

JOINT MEETING
GREAT BARRINGTON BOARD OF SELECTMEN/FINANCE COMMITTEE
SELECTMEN'S MEETING ROOM
TOWN HALL
334 MAIN STREET, GREAT BARRINGTON, MA
FEBRUARY 16, 2011
6:00 P.M.

BOARD OF SELECTMEN:

SEAN STANTON, CHAIRMAN

DEBORAH PHILLIPS, VICE CHAIRMAN

WALTER ATWOOD

STEPHEN BANNON

ALANA CHERNILA

FINANCE COMMITTEE:

THOMAS BLAUVELT, CHAIRMAN

MARK LEFENFELD

LOUIS J. STARK

ALICE REILLY

JOHN BREASTED

ALSO PRESENT: KEVIN O'DONNELL, TOWN MANAGER
LAUREN SARTORI, FINANCIAL COORDINATOR

I. Call to Order at 6:00 p.m.

II. Review of FY12 Budget.

A. Building Inspector

Page: C-02: Mr. O'Donnell explained that the Building Inspector's budget is level funded. He advised a software upgrade for permits will be tied in with the computer upgrade in 2013. The \$3,000 budgeted for securing/maintaining the building at 20 Castle Street was not expended. The overall budget has a 1.9% increase.

Animal Control

Page: C-03: Mr. O'Donnell noted that the budget is level funded. It was noted that over the last few years there were a number of people whose dog licenses were over due, but that has been resolved.

B. Health Operations:

Page: D-1: The only change is in the Visiting Nurse Association Contract. The VNA supplies a public health nurse and monitors communicable disease reporting. There is an increase of \$727.00 in the budget this year because there was no increase last year.

C. Fire Department:

Page: C-1: The Fire Department currently has 45 volunteers. Mr. O'Donnell advised that there was discussion with the neighboring Towns of Egremont, Sheffield, and Alford relative to having a joint fire training practice session once a month. Great Barrington requires a firefighter to be certified where other Towns don't. Chief Jennings noted that he is still undermanned by about 30 volunteers. There is a problem with people responding to calls during the day because employers are not paying employees to go to the calls.

Page: C-07 and C-08: Breakdown on the number of volunteers and the number of calls.

Mr. Stark inquired about requiring the DPW employees to become firefighters. Mr. O'Donnell noted that it would require contract negotiations with the union plus a DPW employee would have to be paid time and a half for answering calls after hours. The Board of Selectmen decided against the idea. It was noted that the Town purchases the books and uniforms for the volunteers. The State pays for the training.

Chief Jennings said he would give a presentation at the Town Meeting in May as to what it takes to become a firefighter.

Page: J-01 –The Fire Department Truck Purchase – to be purchased with \$230,000 from the Fire Department building fund, funds from the sale of Searle's and \$190,000 in borrowing to make up the \$420,000. At the C.I.P. meeting, a power point presentation will be made. Chief Jennings noted that there is \$46,180.00 in the FY12 Budget for R/M Equipment. He advised that Engine 2 is currently in Latham, NY for a pump problem. Chief Jennings noted that in mid June he may have to come before the Finance Committee for a Reserve Fund Transfer.

Police/Communications:

Mr. O'Donnell noted that there is an overall 1% increase. The Department will be fully staffed by the end of July. There will be two full time staff on the street. The overtime line item is to pay special police officers when a regular officer is on vacation, out sick or serving court time, etc. Also because of the 250th Anniversary parade scheduled in July, additional overtime will be required. It was noted that between 25 and 30 citations have been written for Marijuana possession. The return rate on the collection of fines for Marijuana is at 100%. The money goes into the general fund.

Mr. O'Donnell gave a brief explanation of the hiring of a police officer through civil service. He advised that civil service conducts testing every two years. When a town or city hires a new police officer a formal request is sent in to civil service who in turn sends cards out to notify interested candidates of an opening. A list of candidates is sent to the Town or City. The interested party then fills out an application and interviews are conducted with the 3 highest ranking individuals. Mr. O'Donnell advised that he has formed a panel made up of civilians, the chief, a sergeant and himself who do the interviews. Then upon hiring, if the individual has not gone to the academy, the Town will send them. He advised it is a very long process.

G1 – Health Insurance:

Mr. Breasted questioned the 1.5 million for the health/life insurance. Ms. Sartori explained that the life insurance is about \$3,000 a year and the rest is health insurance. In the 2011 Budget if you divide 112 active employees and retirees into the health/life insurance figure, it is approximately \$14,000 per person on average.

Unfunded Liability:

Mr. Breasted had questions in regard to the Unfunded Liability. Ms. Sartori directed him to the Town's Website/Financial Coordinator site where the GASB 45 information is posted in regard to Other Post Employment Benefits. Retired Town employees now have to be on Medicare when they reach age 65. A retiree pays 20% and the Town pays 80%. A former Selectman may remain on the health plan only if they retire from the position. Mr. Breasted noted that he feels it is not widely known that the Board of Selectmen has insurance benefits. Ms. Sartori advised Town Meeting voted to allow a selectman to be on the Town's insurance plan and to pay 25% rather than the 20%.

Ms. Sartori advised that the health insurance figure has to be reported to the D.O.R. as one figure and not broken down per department. It was noted that if a firefighter gets hurt during a fire, the town will pay 80% of their base salary.

The meeting adjourned at 7:50 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Carolyn Wichmann
Secretary