

**TOWN OF GREAT BARRINGTON
JOINT MEETING
SELECTBOARD & FINANCE COMMITTEE
MINUTES
MONDAY, MARCH 3, 2014
6:00 P.M. – FIRE STATION**

PRESENT: DAN BAILLY
STEPHEN BANNON
ANDREW BLECHMAN
DEB PHILLIPS
SEAN STANTON

JENNIFER TABAKIN, TOWN MANAGER

Finance Committee: Bud Atwood
Tom Blauvelt
Leigh Davis
Sharon Gregory – Chairperson
Mark Lefenfeld

1. Call to order: Sean Stanton called the meeting to order at 6:00 P.M.

2. Wrap-up FY15 Budget

Jennifer Tabakin reviewed the DPW budget.

Sharon Gregory asked about the details surrounding the (old fire house) facility lease.

Jennifer responded that the lease will be a maximum of 6 years with the option to sub-let with the permission of the owner.

Leigh Davis asked if any other options were explored.

Jennifer responded that this is not just about the office space but there are also vehicles housed in the space.

Sean Stanton asked Joe Sokul for the cost of trash pick-up down town during the week and on weekends.

Joe Sokul said that he will get this break-down.

Leigh Davis asked Joe Sokul about the heating in the Mason Library; have steps been taken to address this issue.

Joe Sokul responded that work will continue to be done on this issue. Over the next 5 years, greater savings will be realized.

There was discussion about the increased cost of electricity and street lights.

Sean Stanton asked Jennifer Tabakin for the 2013 budget for these items to see if the 'actual' came close.

Deb Phillips suggested that \$20,000 over the actual should be enough in the budget.

Dan Bailly asked if it would be realistic to have National Grid do a pole audit.

Joe Sokul suggested that residents who want a light in front of their home should pay for it.

Jennifer Tabakin said that she will get more information about rates from Hampshire and compare it to past numbers.

a. Capital

Jennifer Tabakin reviewed the Capital budget and said that potential CPA items were not included in the borrowing dollars.

The Selectboard and Finance Committee went through each CPA item to decide which item(s) to defer.

All agree that the Cemetery Committee should come up with a plan for the mausoleum. All agree that the mausoleum project be put off.

Mason Library – cupola /widow walk and carpeting; All agree to wait

Newsboy monument restoration – All agree to wait

Parks improvements - Joe Sokul feels that CPA will not cover this, since they will not cover new equipment. All agree to move this item to the tax levy.

There was discussion about police cruisers.

Leigh Davis asked how much would be saved if they were replaced every 3 years instead of every 2 years.

Jennifer Tabakin said that she will find out.

All agree that Chief Walsh should be part of this conversation.

Sean Stanton questioned the level of service when it comes to plowing.

Deb Phillips asked how much less would need to be done in order to make a change in the budget.

Jennifer Tabakin expressed her unhappiness with the dissemination of incorrect information regarding the Housatonic fire station. She said that this fire station will remain; in fact, they are investing in the building by putting on new doors.

b. Operating

In summary, the towns increase to the tax rate is \$.49 and the schools increase is \$.51, which totals an increase of \$1.00 on the tax rate. The new tax rate will be \$14.57.

In order to reduce it down \$.50, there would need to be a \$661,189 decrease.

In order to decrease the tax rate \$.25, there would need to be a reduction of \$330,000.

Deb Phillips said that our fiscal impact should play into contractual negotiations.

Jennifer Tabakin reminded everyone that they need to look at how cuts will affect things in the long term.

Sharon Gregory suggested that OPEB be removed, lighting be decreased and that money be taken out of free cash.

Lauren Sartori said that there is currently \$371,000 in the stabilization fund so some things could be paid for using these funds in order to reduce the tax rate.

Steve Bannon suggested that all items be looked at instead of only large items that affect safety.

Steve recommended that \$330,000 be cut and asked for the town managers recommendations in how to do so.

Deb Phillips added that all departments look critically at their numbers to come up with a plan.

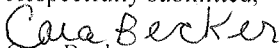
Mark Lefenfeld recommended that no more than 3% be cut departmentally without decreasing safety and asked what would be the long term consequences of doing these cuts now.

3. Adjournment

On a motion by Deb Phillips, seconded by Steve Bannon, the Board adjourned its meeting at 8:45 p.m.

On a motion by Bud Atwood, seconded by Tom Blauvelt, the Finance Committee adjourned its meeting at 8:45 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,


Cara Becker

Recording Secretary