

Finance Committee Meeting Minutes

Monday, April 4, 2016

Attendance: Chairmen, Ed Hoak; Committee Members, Joe Freitas, Nancy Gajoli and Michele Hamilton.

Selectmen, Wendy Cochrane

Accountant, Kathy Avilla

Building Department, Paul Boucher

Town Clerk, Deborah Pereira

Animal Control Operations, Lisa Tetreault, George Faria

Veterans, Donald L Hirschy

Council on Aging, Carolyn M Peldquin, Donna L Benoit, Priscilla Martin

Meeting called to order at 6:30.

Reviewed the Finance Committee minutes of March 28, 2016, motion was made and seconded to accept the minute with minor adjustment of changing Harbors to Harper, unanimously voted for acceptance.

Building Department, Paul Boucher, discussed budget request for fiscal year 2017. Flat line from last year with the exception of payroll which includes step increases.

Mr. Boucher, explained that, at this time, it is too early to determine if the request for permits, etc have increased from last year and currently they are equal to fiscal year 2016.

Town Clerk, Deborah Pereira, discussed budget request for fiscal year 2017. Although payroll was flat line from fiscal year 2016, we can expect an increase due to step raises, additional 2 hours and a 2% raise for clerical.

Selectman, Wendy Cochrane, indicated that we may be looking at a possible increase of 4.8% across the board for clerical. This increase is due to step raises and the extra 2 hours for the Town Offices to be open.

In addition, Town Clerk, Ms. Pereira discuss the cost to bind critical records. The cost for the acid paper is \$100 for 200 sheets for her to copy on her own and then send them out for binding. Ms. Pereira is currently waiting for a quote to have the records done. We currently have 2 file draws that need binding and this process has not been done for 25 years and we are not compliant with Massachusetts General Law.

Animal Control Officers, Lisa Tetreault and George Faria discussed budget request for fiscal year 2017. The increase in payroll is to correct last year contract issues. The contract was agreed upon after town meeting in June. There was an increase of \$600. To meet this increase it was agreed that for fiscal year 2016 would be taken out of their expenses and recovered in this year budget, adding an additional \$520. After this fiscal year the payroll will progress with contract terms.

Ms. Tetreault provided the committee with the Animal Control Officer report from January 01, 2015 to December 31, 2015 giving an outline of calls handled. Also, it provided the committee with the amount of fees collected for 2015 in the amount of \$14,575.00. Accountant, Kathy Avilla, explained that all fees collected were placed in the local fees receipt account.

Veterans, Donald L Hirschy, discussed the budget request for fiscal year 2017. There is a contractual increase in the amount of \$158.00 for the Veterans Agent. Expenses are increased by \$500. This monies was originally

taken out of expenses for fiscal year 2016 to cover the training/certification required. These fees have been added back in to expenses as training/certification is not need for fiscal year 2017.

Mr. Hirschy also explained that the Town of Berkley currently have 4 veterans on chapter 115 and he expects that we will be looking at Dessert Storm veterans needing assistance.

Council on Aging, Carolyn M Peldquin, Donna L Benoit and Priscilla Martin discussed the budget for fiscal year 2017. There is an increase of \$763 in expenses. An increase in newsletter/postage, for mail returned. Increase in the wellness programs, bus trips/special programs and training. Due to the new building, new equipment purchased, office equipment was decreased and office supplies and misc lines were flat line.

Also discussed was increase of participants in the programs, which is tracked by sign in sheets, explains some of the increases requested.

Ms. Peldquin explained that they currently received a grant to fund an outreach person for 8 hours per week. This person will make phone calls reaching out to those that may be house bound. Hopefully this will provide the community who may need further assistance than what they are receiving.

Also discussed was the need for a director. The Town of Berkley currently have 1000/60 plus residence and this population is growing, thus the need for a director. The Council on Aging requested a director for 20 hours at \$15.00 an hour. The Town of Berkley is not able to support this request art this time so other options were put on the table for discussion.

There are grants that could cover a portion of the pay, however, the Town of Berkley would have to hire a director, say for 10 hours and if we qualify for the grant, the grant could cover the remaining balance of the payroll. Because we do not have a director in place the Town of Berkley has missed out on 2 grants.

Unfortunately, the Finance Committee is unable to make a decision on the above matter, it was an informative conversation.

The Association of Town Finance Committees are offering three workshops:

- Managing Your Debt and Credit on Thursday, May 5, in the MMA Office, Boston at 11:30 am.
- Building a Capital Plan on Thursday, May 12, at the Sharon Community Center at 5:30 pm.
- Planning For and Making Presentations at Town Meeting on Thursday, May 19, at the Hadley Town Hall at 5:30 pm.

Finance Committee members, Joe Freitas and Michele Hamilton expressed an interest in attending Managing Your Debt and Credit and Planning For and Making Presentations at Town Meeting.

The next Finance Committee meeting will be on April 11, 2016 at 6:00 pm in the Town of Berkley Office building.

A motion was made and seconded to adjourn the meeting at 8:00, unanimously voted.