

JOINT FINANCE COMMITTEE AND BOARD OF SELECTMEN MEETING

April 6, 2016

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**Meeting Date:** April 6, 2016      **Called to Order:** 6:00 PM

**Location:** 1 Avenue A, Turners Falls MA

**Finance Committee Members Present:** John Hanold, Michael Naughton, Greg Garrison, Fred Bowman and Patricia Pruitt. Chris Menegoni was absent

**Selectmen Present:** Rich Kuklewicz, Chris Boutwell and Michael Nelson.

**Others Present:** Town Administrator Frank Abbondanzio, Town Accountant Carolyn Olsen, Airport Commissioner Peter Golrick, Town Clerk Deb Bourbeau, Jeff Singleton, and Montague Pipeline Liaison Ariel Elan

**Minutes**

Finance Committee Moved:

To approve the minutes of March 30, 2016.

Vote: 4 In Favor   0 Opposed   1 Abstained

Selectmen Moved:

To approve the minutes of March 30, 2016.

Vote: 3 In Favor   0 Opposed   0 Abstained

**FY17 Budget**

Mr. Golrick asked for an opportunity to explain the airport special article. The FAA allocates a non-primary entitlement of \$150,000 to each airport every year. This is to be used as the 90% federal grant which must be matched by 5% each from the state and the municipality. The total project amount is \$167,000.

- The airport is proposing a planning project, either an airport layout plan update or a master plan update, for the Fiscal Year 2017 grant. The reason for a planning project is that these plans identify the uses of various areas of the property, and the airport can't do anything with a specific area that's not appropriately identified on one of those plans.
- Changes to the plans require surveys, including for surveys for endangered species and the existence of artifacts.
- A revised layout plan will allow the airport to identify the portions of the property not used for aviation. The ultimate goal is to eventually install a solar array on a 28 acre area that is not suitable for aviation purposes, and which the airport has been unable to market as an industrial park parcel.
- The mechanics would be that the airport would lease the property to a company that would install and operate the solar panels. The airport would receive lease payments and be the first customer for any electricity generated.
- The projected revenues from a solar project would allow the airport to become fully self-funding.
- There was general discussion about coordination with the Franklin County Technical School.
- It was asked if any land not used for aviation purposes could be returned to the town so that the town could get the lease revenues directly, but this would likely require repayment of many years worth of federal grants.

Selectmen Moved:

To recommend \$8,350 as the town share of a FAA grant for a planning project, funded from Airport Retained Earnings.

Vote: 3 In Favor 0 Opposed 0 Abstained

Finance Committee Moved:

To recommend \$8,350 as the town share of a FAA grant for a planning project, funded from Airport Retained Earnings.

Vote: 5 In Favor 0 Opposed 0 Abstained

Reconsiderations

The budget as approved last week has a shortfall in taxation of \$164,724. This needs to be corrected through either budget reductions or changes in funding sources.

Pipeline Legal Expenses

- Ms. Elan is concerned that changing the funding source for the pipeline legal expenses from taxation to a stabilization fund, and the required two-thirds vote for using stabilization funds, would make it difficult to pass the article.
- Ms. Elan requests that the Finance Committee change the funding source of other articles funded from taxation that she thinks would have no difficulty in passing with a 2/3 vote. This would allow the \$50,000 to continue to be funded from taxation.
- If it were an open town meeting, Ms. Elan would not be concerned. But it will be late in the meeting before it comes up, the amount is significant, and given a small vocal contingent that wants the pipeline, she is asking that this article have a lower bar for passage.
- Ms. Elan feels that Montague has a responsibility to Franklin County, given that other towns have provided or plan to provide funds.
- Mr. Hanold feels we've already bent our principals significantly by looking at moving many of the articles to stabilization funds. Mr. Hanold recognizes Ms. Elan's concern about the threshold of approval, but doesn't think we have a lot of alternatives.
- Mr. Bowman said that this is just a reason for a lower threshold, and if town meeting really supports this article, there should be no problem getting a 2/3 vote.
- Mr. Naughton is not in favor of juggling funding sources in an attempt to influence how a particular article will be funded – that could be a slippery slope. Mr. Naughton doesn't think we should take attitude of making one article as easy as possible to fund.

General Discussion

- Ms. Pruitt suggested reconsidering the taxation contribution to OPEB.
- Mr. Naughton suggested also reconsidering funding the FCTS Stabilization fund at all. If those two articles weren't funded, we could fund the DPW Equipment from taxation.
- Mr. Naughton asked if was more important to fund OPEB or keep stabilization balance within threshold. Mr. Hanold suggested that the auditors may prefer the consistency of a second OPEB appropriation. Mr. Bowman noted that if we don't fund it this year, but fund next year it will be likely at the annual amount, which will put us further behind.

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Selectmen Moved:

To change the recommended funding source for DPW Equipment from Taxation to the Town General Stabilization Fund.

Vote: 3 In Favor 0 Opposed 0 Abstained

Finance Committee Moved:

To change the recommended funding source for DPW Equipment from Taxation to the Town General Stabilization Fund.

Vote: 5 In Favor 0 Opposed 0 Abstained

Selectmen Moved:

To change the recommended funding source for fixing the Carnegie roof from Taxation to the Town Capital Stabilization Fund.

Vote: 3 In Favor 0 Opposed 0 Abstained

Finance Committee Moved:

To change the recommended funding source for fixing the Carnegie roof from Taxation to the Town Capital Stabilization Fund.

Vote: 5 In Favor 0 Opposed 0 Abstained

Selectmen Moved:

To change the recommended funding source for fixing the Montague Center Library roof from Taxation to the Town Capital Stabilization Fund.

Vote: 3 In Favor 0 Opposed 0 Abstained

Finance Committee Moved:

To change the recommended funding source for fixing the Montague Center Library roof from Taxation to the Town Capital Stabilization Fund.

Vote: 5 In Favor 0 Opposed 0 Abstained

Selectmen Moved:

To change the recommended funding source for Library masonry work from Taxation to the Town Capital Stabilization Fund.

Vote: 3 In Favor 0 Opposed 0 Abstained

Finance Committee Moved:

To change the recommended funding source for Library masonry work from Taxation to the Town Capital Stabilization Fund.

Vote: 5 In Favor 0 Opposed 0 Abstained

Selectmen Moved:

To change the recommended funding source for Pipeline Legal Expenses from Taxation to the Town General Stabilization Fund.

Vote: 3 In Favor 0 Opposed 0 Abstained

**Finance Committee Moved:**

To change the recommended funding source for Pipeline Legal Expenses from Taxation to the Town General Stabilization Fund.

Vote: 5 In Favor 0 Opposed 0 Abstained

**Software Article**

Ms. Bourbeau came to explain the opportunity to purchase software for license issuing by the Town Clerk and the Selectmen's office.

- Ms. Bourbeau has found a software package for licenses that includes software for letters and reports. There's another software package called Boards and Commissions which tracks the membership and appointments of various boards and committees. Currently everything is kept manually in 3 ring binders, and it's very difficult and cumbersome to do a paper trail every year.
- Mr. Hanold – this looks like a single solution, has Ms. Bourbeau considered other packages. Ms. Bourbeau said this package would work very well for them, and that it was the best of the ones she has seen at conferences.
- Mr. Kuklewicz asked if it has ability to expand to other departments. This particular software is just geared to the two departments.
- There is some confusion around whether software for the Board of Health and Building Inspector also has a component for the Town Clerk and Selectmen.
- Mr. Naughton thinks if there is a package that could serve all, or at least most of, the departments in town hall that have licensing, permitting, and inspections, it would be preferable to having multiple programs that don't communicate with each other. If we must have multiple programs, it would be good if they could at least communicate with each other. Mr. Naughton wants software purchases to be coordinated with IT, and based on more than one vendor presentation.
- Mr. Kuklewicz's suggestion is to get more information and have discussion with other departments before town meeting.
- Ms. Bourbeau is more concerned with getting software than the timing.

**Draft Finance Committee Report to Town Meeting**

Mr. Hanold handed out hard copies of his draft report. Mr. Hanold is particularly interested in buy-in from others that this really is our view of the world.

**Topics not anticipated within in the 48 hour posting requirements - None**

**Meeting adjourned at 8:00 PM**

**List of Documents and Exhibits:**

- Minutes of March 30th

**Next Meetings:**

- April 6<sup>th</sup> – Draft Finance Committee Report
- April 13<sup>th</sup> – Revise Finance Committee Report