

Minutes of meeting for the joint meeting between the Board of Selectmen and the Finance Committee March 6, 2018

Selectboard members present: John Skrip, Mark Newman, Fred Ventresco, Town Administrator, Dolores Harasyko, Admin. Asst.

Finance Committee members present: Joe Gelinas, Kathy Jacobs, David Hubbard, Bogart Muller

Called to order at 4:00 p.m.

Meeting is being recorded

John suggested the finance committee chair the meeting, Joe explained that per the bylaw it is the selectmen's job to chair and to vote first on each budget. The process will be to review each budget with the department head, the selectmen will then vote and the finance will vote after. Votes will be recorded for the annual town warrant.

Bob O'Brien in to represent the highway dept. We will review all highway department budgets and vote them as one article.

Conservation Consultation Fees. The budget is for \$10,000. Joe asked if we could use our own Conservation Commission. Bob responded that it has to be separate from the towns rep. It has to be a conservation engineer. David asked for a streamlined process. Bob said the towns generic NOI is up this year and this will be discussed

Machinery and Maintenance budget. The budget was submitted at \$90,000. Bob explained that he took an average over the last 3 years. Due to the fire and the age of the equipment he has all old equipment which will require more maintenance. John would like to lower the "repair" line in the budget from \$45,000 to \$40,000. David asked about vehicle maintenance schedules. Bob said they do it as time allows. John wants to hire certified mechanics. The DPW Committee is currently working on this issue. John asked about fire maintenance, Bob responded it is mandatory to upkeep the fire extinguishers. The Machinery and Maintenance budget will be lowered by \$5,000 from the repair line.

Snow and Ice budget. The budget was submitted at \$175,000 which is the same as last year. The only correction was the dates for Snow and Ice, should be from November 15 to April 15. Discussed contracted services.

Tree Account. The budget was submitted at \$10,000 which is level funded. This account is for contracted tree removal.

Mowing and Cemetery Maintenance. Bogart Muller recused himself. This is a contracted service and will level fund at \$8,500

Highways and Bridges. The budget was submitted at \$353,938.92. Discussed adding one more full time employee. Bob explained in detail how difficult it is to get work done with only 3 full time employees which includes himself and one part time employee. Mark would like to move forward with adding a new employee and remove the line for mowing which is used to hire a person to do roadside mowing. John would like more seasonal part time employees. Discussed the ongoing beaver problems. Discussed the line for rental equipment. Since we have a backhoe the selectmen would like to cut the rental line from \$25,000 to \$10,000. Bob strongly does not agree. He will not be able to repair roads if we lower the budget by \$10,000. Kathy J. does not agree with lowering the budget. David would like an extensive survey done. Dawn needs to add to the budget benefits for the new employee in the amount of \$17,374.56. Joe agrees to lowering the budget by removing the \$3,000 for mowing and lowering the rentals to \$15,000. We will also amend the part time employee to 19 hours instead of 20. New total for Highways and Bridges will be \$358,313.49.

Selectmen's vote: Motion by John, second by Mark to accept the budgets with the corrections listed. All in favor 2-0

Finance Committee vote: Motion by Joe, second by Kathy to accept the budgets with the corrections listed. All in favor 4-0 with an abstention on Mowing and Cemetery Maintenance from Bogart Muller.

Gary Bottum in representing the Planning Board. The Planning Board budget was submitted at \$2,550. Gary explained that they will be working on cell tower bylaws in the upcoming year. Discussed the cost of advertising for the public hearings that are required.

Selectmen's vote: Motion by John, second by Mark to accept the Planning Board budget as submitted. All in favor

Finance Committee vote: Motion by Joe, second by Kathy to accept the Planning Board budget as submitted. All in favor 4-0

Cultural Council. There were no members present to review this budget. It was submitted level funded at \$250. John explained that the town has to put up the \$250 in order to apply for grants. Joe pointed out that the Cultural Council has not held any meetings this year and has not submitted any documentation supporting their budget. David suggested sending the budget back until there is justification from the board. No action taken on this budget. Fred will get in touch with them.

Police Department. Officers Michael Morrison, Michael Johnson and Adam Gonska present. Joe had questions on hourly rates. Michael M. explained that he took the total salary amount and increased it by the 2% approved by the selectmen. Discussion followed on breaking the hourly rates by employee and not rounding the dollar amount up. It was discovered that the total monthly hours budgeted for were short by 8 hours a month. Also left off was the cost of bullets.

David asked what the demand is for the police department. Michael M. reviewed the 911 call sheet for last month and explained that in addition to that they respond to motor vehicle accidents, medical calls, in addition to other calls that do not go through 911. He also pointed out that 3 officers are trained emt's and are able to do CPR which is a huge benefit to our remote town. Michael M. stated that he is almost out of budgeted hours for this year. Joe reviewed the use of the reserve fund for emergency expenses. The selectmen met with the police department last Friday and agreed on \$45,500 but that did not include the 8 hours a month. Discussed training, Michael J. reviewed all that is required for certifications. The amended Police Department budget will be \$57,521.25 for salaries and \$14,025 for expenses.

Selectmen's vote: Motion by John, second by Mark to accept the Police Dept. budget as amended. All in favor 2-0

Finance Committee vote: Motion by Joe, second by Kathy to accept the Police Dept. budget as amended. All in favor 4-0

Berkshire County Sheriff Communication 911 Services: Budget submitted is \$9,827.76.

Selectmen's vote: Motion by John, second by Mark to accept the Berkshire County Sheriff Communication budget as submitted. All in favor 2-0

Finance Committee vote: Motion by Joe, second by Kathy to accept the Berkshire County Sheriff Communication budget as submitted. All in favor 4-0.

Council on Aging. Members present were Linda Riiska, Barbara Cormier and Anina Carr. Budget submitted was \$3,150.00. Fred helped them with their budget. Discussed repairing the floor, this should actually come out of operation and maintenance of town buildings. They will get a quote and give it to Fred to work on. Linda explained the grants and their usage.

Selectmen's vote: Motion by John, second by Mark to accept the Council on Aging budget as submitted. All in favor 2-0

Finance Committee vote: Motion by Joe, second by Kathy to accept the Council on Aging budget as submitted. All in favor 4-0

Southern Berkshire Elderly Transportation. The budget submitted was \$4,834 which is double from last year. Discussion followed. Barbara Cormier feels we should be able to cut the budget in half and still receive the same benefit. This has happened in the past. Linda explained the purpose of the van. She is not sure they will accept half and does not want to lose the van. Discussed the volunteer driving program. It is working well however they are not handicap accessible which the van is. John will contact them and try to negotiate a better rate. We will keep the budget as submitted and amend if needed at the town meeting.

Selectmen's vote: Motion by John, second by Mark to accept the Southern Berkshire Elderly Transportation as submitted. All in favor 2-0

Finance Committee vote: Motion by Joe, second by Kathy to accept the Southern Berkshire Elderly Transportation as submitted. All in favor 4-0

Board of Assessors. Members present were Bethany Perry and Jackie Bitso. Budget submitted was \$57,240.39. A correction is needed for the Assessor Clerk salary. When the budget was submitted the assessor clerk position was budgeted \$11.00 an hour, the person hired is getting \$15.00 an hour. Amended salary for the clerk went from \$8,580 to \$11,700. John asked the Assessors to reduce their compensation to \$1,000 for the chair and \$500 for other members. Bethany explained the mandated certifications required to be an Assessor, the classes they are mandated to take and the daily involvement they have in running the office. Dolores researched town records as far back as 1920 and Assessors have always been paid. John agrees they should get something but wants it reduced. Bethany explained that they take a week off of their jobs to take the certification course. The cost of that alone is more than the \$500 John is suggesting. Mark does not agree with lowering their compensation. Joe being the newest member does not have enough history to comment on a reduction. Kathy and Bogart would like to know more about the Assessors office as to how many emails, calls, visits do they get. John agreed to compensate any new Assessors the cost of their time they take away from their job to take the mandated testing. Bethany explained that the selectboard increased the clerks hourly rate from \$11.00 to \$15.00 without talking to the Assessors. Mark believes the assessors put in the time required.

Selectmen's vote: Motion by John, second by Mark to accept the Assessors budget with reduced Assessor compensation. Vote failed 1-1. The budget will be as submitted with the correction to the clerks salary. Salaries will be \$48,935.39, expenses \$11,425 for a total of \$60,360.39.

Finance Committee vote: Motion by Joe, second by Bogart to accept the amended Assessors budget salaries at \$48,935.39, expenses at \$11,425 to a total of \$60,360.39

Recreation Committee. Member present was Bethany Perry. There is no budget submission for this committee. There are only two members and they have been inactive. The Community Center Committee was appointed this year and has been requesting funds from the Recreation Committee for events. So far this year the Recreation Committee has only spent \$1,307. They will be having an Easter Egg hunt but that is all they have scheduled for the rest of the year. All agreed to not fund the Recreation Committee for FY2019. We will remove the article from the warrant.

Selectmen's vote: Motion by Mark, second by John to not fund the Recreation Committee for FY2019. All in favor 2-0

Finance Committee vote: Motion by Joe, second by Kathy to not fund the Recreation Committee for FY2019. All in favor 4-0

Meeting adjourned at 8:03 p.m.

John Skrip

Mark Newman

Joe Gelinas

Kathy Jacobs

David Hubbard

Bogart Muller