

FINANCE COMMITTEE
Town of Becket
557 Main Street
Becket, MA 01223

Meeting Minutes for Thursday, January 5, 2012

Call To Order: 7:10 PM

Present: Steve L., Ann S., Jeremy D., Chuck A., Craig K., Jeanne Prior

Absent: None

Public: Zina Jayne & Purr McEwen from the Berkshire Athenaeum

AGENDA

1. Review and approve minutes for prior meeting

Motion: Ann Second: Jeremy

Approved

2. Correspondence and transfers
None

3. Town Admin. Summary of Special Articles for ATM

Listing provided and discussed. Questions were raised on estimated cost of servers as being high. This is Jeremy's expertise and he offered guidance if needed. Question as to integration of new Tax Collector software with Accounting software be investigated and possibly built into the turn key cost of the software. Total cost for this software is still open. Town Beach improvements are in for a placeholder but costs have not yet been determined. The need for the Permitting Software for the Building Inspector was also challenged as it appears the building dept is not that busy right now and Fin Com felt the annual charges are rather stiff.

Last year's Special Articles that should be in department budgets going forward are the Accounting software, Town Building Maintenance/Repairs, Center Pond Lake District and Women's Auxiliary Children's Holiday Party.

4. Update on applications for FEMA funds for storm damage versus our Highway budgets and expenditures.

\$289K spent in out of pocket cash; \$343K applied for (includes equipment charge). Expected to receive about \$300K from FEMA/MEMA. Question as to whether we can overspend this budget category or a transfer is needed since the reimbursement will probably be in FY 2013.

5. Discussion on the Budget Timetable, budget assumptions set by the Select Board

Letter sent out Dec 5th. Jeremy asked as to timetable for CBRSD budget as this is the critical piece of the Town Budget.

6. Salary Survey update/timetable to get ready for 2013 Budget

Craig is working on this.

7. Public Input

Becket Athenaeum representatives presented their 2012 Budget Request (Flat Funding). It was well presented. Some points to note is that the town funding is lower than comparable towns and their library funding. It was stated that the Town does not own the library as is the case with other town libraries and therefore has no control over the spending of its stipend and the size of its' overall budget. However, many of the services provided by the library are funded through grants which are specific to programs offered such as the after school children's programs. The town funding covers such things as building maintenance and utilities. Also the funding from Washington has been increased and it is very representative of the library use population split for residents. It was also noted that the Library could provide space for the Historical Commission. It was asked how much of a reduction could be done, if necessary, for the budget without impacting the Library State Certification which is necessary for State Grants. This will be forwarded to us.

8. Any other business

A discussion about the SB wanting a Special Town Meeting to address the need for a full or part time Police Chief, FEMA Costs versus budget, and Wired West initiative.

It was brought up that an STM is expensive and also non-binding versus the ATM. It was felt the FEMA and Wired West could be handled at the ATM. As for the Police Chief position from our viewpoint the critical point is the overall Police Budget, not Full Time or Part Time. Voters do not vote on headcount, only budget \$ for salaries. Once again this would be better handled at the ATM. It was suggested a look at the police department budget needs if there was a full time chief versus part time chief and part time officers and whether all could be accomplished in the current budget apportionment. The FC asked for a Revised Police Budget covering a FT Chief before moving forward. Jeremy made a motion, seconded by Ann and all approved that the SB not call a Special Town Meeting but to include everything in the ATM.

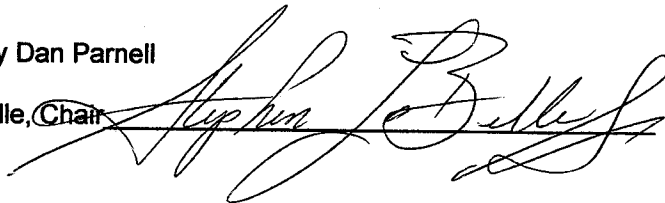
The Housing Grant status was raised and Craig informed the FC the required activities are in process.

There will be a Jan 26th CBRSD meeting and Becket Washington School to present preliminary Budget findings. It was requested that the FC have representation.

Adjourned: 9:20 PM

Respectfully submitted by Dan Parnell

Approved by Steve LaBelle, Chair

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Steve LaBelle", written over a horizontal line.