

**TOWN OF GREAT BARRINGTON**  
**BOARD OF SELECTMEN/FINANCE COMMITTEE**  
**GREAT BARRINGTON FIRE STATION**  
**37 STATE ROAD, GREAT BARRINGTON, MA**  
**MINUTES**  
**FEBRUARY 25, 2014**  
**6:00 P.M.**

**PRESENT:**

**BOARD OF SELECTMEN:**

**SEAN STANTON, CHAIR**

**DEBORAH PHILLIPS**

**STEPHEN BANNON**

**DANIEL BAILEY**

**ANDREW BLECHMAN**

**FINANCE COMMITTEE:**

**SHARON GREGORY, CHAIR**

**WALTER ATWOOD**

**MARK LEFENFELD**

**LEIGH DAVIS**

**THOMAS BLAUVELT**

**TOWN MANAGER: JENNIFER TABAKIN**

I. The meeting was called to order at 6:00 p.m.

Sharon Gregory noted at the last Finance Committee meeting, they discussed concerns about the proposed town budget and school budget. With the combined changes, it would result in a \$1.00 increase per thousand in the tax rate or 10%. She noted the Finance Committee would like the town to approach the idea of a level funded budget even though it could lead to a reduction in service levels. We encourage departments to identify possible revenue sources that correlate to the costs of services. We need to be cautious in an extremely lacking economic environment and that we keep the taxes down.

II. FY 15 Budget

a. Town Planner – Page: C-17 – Department Budget Detail, Budget line items – Page C-03  
Chris Rembold, Town Planner, was present to explain his budget. He noted he has requested \$1,000 in line item #71 – Contracted Services to digitize the property records. There is also an increase in the Berkshire Regional Planning Commission assessment of \$103.00. Chris noted that by digitizing the parcels, the lot line changes, subdivisions and sales will be kept up to date so you are looking at accurate information. He advised that this was started in 2009 with approximately \$15,000, which is almost completely spent. There is approximately \$900.00 left.

b. Conservation Commission Page: (C-16) – Budget Detail – Line items Page: B-15  
It was noted that Shep Evans has joined the team as a conservation agent. It was noted that the Town Manager's budget has a line item for training and conferences. There are no increases in the Planning Board budget.

c. Health Operations – Pages: E-01 and E-02 – It was noted that the Board of Health monitors restaurants, lodging, camps and handles complaints as well. The health agent also is the animal inspector. Mark advised that there is an increase of \$333.00 in the beach testing line item because the fees went up. There is an \$18.00 increase in R/M of Equipment because the contract for the photocopy increased. The Board will be reviewing the fee schedule in March to see if any fees need to be raised. Mark advised that Beaver trapping permits are only issued out of season and the flooding of property and wells is usually the issue.

Animal Control – No changes. Bonnie Bassis from Egremont is still taking stray animals. The town or owner pays per night. The town only pays when the owner can't be located.

d. Building Inspector – pages: D-10 – and D-02 of the Budget – The building department provides technical assistance to contractors and homeowners. Jennifer noted that they are going to seek grants to help people rehabilitate their homes. Also we are trying to bring the building department on to the electronic building system that is being used by many Berkshire towns. The Building Department brings in revenue that offsets its costs. It is proposed in the budget to add an assistant part time inspector because of increased building permits with the Barrington Brook homes and the possible high school renovation. Also \$10,000 has been added for property security and safety. There is currently \$11,500 in the account. It was noted that it could take up to a year to take the properties from current owners in order to demolish them. It was suggested to return with an amount for multiple buildings to do an estimated schedule.

e. Parks and Recreation – pages: G-01 and G-03 – Karen Smith was present to explain the budget. First she noted that there will be no money available in the 2015 budget for CPA. The three categories for CPA allocations are historical, open space and low income housing. The State match would be in the middle of November. Parks also is part of the cemetery department. There is a transfer of \$500 from Repair/Maintenance to Waste Management which is to pay the portal-let rentals at the lake and playgrounds. Berkshire South manages our summer programs as well as the skate park. Parks has been involved in upgrading the Housatonic Playground, Grove Street Park, and the Olympian Meadows for water lines. Drinking fountains are also proposed for various parks.

f. Council on Aging – Pages: F-01 and F-02 Polly Mann, COA Director was present to explain the budget. It was noted that a new full time assistant/clerical line item in the amount of \$34,000 has been added to the budget. Polly advised that when she is out helping, there is nobody to fill in. She said the Council on Aging Board is in favor of the new position. In the future there will be a need as the older population grows. She said Southern Berkshire Elderly Transportation received \$13,000 from the State and gave \$2,000 to the Senior Center. Polly said this year the DPW put in automatic doors in the restrooms, put in a welcome window and the Friends of the Senior Center are being approached about donating a piano. The gift store sold \$400.00 in merchandise this year.

The meeting adjourned at 8:45 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Carolyn Wichmann

Secretary