

FINANCE COMMITTEE

Minutes

March 3, 2014

Regular meeting of the Finance Committee was held on Monday, March 3, 2014 at 7:30 p.m. in the Finance Committee Room, Town Hall with the following members present: M. Iwanowicz, J. Burke, S. Ahmed, J. Denneen, D. DiCenso, J. McDermott, S. Lawson, D. Bruce, P. Hinton, T. Williams, J. Lowre, and D. Crowley. 8:20 A. Healy. Absent were: L. Pitman and C. Lane. Also Town Administrator M. Boynton, Fire Chief T. Bailey, Town Accountant J. Cuneo and Finance Director M. Thompson. Also DPW Employees, D. Hand, R. LeBlanc, D. Anderson, M. Walker and DPW Director R. O'Brien.

7:30 p.m. – Quorum being present, the meeting was called to order by the Acting Chairman S. Lawson.

May 5, 2014 Spring Annual Town Meeting Warrant

DPW Budget Review – speaking to these budgets were R. O'Brien, DPW Director

DPW Administration

Administration staff includes, Director, , DPW Administrative Assistant, DPW Secretary and a request for \$17,000 for seasonal employees working in the Parks and Highway Department.

MOTION MADE by J. Denneen, Seconded by J. Burke for Favorable Action on the DPW Administration Budget in the amount of \$265,947, Motion Passed (12-0-0) (12 voting) Unanimous

Engineering

Town Engineer M. Walker spoke to this budget. Engineering staff includes Town Engineer, Assistants Town Engineer, Part-Time Clerk, Temporary Part Time Engineering Inspector

MOTION MADE by J. Denneen, Seconded by D. Crowley for Favorable Action on the DPW Engineering Budget in the amount of \$302,417, Motion Passed (12-0-0) (12 voting) Unanimous

Highway– R. LeBlanc, Superintendent spoke to the Budget. Staff in this department includes, Superintendent, Assistant Superintendent, Foreman, and four laborers. Department handles cemeteries, roads, parks, storm drains (cleaning of storm drains is done by an outside contractor) disposing of hazardous material. Areas around municipal and school buildings. It was explained that most of the department's vehicles are diesel and most of the employees have hydraulic licenses. Licenses are part of bargaining unit.

Discussion held that it is not feasible for the town to have there own gas facility and most of the town is in the aquifer. If the town had there own facility, it would save 15 to 30 cents a gallon. Solid waste disposal is for materials picked up from the side of the road.

MOTION MADE by J. Denneen, Seconded by D. Crowley for Favorable Action on the Highway Budget in the amount of \$814,015, Motion Passed, (12-0-0) (12 voting)

Parks Division – Department does receive some money from outside sources, Fields Committee (\$6000) adopt a field program, some funding from youth football (\$9,000) Lacrosse (\$9,000) balance comes from general government Turco field was privately funded, turf has a 2 to 3 years life span. Discussion ensued on how to replace a field/ This will have to be taken up with the user groups and School Department. Turco Field cost approximately ½ million. Receipt of athletic fees doesn't come back to the Parks Department or the DPW. There is no money set aside for field replacement. Department doesn't receive any money for the realignment of the fields. Irrigation is in the Parks Budget. Non-profit organizations don't pay a fee. Walpole has been designated a Tree City USA. Trees reduce heating and provide cooling in houses and are considered a huge benefit to the community.

8:20 – Committee Member Ann Healey

MOTION MADE by J. Denneen, Seconded by J. Burke for Favorable Action on the Parks Division Budget in the amount of \$547,149, Motion Passed (12-0-1) (D. DiCenso abstained) (13 voting)

Cemeteries - are under Superintendent LeBlanc. Department does approximately 560 interments per year. Use of Perpetual Care Funds helps offset this department. They request the funds from the Cemetery Commissioners' (Selectmen) They will be doing a survey on cost of burials, this hasn't been done in four or five years. They sell 20 to 25 lots per year for futue consideration. Town does have some undeveloped land available for future use. Department has been using resident from the Tax Workout Program to compile and update information on the cemeteries, project is 50% complete.

MOTION MADE by J. Denneen, Seconded by J. Burke for Favorable Action on the Cemeteries Budget in the amount of \$158,129, Motion passed (13-0-0) (13 voting) Unanimous

Vehicle Maintenance Mr. O'Brien spoke to this budget. Department maintains all of the town vehicles (exception of fire trucks) pump stations, police and some fire vehicles. Four employees in the department, Superintendent and three mechanics. Most of the repair work is done in house. Position that was previously in this budget was reinstated last year. It is beneficial to have the staff on duty during snow storms to fix any vehicles that break down, they can get them up and running and back out very quickly. They maintain approximately 120 pieces of equipment. They need to upgrade the computer tracking of the repairs to the equipment. They do not maintain the school vehicles. Committee questioned whether it would be cost effective to maintain the school vehicles.

They are unable to do this, at this time, as the garage is maxed out of space and staff. Town Administrator spoke to the need to have a modern vehicle maintenance facility. Presently they have three bays and need to expand to four and upgrade lifts, etc. Cost of an additional mechanic would be approximately \$60,000 including benefits.

MOTION MADE by J. Denneen, Seconded by J. Burke for Favorable Action on the Vehicle Maintenance Budget in the amount of \$353,997, Motion Passed (13-0-0) (13 voting) Unanimous

Building Maintenance

Building Maintenance – D. Anderson, Superintendent, spoke to this budget. Department maintains 15 buildings and other municipal facilities (8 schools) Staff consists of 8 employees plus 4 custodians. On a question from the committee, the heating line item is being managed. Some of the buildings have gas option, oil is purchased through consortium. And he is comfortable with the line item number. They are working on doing improvements to burners. Projects that the department is working or has worked on are installing a lift at Plimpton School along with remodeling some of the classrooms. They have done the roof at Elm Street, Fisher School Gym, new tile in the kitchen of Fisher, removed the asbestos tile on floor of the auditorium at the Johnson Middle School, and installation of snow guards, heating wires at various locations. They are doing preventive maintenance. They have assisted and oversaw the volunteers at the installation of a playground at Boyden School. They did form work at the Spring Brook Bridge and are active in all of the buildings in town

Committee questioned the reduction in the Police Station Line Item in the amount of \$10,000. Town Administrator would like to know where we are going with the police and fire departments before adding additional money.

Plimpton School update – Contractor went in during February vacation and did the concrete work, shaft has to be ready before the lift company will come in.. Everything else is done and should come together. Cost from this project is \$3,000 from the Building Maintenance Budget, the balance is being paid out of the Schools and utilization of Special Ed funds. They are no longer looking for a Reserve Fund Transfer.

MOTION MADE by J. Denneen, Seconded by D. Crowley for Favorable Action on the Building Maintenance Budget in the amount of \$2,732,000, Motion Passed (13-0-0) (13 voting) Unanimous

Snow & Ice Budget

Snow & Ice Budget – R. LeBlanc spoke to this budget, anticipate that there will be a \$78,000 deficit this year. Average cost for outside contractors per snowstorm is approximately \$30,000. All the bills are not in. Budget is realistic. Department attempts' to remove snow during the daytime downtown and do as much as possible in house.

There is a potential for danger to pedestrians when snow removal downtown is done during the day.

Sidewalks – Committee questioned encouraging residents to shovel sidewalks and fire hydrants and storm drains. There is no enforcement mechanism. Is on the town website No town ordinance to remove snow on snow removal on hydrants.

MOTION MADE by J. Denneen, Seconded by D. Crowley for Favorable Action on the Snow & Ice Budget in the amount of \$771,400, Motion Passed, (13-0-0) (13 voting) Unanimous

Street Lighting

Street Lighting –R. O'Brien spoke to this budget. It consists of street lights, traffic signals, police details, \$57/hour. (2,000 street lights) professional services, roadside traffic safety, contractors do repairs on the traffic signals, (10 intersections). Also Opticon, lane painting of roadways and crosswalks. All are repainted annually. Street lights fare owned by Nstar and they maintain them. Town has had a contractor to resynchronizes the downtown traffic lights. They will be looking for additional monies in next year's Capital Budget.

MOTION MADE by J. Denneen, Seconded by J. Burke for Favorable Action on the Street Lighting Budget in the amount of \$362,200, Motion Passed (13-0-0) (13 voting) Unanimous

Adjourn:

MOTION MADE by J. Denneen, Seconded by D. Crowley to adjourn at 9:40 p.m. Motion Passed (13-0-0) (13 voting) Unanimous

Respectfully submitted,

Clare P. Abril
Clerk

