

## **FINANCE COMMITTEE**

### **Minutes**

**March 6, 2014**

Regular meeting of the Finance Committee was held on Thursday, March 6, 2014 at 7:30 p.m. in the FinCom Meeting Room, Town Hall, with the following members present: J. Burke, J. Denneen, M. Iwanowicz, J. McDermott, L. Pitman, A. Healy, D. Crowley, Williams, S. Lawson. Members absent were: S. Ahmed, D. DiCenso, C. Lane, D. Bruce and P. Hinton. Also in attendance was Town Administrator M. Boynton, Fire Chief T. Bailey, Finance Director M. Thompson and Town Accountant J. Cuneo.

7:30 p.m. – Quorum being present, the meeting was called to order by the Chairman L. Pitman.

#### **May 5, 2014 Spring Annual Town Meeting**

**Conservation Commission** - Speaking to this budget was Conservation Agent L. Hersey. Budget is pretty much level funded. Staff includes Conservation Agent for 26 hours, Board Secretary for 26 hours. Any additional hours worked by the Board Secretary or Agent are supplemented by the Wetlands Fund which is under joint authorization of the Conservation Commission and the Board of Selectmen. This money comes from filings. Department has seen an increase in filings and applications. Commission is reviewing large parcels i.e. Zion, Allied, Sunnyrock Farm. Money received from filing fees is fairly close to running the department and goes into the General Fund. Department works closely with Ponds Committee, Planning Board, and Storm Water Management. Enforcement is done when it receives a complaint and they do write fines for violations.

**MOTION MADE** by J. Denneen, Seconded by D. Crowley for Favorable Action on the Conservation Commission Budget in the amount of \$99,766, Motion Passed (9-0-0) (9 voting) Unanimous

**Veterans** – Veterans Agent J. Cogan spoke to this budget. Town has a new Veterans Committee which has been very beneficial to the Town. It does fundraising for purchasing items like Stop and Shop cards for veterans. Under the Line Item for Veterans Benefits, Town Administrator is recommending \$55,000, this budget is presently on target at this time. Department helps out with applications for fuel assistance and provides back up to the Senior Outreach Worker and in January has to reauthorize all the clients in order to receive reimbursement. Veterans Agent also works as a disability advocate and receives assistance from the Shine counselor with helping obtain benefits for Veterans'. Agent also assists Veterans with filing claims with the VA. Mr. Cogan was requested to provide to the Committee with a breakdown of Veterans cases.

**MOTION MADE** by J. Denneen, Seconded by J. Burke for Favorable Action on the Veterans Budget in the amount of \$104,955, Motion Passed (9-0-0) (9 voting) Unanimous

**Article 20 – Veterans Property Tax Credit**

This proposed article is similar to the Town's Senior Work Off Program. It calls for the acceptance of MGL, Chapter 59, Section 5N. It allows Veterans to volunteer to provide services in exchange for a reduction in the real property tax obligations of that Veterans tax bills. This is in addition to any exemption or abatement to which the Veteran is otherwise entitled. This allows for assisting the growing ranks of Veterans and gives cities and town's greater flexibility in creating tax relief to Veterans. Maximum credit is \$750/annually, and are required to work in a municipal department augmenting the existing work force. Hourly credit is \$8.00 per hour. It is not considered income or wages for state income tax withholding, unemployment compensation or workers compensation. It is considered income relative to federal tax regulations and social security and Medicare taxes are deducted and a W-2 form will be issued for federal tax purposes. Program will be administered by the Veterans Agent and he will make final determination relative to program placement and procedures. This will be done on an open enrollment and will be publicized on the Town's web site and in the newspaper. Funding for this program will come from the Assessor's Overlay.

**MOTION MADE** by J. Denneen, Seconded by S. Lawson for Favorable Action on Article 20, to accept the MGL Chapter 59, Section 5N legislation, Motion Passed (9-0-0) (9 voting), Unanimous

**Council on Aging** – Director Courtney Riley

Ms. Riley explained that she started work with the Town on April 1, 2013 and prior to that had worked at Linden Ponds in Hingham and spoke to enjoying working with elders.

Director spoke to the budget being similar to last years. She felt that there would be additional people if there was a better facility. She is trying to reach out to other groups in order to provide assistance to find elders in need. Increase of the number of people having Alzheimer's disease is increasing. One in every three seniors dies each year of this disease. With the number of people needing services, Council on Aging has the opportunity to educate people to understand ahead of time the problems. There is a need for a new senior center, present one has no room for the people that we have. Seniors are going to other communities to use their facility. There is a need for day care option.

Town Administrator spoke to this budget being one of the smallest. In the future, there is a drain on services and presently they are not equipped to handle it. There is the need for conversation on the numbers of elders and priorities of the community, where are we going? The needs of the community need to be presented, and not just schools or public

safety. Community needs to be alerted of the needs. People live longer, and there are more medical issues to deal with.

**MOTION MADE** by J. Denneen, Seconded by S. Lawson for Favorable Action on the Council on Aging Budget in the amount of \$174,913, Motion Passed (9-0-0) (9 voting) Unanimous

**Zoning Board of Appeals** – S. Murphy, Chairman

Zoning Board consists of five regular members and two associates. Secretary has retired and this position has not yet been filled. Position was originally 24 hours/week with benefits and has been reduced to 18 hours with no benefits. This secretary will work for the Zoning Board and under direct supervision of Building Inspector. Chairman Murphy spoke to the position was advertised for 24 hours and some applicants did not show up for an interview due to the hours for the position being dropped and no longer offering benefits. Position will call for majority of hours to be spent working for the Zoning Board and some hours to help in the Building Inspector's Office.

Town Administrator spoke to their being a limited amount of positions that work over 20 hours and receive benefits. In prior years there had been a plan to have a Community Development Department (Conservation, ZBA and Planning Board) but this new position never went forward. Economic Development Director has been filling in for this position in absence of a secretary. There is a need for training money for this budget of \$1,000/year for updates on an annual basis due to change in laws. Need to enhance the level of training for the position.

**MOTION MADE** by J. Denneen, Seconded by J. Burke for Favorable Action on the Zoning Board of Appeals Budget in the amount of \$28,790 (includes \$1,000 in Training and Education Line Item), Motion Passed (9-0-0) (9 voting)

**Board of Health** – R. Chapell, Health Agent

Ms. Chapell updated the Committee on the accomplishments of the Department for the year 2013/2014. Budget is pretty much level funded. 70% of the department's professional services are outsourced.

**MOTION MADE** by J. Denneen, Seconded by J. Burke for Favorable Action on the Board of Health Budget in the amount of \$305,291, Motion Passed (9-0-0) (9 voting) Unanimous

**Solid Waste** – R. Chapell, Health Agent

Town is going into a third year of a five year contract. Budget is increased 3.4% from FY14. If Town were to go to single stream collection, this would need to be negotiated with the hauler. There is no guarantee that with single stream there would be less

tonnage. Committee members spoke to the Finance Committee should take a strong stand on saving money with the Solid Waste Budget. Committee should push for single stream, take a strong stand on saving money for trash collection. There is a potential of saving \$150,000 a year with this. Most people read the newspaper on line now.

**MOTION MADE** by J. Denneen, Seconded by J. Burke for Favorable Action on the Solid Waste Budget in the amount of \$1,666,820, Motion Passed, (9-0-0) (9 voting) Unanimous

### **Article 27 – Superfund Site/South Street – Town Administrator**

Superfund Site/South Street Town needs to acquire the necessary parcels to move forward on the site. Numerous environmental assessments have been conducted at the site for threats and contaminants. Recommended scheme for redevelopment retains the two individual buildings for the Senior Center and Police Station and creates separate parking areas. Town would need to acquire ownership either through tax title (excessive of 2 Million owed) and a filing with Attorney General a covenant on what town would be responsible going forward. Attorney General wants a proposed use of the property. A portion of money needs to be funded by town meeting. Warrant article is acceptance of title without going through tax title process. Town is not taking any parcels that contain hazardous waste or asbestos only taking parcels for parking, recreation, and to tie into town forest If approved by Town Meeting with a caveat that only successful acquiring of the covenant. Town Administrator will ask Town Counsel for a motion that would include all aspects and scope by a tax title. The money that was set aside for handling the legal costs spiked in January. Responsibility of the contamination will not be responsibility of the Town. There is a meeting scheduled for March 17 and Town will receive a draft of the covenant from the Attorney General's Office. It will take four months to get a covenant finalized.

Committee discussed that this article needs to be broken down for Town Meeting with outline of different steps. Members need to understand what is involved and the time needs to be spent as this is a critical issue. Discussion could also be tied into Article 1 with facilities planning report.

### **Permanent Building Committee – Town Administrator**

\$200 requested.

**MOTION MADE** by J. Denneen, Seconded by D. Crowley for Favorable Action on the Permanent Building Committee Budget in the amount of \$200, Motion Passed (9-0-0) (9 voting) Unanimous

### **Building Maintenance Budget**

Town Administrator is recommending adjustments to the following line items, Equipment Repairs, Equipment Maintenance and Other Supplies. He is also recommending \$1,000 be taken from this budget and allocated to the Zoning Board of Appeals Budget for the Training and Education Line Item. New number for this budget is \$2,017,332.

**MOTION MADE** by D. Crowley, Seconded by J. Burke for Reconsideration of Building Maintenance Budget, Motion Passed (9-0-0) (9 voting) Unanimous

**MOTION MADE** by D. Crowley, Seconded by J. Denneen, for Favorable Action on the DPW Building Maintenance Budget in the amount of \$2,017,332, Motion Passed (9-0-0) (9 voting) Unanimous

**Minutes**

**MOTION MADE** by J. Denneen, Seconded by S. Lawson for Favorable Action on the Minutes of February 27, 2014, Motion Passed (8-0-1) (J. Burke abstained) (9 voting)

**Adjourn:**

**MOTION MADE** by J. Denneen, Seconded by J. Burke to adjourn the meeting at 10:05 p.m., Motion Passed (9-0-0) (9 voting) Unanimous

Respectfully submitted,

Clare P. Abril  
Clerk