for the increased use of the transportation corridor. The program goal is to provide safe options for all travel (walking, biking, transit, automobiles). Funding is capped at $400,000 and requires engineering determination.

Snow and Ice increase in FY8. Annual increases have been modest, and the acquisition and maintenance costs have increased. Typically the budget is for one snowstorm a year; that budget has to be met. Any additional snow and ice expense is met by a request for a Reserve Fund transfer.

There are no long range plans to increase commuter parking more than a dozen spots due to neighborhood objections on one side and protected wetlands on the other. The suggestion is to maximize use by pricing on parking passes; quarterly parking is on T0wn owned property; daily parking belongs to MBCR. Excess parking incomes goes into a revolving fund for capital improvements and maintenance.

Eric Hooper continued with the water budget with no structural changes but salary impacts due to one retirement and step changes. There are increases in personnel costs (retirement, health, disability, etc.) with the allocation of those expenses from the general fund to the Water Department enterprise fund. Personnel expense also includes allocation of a percentage of Town Hall and DPW staff time and effort.

There have been expensive system improvements in areas, such as the center of town, where there is the greatest frequency of lead services. Next summer the water department is wanting to pave the streets in the South Pleasant Street neighborhood and they will continue work on Belcher Street in the springtime.

**Schedule for Finance Committee**

The Finance Committee will meet on February 27th, 2017 with the School Department regarding their budget.

There are three zoning Articles anticipated (McSweeney, Sharon Gallery and the transfer of property to ConCom).

1. **Adjournment**

**MOTION:** to adjourn by Edward Phillips **SECONDED:** by Patricia-Lee Achorn **VOTED:** 9-0-0.

The meeting was adjourned at 10:00 pm.