

JOINT FINANCE COMMITTEE AND BOARD OF SELECTMEN MEETING

January 15, 2014

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Meeting Date: January 15, 2014

Called to Order: 6:00 PM

Location: 1 Avenue A, Turners Falls MA

Finance Committee Members Present: John Hanold, Michael Naughton, Sharon Kennaugh, Greg Garrison and Lisa Adams. Lynn Reynolds arrived at 6:02 PM.

Selectmen Present: Mark Fairbrother arrived at 6:29 PM. Michael Nelson and Christopher Boutwell were absent.

Others Present: Town Administrator Frank Abbondanzio (arrived at 6:03 PM) and Town Accountant Carolyn Olsen

Minutes

Finance Committee Moved:

To approve the minutes of January 8, 2014.

Vote: 5 In Favor 0 Opposed 0 Abstained

Special Town Meeting Articles

Article # 1 - Amends the Zoning Bylaws to add sections dealing with medical marijuana. No Finance Committee vote needed.

Article #2 - Amends Article #1 of the May 5, 2012 Special Town Meeting to allow the appropriation to be spent on demolishing the Cumberland Farms building a 38 Avenue A. No Finance Committee vote needed.

Article #3 – Appropriates \$5,000 for legal fees of Cable Advisory Committee. The previous special article (#17 5/7/11) has been fully spent, and additional funds are needed to complete negotiations with Comcast.

Finance Committee Moved:

To recommend \$5,000 for legal fees of Cable Advisory Committee, to be raised from Free Cash.

Vote: 6 In Favor 0 Opposed 0 Abstained

Article #4 – Appropriates \$15,000 to make the restrooms at the Unity Park Field House handicapped accessible.

Mr. Naughton is concerned that this came up so suddenly and wonders if it's really necessary at this time, pointing out that we expect department heads to plan ahead and bring these projects through the Capital Improvements Committee. The Finance Committee chose not to vote on this due to the lack of information and concerns about the way it was submitted without going through the Capital Improvements Committee.

Article #5 – Appropriates \$20,000 to increase the Fiscal Year 2014 Police Budget. After the original 2014 budget was drafted the department experienced some unanticipated costs. One officer resigned to take a job elsewhere. This resignation put a burden on the Overtime budget because the shift had to be filled during the officer's absence. The recent contract also provided for pay increases which resulted in the overtime pay rates going up. This added to this burden as well and currently puts the department about \$13,000 behind in the overtime line item. The Police

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Chief is asking for \$15,000 in hopes that he will not need to return to Town Meeting again this year. The Police Supplies budget is running behind about \$2,000 due to supplies that were purchased for the Police/Fire Open House as well as other needed supplies for both police and dispatch. The Police Vehicle Maintenance/Supplies is running about \$3,000 behind due to rising fuel costs and some work that was needed on one of our police cruisers to keep it in service as an unmarked cruiser.

There was discussion about the timing of replenishing this budget.

- Mr. Naughton is okay with the timing of the request for overtime, but would prefer that the remaining request be brought up at the special before the annual in May when there's a better sense of how much of a shortfall remains.
- Mr. Garrison said that he could see that the budget was heading for a deficit, and that it makes sense to him to adjust it now, as well as reviewing next year's budget more carefully.
- Mr. Hanold noted that the Fiscal Year 2015 budget does include increases in these areas.
- Ms. Reynolds noted that there's been a lot of creeping up in this department and feels we need to get this budget under control, understanding that there's been a learning curve with a new Chief of Police.

Finance Committee Moved:

To recommend \$20,000 to increase the Fiscal Year 2014 Police Budget, to be raised from Free Cash.

Vote: 4 In Favor 1 Opposed 1 Abstained

Mr. Hanold asked that the Finance Committee votes on these articles be provided as part of the information given to town meeting members.

Fiscal Year 2015 Capital Requests/Special Article submitted to date:

1. \$400,000 for a skate park at Unity Park, to be funded by a combination of grants, donations, and town funds. A more extensive description of the project will be provided after consultation with the Massachusetts Executive Office of Environmental Affairs, who administers the partial funding source - The PARC Grant (Parkland Acquisitions and Renovations for Communities). At that time there will also be a better idea of the town's share of the cost.
2. \$100,000 for DPW equipment purchase/repairs. This is an annual appropriation for the purchase of smaller pieces of equipment as well as large repairs. Balance of Fiscal Year 2014 appropriation (\$75k) is \$53,051. Another \$29k of expenditures are already planned.
3. \$43,325 for DPW lease payment (#3 of 5 for a 6 wheel dump truck)
4. \$10,000 for Police Equipment. This is an annual appropriation, although this year the request is for a lower amount. Balance of Fiscal Year 2014 appropriation (\$20k) is \$16,132.
5. \$8,200 for IT equipment, accessories, software and installation. This is an annual appropriation. Balance of Fiscal Year 2014 appropriation is \$7,708.
6. \$8,500 to upgrade assessing software. The Assessors are requesting to upgrade the Computer Assisted Mass Appraisal software used by the Assessing Department to AssessPro 5.0.

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7. \$10,000 for Montague Center School Maintenance. This is an annual appropriation. Balance of Fiscal Year 2013 appropriation (\$15k) is \$1,178 and all \$10k remains of Fiscal Year 2014 budget.
8. \$3,000,000 to replace 2 pump stations. This is a request from the Water Pollution Control Facility to begin replacement of old equipment.

Decide what departments to meet with for budget discussions.

The Police/Dispatch, Department of Public Works, and Water Pollution Control Facility are already scheduled for meetings, as are both school districts. Other departments to meet with will be the Libraries, Assessors/IT and Selectmen. Additionally the Shared Costs and Benefits budgets will be reviewed at a meeting.

Carolyn will e-mail all other departments to see if they want to meet with us.

Topics not anticipated within in the 48 hour posting requirements

All questions for departments should be e-mailed to Mr. Abbondanzio by 9:00 AM on Tuesday, January 21st.

Next Meetings:

January 22, 2014	Initial Schedules I and II, discuss/decide use of reserves
January 29, 2014	Assessors/IT, BOS?, Shared?, Benefits?
February 5, 2014	Police/Dispatch budgets, GMRSD briefing
February 12, 2014	WPCF, DPW budgets
February 19, 2014	FCTS, Libraries?
February 26, 2014	reserved for snow days
March 5, 2014	GMRSD
March 12, 2014	Capital Improvements Committee, decide final use of reserves, final Schedules I & II
March 19, 2014	Vote STM and ATM recommendations
March 26, 2014	Vote operating budget and funding sources for Town, WPCF, Colle, Airport and school districts

Meeting Adjourned at 6:35 PM

List of Documents and Exhibits

- Minutes January 8, 2014
- Special Town Meeting Warrant