

FINANCE COMMITTEE

Minutes

February 11, 2017

Regular meeting of the Finance Committee was held on Saturday, February 11, 2017 at 10:00 a.m. in the Community Room, Walpole Public Library with the following members present: D. Bruce, J. Burke, K. Guyette, E. Barmakian, T. Bowen, J. Denneen, A. Healy, P. Hinton, S. Lawson, J. Leith, R. Nottebart, P. Stasiukevicius, M. Trudell, J. Vaillancourt and R. Mariani at (12:15 PM) Also in attendance was Town Administrator J. Johnson, M. Thompson, Finance Director and J. Cuneo, Town Accountant, and representatives from different departments.

10:00 a.m. – Quorum being present, the meeting was called to order by the Chairman D. Bruce.

May 1, 2017 Spring Annual Town Meeting Budget Discussion

Chairman spoke to the procedure for handing the budgets. He will read out the budget numbers, similar to how it is done at Town Meeting, and members can place on hold budgets that they wish to discuss further. He expressed his thanks to the Town Administrator on the notes that he has provided being very helpful.

Town Administrator spoke to not discussing today the School, Debt, Insurance and Benefits and Water and Sewer articles.

Committee Members spoke to the budget discussion. It would be helpful to have a high level discussion, with a philosophical approach. They would like to hear from the department heads regarding their mission statement and goals and objectives while reviewing the budgets

Budgets weren't available till last week and there is a lot of detail and not sufficient time with only ten weeks till Town Meeting. It is difficult to review the budgets with only a four hour window. Any budgets that are put on hold, discussion should be put off for another session. Committee is comprised of volunteers and there is need for sufficient time to review the detail.

MOTION MADE by K. Guyette, Seconded by J. Vaillancourt that any budgets that the committee members asked for a hold should be rescheduled for another session, Motion Failed on a 7-7-0 vote (voting in favor were K. Guyette, J. Vaillancourt, R. Nottebart, E. Leith, T. Bowen, P. Stasiukevicius and E. Barmakian. (7-7-0) (14 voting)

Chairman spoke to having sent out to the members previously an e-mail with how the budgets would be approached, and he only heard back from seven members with only one of the seven undecided. It is difficult to change the format now of the meeting. The various department heads were present to discuss their budgets and have given up their Saturday morning to address any questions. It is important to go forward and any questions on a specific budget be put on hold. Bottom line is voted on in its entirety.

Personnel Board – Town Administrator spoke to a 2% wage adjustment included in the budgets for non-union personnel. All the municipal unions are up presently for negotiation. Personnel Board will be meeting with the Committee at a later date. The 2% is based on review of other towns, CPI for the Boston area. Some members spoke to feeling the 2% being high.. This should be looked at to balance the budget. Collective bargaining numbers are not included in the budget numbers. Municipal contracts pending are Clerical, Police, Fire, DPW and Library. Police Department dispatchers are looking at establishing a union. Committee would like to see comparisons from other communities.

Revenue is a key element of the budgets, Town is assessing at a full 2 ½% that is allowed under State Law, need to look at how other governments operate. Town should consider not going up to the levy. ½% is \$328,000, increase in revenue is 1.6 million. This is worthy of a discussion and benefit to all constituents. 80% of the budget is for salaries. List of offsets from the State would be helpful with the budget discussion.

Average person receives lower than the 2%. Senior Citizen benefits are down. Selectmen and Finance Committee need to have a discussion on revenues. Public sector the only one getting increases. The change in benefits need to also be addressed. Under today's discussion, only 20 million is being discussed, 62 million is being held for a future meeting. Chairman spoke to tabling further discussion on revenue. This discussion would have been held at the February 9, meeting but meeting was cancelled, this created a timing issue.

Chairman read through the proposed budgets and asked for any holds on the budgets for further discussion and asked for a motion on any budget not being held.

MOTION MADE by J. Denneen, Seconded by J. Burke to approve the following budgets: Charter Review Committee (0), Town Moderator (0), By-Law Review Committee (0), Finance Committee (21,632), Reserve Fund (\$200,000), Legal Services (\$200,000), Personnel Board (\$2,750), Elections & Registrars (\$88,503), Zoning Board of Appeals (\$8,900), Ponds Management Committee (\$1500), Community & Economic Development (\$142,214), Permanent Building Committee (0), Town Report & Annual Audit (\$56,300), Trust Fund Commission (\$175), Weights & Measures (\$5,000), Emergency Management (\$34,171), DPW Engineering (\$314,244), DPW Street Lighting (\$421,175), DPW Landfill Maintenance (0) DPW Cemetery (\$163,509), Veterans Services (\$129,120), Town Celebrations (\$1500), Trail Committee (\$650), Motion Passed (14-0-0) (14 voting) Unanimous

Selectmen

Budget is \$2300 over department request and is due to 2% salary increase and additional hours for vacation coverage. Hours have increased for the part time clerk. Salary for the Administrative Assistant is also included in the Town Administrator's Budget. Town Administrator provided an overview on the duties of this position, and person is invaluable to the department. Town Administrator is a contractual salary fixed by a contract with the Board of Selectmen.

MOTION MADE by D. Bruce, Seconded by J. Burke for Favorable Action on the Selectmen's Budget in the amount of \$83,711, Motion Approved (13-1-0) (J. Vaillancourt opposed) (14 voting)

Administration

MOTION MADE by S. Lawson, Seconded by M. Trudell for Favorable Action on the Administration Budget in the amount of \$474,572, Motion Passed (14-0-0) (14 voting) Unanimous

Town Accountant

Town Accountant spoke to department being responsible to make sure all General Laws being followed i.e. accounts payable, produce financial statements, general ledger analysis, and monitor department budgets constantly, reconcile cash on a monthly basis. Free Cash numbers are certified by the State.

MOTION MADE by M. Trudell, Seconded by S. Lawson for Favorable Action on the Town Accountant's Budget in the amount of \$202,709 Motion Passed (14-0-0) (14 voting) Unanimous

Municipal Office Expenses

Contracts for the copy machines have been renegotiated.

MOTION MADE by S. Lawson, Seconded by M. Trudell for Favorable Action on the Municipal Office Expenses Budget in the amount of \$62,450, Motion Passed (14-0-0) (14 voting) Unanimous

Board of Assessors

Hold released

MOTION MADE by M. Trudell, Seconded for S. Lawson for Favorable Action on the Board of Assessors' Budget in the amount of \$307,971, Motion Passed (14-0-0) (14 voting) Unanimous

Treasurer/Collector

Department is responsible to send out all tax, water and sewer, motor vehicle excise taxes. They do all tax takings, responsible for all the debt functions, provide municipal lien certificates. In addition they handle on line payments on tax bills, paying off debt and borrowing expenses. Tax bills are issued four times a year and they work through a bank for lock box. Professional Services are for banking fees, fees for bill processing, attorney fees for tax title, lock box fees. Staff includes five personnel in addition to the Treasurer/Collector.

MOTION MADE by J. Burke, Seconded by M. Trudell for Favorable Action on the Treasurer/Collector's Budget in the amount of \$490,674, Motion Passed (14-0-0) (14 voting) Unanimous

Information Systems

Increase in salary for this position is due to the previous person only working four days, position now calls for five days a week and is on call.

MOTION MADE by S. Lawson, Seconded by J. Vaillancourt for Favorable Action on the Information Systems Budget in the amount of \$312,583, Motion Passed (14-0-0) (14 voting) Unanimous

Town Clerk

Animal Control administrative work is included in the Town Clerk's Budget. Department deals with the preservation of the Town's records. \$6500 is being requested for the preservation of Towns' records. Last year, four books were done. It will take several years to complete project. Committee had additional questions on this project and questioned whether this should be handled through the Capital Budget Committee.

Conservation Commission

Hold released

MOTION MADE by S. Lawson, Seconded by M. Trudell for Favorable Action on the Conservation Commission Budget in the amount of \$75,109, Motion Passed, (14-0-0) (14 voting) Unanimous

Planning Board

Hold Released

MOTION MADE by S. Lawson, Seconded by M. Trudell for Favorable Action on the Planning Board Budget in the amount of \$64,175, Motion Passed (14-0-0) (14 voting) Unanimous

Building Maintenance – DPW Director R. O'Brien, and Superintendent of Building Maintenance D. Anderson.

D. Anderson recapped what the department has been doing. Plimpton School, new tech program that required a lot of work, Recreation, due to increase in activity at Blackburn and East Walpole Library, Jarvis Farm doesn't pay for itself, any profits go back into Water Retained Earnings.. (Breakdown of costs for the water and sewer on the recreational programs) They are required to do state mandated programs, elevators, sprinklers, fire alarms. They have to prioritize projects. There has been a reduction in personnel costs for the department due to new custodians starting at a lesser salary. They receive at the end of the fiscal year, numerous requests from the schools. The moving of the fire personnel to the temporary structure will fall under this department. Most of the Town buildings are now on natural gas. Committee questioned the Town providing the maintenance of the Plimpton School, should the School Department reimburse the Town. Mr. Anderson spoke to the Town owning the building and it is the Town's responsibility.

MOTION MADE by S. Lawson, Seconded by P. Hinton for Favorable Action on the Building Maintenance Budget in the amount of \$2,103,557, Motion Passed, (14-0-0) (14 voting) Unanimous

Police – Chief J. Carmichael

Chief Carmichael questioned the additional request for dispatchers. They feel the need to have two dispatchers on at a time during peak time, sometimes they operate with only one. They do need two on at all times. New facility is designed for a dispatch area. Fire Station dispatcher area will be smaller in new station. Police Station will be a combined facility and have two 911 location, plus back up station. Staffed 24 hours a day There are plans to form a union by the dispatchers. They currently work four/two days.

Quinn bill – Police Officer educational incentive, need an associates degree or military veteran to be hired. Held for additional discussion on dispatch.

Part time clerical deal with public records, court information, lawyers requests and license to carry arms. They issued 1500 FID cards and it takes significant time for background checks.

12:15 p.m. – Ron Mariani

? monies going through town not subject to oversight, All money brought in, goes back to the Town, only funding receive drugs, drive in lease or rental, drug investigation seize the drugs and vehicle, goes towards future money and set aside in a town account.

Salaries for 42 staff and not seeing reduction in overtime. 3,000 residents responded to a survey on what the community expects and what are the issues: drug issues, mental health youth and they try to do what the community wants. School Resource officer is back in schools, and deal with significant issues. Community has more and more events each year and they are required to provide police officers. Department has the same number of officers they had 30 years ago. Population is approaching 25,000, and he feels the need for 50 officers. Department is extremely busy with dealing with the number of drug and mental health issues, and anticipate facing many issues in the future with the hotels and large housing developments being built. Drug issues, mental health issues, engage youth, tried to give the community what they WANT. Deal with training and response to critical issues, doing community issues. Responding to the community. There are more and more events each year. Town has same amount of cops that we had 30 years. Population anticipated going over 25,000. He feels need 50 officers. Department extremely busy. Dealing drug and mental health issues. Department facing issues in the futures, hotels, large housing developments.

Held, awaiting additional information on the dispatchers.

Inspectional Services

Town Administrator reduced this budget approximately \$3,000 due to reduction in hours for the part time clerk and the part time inspectors. Being proposed is the elimination of two of the inspectors and hiring one additional full time inspector. Software program has been upgraded.

MOTION MADE by J. Denneen, Seconded by R. Nottebart for Favorable Action on the Inspectional Services Budget in the amount of \$400,856, Motion Passed (15-0-0) (15 voting) Unanimous

Animal Control – Held

Position is included in two budgets.

Board of Health – R. Chappell, Health Agent

Health Agent R. Chapell outlined the responsibilities and accomplishment of the department. Salaries – Requested an additional 5 hours for Health Agent, Town Administrator is not recommending. Animal Inspector \$5,000 stipend. This position oversees the animal regulations of the Board of Health, and is hired by the Board of Health and is approved by the State. Animal Control Officer is appointed by the Board of Health.

Number of restaurant inspections have increased. Department does receive help from outside sources for these inspection but some are done through the Health office. They

keep up with the inspection cycle. Public nurse is covered under Agency Support (VNA).

Solid Waste – Held

There is a new Recycling Committee, but have only met once. This is not an appointed committee but made up of individuals that will do the work. They will be meeting March 1. What are the short term goals of the committee.

MOTION MADE by S. Lawson, Seconded by J. Denneen for Favorable Action on the Board of Health Budget in the amount of \$313,180, Motion Passed (15-0-0) (15 voting) Unanimous

Council on Aging – K. McManama, Director

Question on the use of volunteer van drivers – Presently don't use volunteers to operate the vehicles due to needing specific licenses, but Director will look into it. Van drivers are not working at the same time, they have one on at a time with one substitute. Vans are used for shopping every week and driving for recreational events outside and at the Senior Center.

MOTION MADE by J. Burke, Seconded by J. Denneen for Favorable Action on the Council on Aging Budget in the amount of \$178,634, Motion Passed (15-0-0) (15 voting) Unanimous

Library – S.Genovese, Director

Town is faced with population growth and new numbers will be available in July. This requires the Library to be open a certain amount of hours based on population, but Library Director feels that there will be sufficient time to adjust the budget, if necessary, when the numbers are known. .

MOTION MADE by S. Lawson, Seconded by J. Denneen for Favorable Action on the Library Budget in the amount of \$823,303, Motion Passed (15-0-0) (15 voting) Unanimous

Recreation –P. Shield, Recreation Director

Director has been employed in this position over 18 months ago. They provide recreation services to the community with over 700 programs: Movie nights, senior citizen programs, aquatic programs, Walpole Day, Concerts on the Common, etc. In addition they are in charge of Jarvis Farm, and schedule all the town fields. Financial reporting in the department has become improved and more efficient. They have consolidate the number of revolving funds, making them more streamline and structured with other departments.

Jarvis Farm –. Programs are evolving all the time. There have been many upfront costs involved with Recreation Department and Department of Public Works. Town Administrator to provide the committee with a breakdown of costs.

MOTION MADE by K. Guyette, Seconded by R. Nottebart for Favorable Action on the Recreation Budget in the amount of \$224, 219, Motion Passed (14-0-1) (P. Hinton abstained) (15 voting) Unanimous

Historical Commission- S. Ober, Chairman

Requesting additional money monies in the amount of \$1266 for personnel services Town Administrator is not requesting any monies for this line item. Mr. Ober spoke to the Committee in prior years received \$300. He is estimating work load of 5 hours per month (10-12 months) Commission oversees the demolition by-law, a lot of record keeping involved. Commission consists of five full members and two non- voting members.

Town Admilnistration spoke to the need for additional hours for other boards/commissions. This needs to be looked at. It was suggested that one person could provide assistance to these committees.

Held for additional information from Town Administrator

1:30 p.m. - Committee Member E. Barmakian left

Department of Public Works – Director R. O’Brien

This department is the second largest in the Town for personnel. Administration has minimal staffing with Director, Administrative Assistant, and Staff Assistant at the DPW. There are also four superintendents that oversee their departments plus the Engineering Department Office. Stormwater Management – State is moving forward with regulations and this will cost considerable amount of money in future. They presently budget for a firm (\$12,000) and they are doing an assessment of the Town’s catch basins. Town needs to map out all the catch basins and need to purchase software for this project. Drug testing is required for all new employees and they do random testing of the DPW employees. This is part of the collective bargaining agreement.

MOTION MADE by J. Denneen, Seconded by S. Lawson for Favorable Action on the DPW Administration Budget in the amount of \$328,830, Motion Passed (14-0-0) (14 voting) Unanimous

Highway

MOTION MADE by S. Lawson, Seconded by J. Denneen for Favorable Action on the \$856,149, Motion Passed (14-0-0) (14 voting) Unanimous

Snow and Ice

Contractors – There are 44 outside contractors that work for the town. (15 less contractors this year). They are paid in line with surrounding communities. Town has 44 pieces of equipment and 28 DPW vehicles. Town goes out first in a storm and if there is a need, outside contractors are called in. Department is cognizant not to call them in until it is necessary. 3 in. storm all contractors come in. All vehicles are tracked. Department has to be flexible and budget is realistic. Foreman all work the storms. Cost \$5500/hour for a full storm. They don't have 24/7 coverage and rely on Police Department to notify them of the need. They attempt to pre treat the roads. Town has gone to sand and salt combination, and keep track of the usage of salt due to environmental issue. All vehicles are tracked and some are able to be switched from sanding to plowing. Budget is realistic.

MOTION MADE by R. Nottebart, Seconded by S. Lawson for Favorable Action on the Snow and Ice Budget in the amount of \$818,050, Motion Passed (14-0-0) (14 voting) Unanimous

Vehicle Maintenance. – Tom Perciaccante, Superintendent

Vehicle Maintenance Garage consists of four bays. Staff includes 3 full time mechanics in addition to the Supervisor. They handle all town vehicles with the exception of the Fire Department.

MOTION MADE by J. Denneen, Seconded by S. Lawson for Favorable Action on the Vehicle Maintenance Budget in the amount of \$379,550, Motion Approved (14-0-0) (14-voting) Unanimous

Parks

MOTION MADE by S. Lawson, Seconded by J. Denneen for Favorable Action on the Parks Budget in the amount of \$605,204, Motion Passed, (14-0-0) (14 voting) Unanimous

Fire Department, Chief T. Bailey

Town Administrator reduced \$87,000 personnel line item is less than requested. (\$3,471,248). He had budgeted for two additional people, and requested five additional hours for the Administrative Assistant which was denied. Overtime, apparatus repair has been cut back, medical expenses are up. Staff is highly trained, Town Administrator will look into this budget if additional monies become available. Department has many costs involved with unfunded state mandates (stretchers, IV drug pumps).

Department has eight EMT's, rest of personnel are paramedics. Firefighters receive stipends for degrees (fire science), presently have personnel in the academy and shift should run with 9 minimum, but usually is only 7. They operate three ambulances. Issue

is the growth of the town and not keeping up with additional personnel. Firefighters are required to retire at 65, but can leave at 55 if they have the years of service. They do approximately 14 calls a day, 5200 year. They should have 3 men on a truck with the captain in a vehicle. They rely heavily on mutual aid from surrounding communities.

MOTION MADE by R. Nottebart, Seconded by S. Lawson for Favorable Action on the Fire Department Budget in the amount of \$3,750,024, Motion Passed (14-0-0) (14 voting) Unanimous

Budgets on hold are : Town Clerk, Police, Animal Control, Solid Waste, Walpole Public Schools, Tri-County, Norfolk County Agricultural , Historical, Debt, Employee Retirement Assessment, Unemployment Compensation, Employee Fringe Benefits and Casualty Insurance.

School Budget

Copies of the FY2018 proposed budget were provided to the committee. Copies of the entire budget are available for any members.

Adjourn:

MOTION MADE by J. Denneen, Seconded by M. Trudell to adjourn the meeting at 2:20 p.m.) Motion Passed (14-0-0) (14 voting) Unanimous

Respectfully submitted,

Clare P. Abril
Clerk