

**JOINT MEETING**  
**GREAT BARRINGTON SELECTBOARD & FINANCE COMMITTEE**  
**TOWN HALL**  
**334 MAIN STREET, GREAT BARRINGTON MA 01230**  
**FEBRUARY 29, 2016**  
**6:00 P.M.**

**SELECTBOARD:**

**SEAN STANTON, CHAIR**

**STEPHEN BANNON, VICE CHAIR**

**DANIEL BAILLY**

**EDWARD ABRAHAMS**

**WILLIAM COOKE**

**FINANCE COMMITTEE:**

**MICHAEL WISE - CHAIR**

**THOMAS BLAUVELT, VICE CHAIR**

**EUGENE CURLETTI**

**LEIGH DAVIS**

**WALTER ATWOOD**

**JENNIFER TABAKIN, TOWN MANAGER**

**I. Call to Order:**

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

**II. SB- Signing of Interim Loans/ Bond Anticipation Note (BAN).**

Jennifer Tabakin explained that the Selectboard and Finance Committee as well as Town Meeting previously approved capital projects to be funded by borrowing. It was further explained in order to meet the dates of the contractual payments; the money will be borrowed on a temporary basis and later replaced with a permanent borrowing in the future by issuing bonds. The temporary borrowing is \$1,171,000 for the following:

(1) Fire Chief Vehicle - \$40,000

(1) DPW Dump Truck - \$139,464

(2) Pickup Trucks - \$115,536

(2) Police Cruisers - \$80,000

Dewey Court House Improvements - \$500,000

Wastewater Phase II engineering and design - \$296,000

The low bid of .70% was awarded to Eastern Bank. The note will have a due date of November 17, 2016. The Select board signed the document for the interim loans for temporary borrowing.

Jennifer introduced Karen Fink who has been hired to replace Sandra Larkin as the Town Treasurer/Tax Collector. She also noted that the final findings and the record of proceedings are finalized and ready signature.

Lauren and Jennifer explained the Transparency program which is linked to the Munis System, which is the Town's Municipal Accounting System. This is a web interface that allows people to see the Town's accounts. A power point was presented on how it operates. There will be a button to click to take you to

the Munis website, which will be updated once a week. It was further explained that it will show what payments have been made from specific accounts to specific vendors and when it was paid. Lauren noted that there will be a way for people to ask questions as well.

### **III. FY 17 Budget Overview by Town Manager.**

Jennifer noted the town revolving funds; electric, plumbing and gas are paid by fees. For capital improvements (over \$10,000) we fund or finance them over multiple years. The CIP is funded by annual taxes. Town operation is funded by taxes, state funds, grants, and user fees. The Wastewater Treatment plant is an Enterprise Fund which is funded by sewer user fees.

The \$30,443,370 – that is the total proposed appropriation for town operating, town capital and BHRSD based on last year. Town Operations Budget is \$11,020,416. The state charges in overlay are \$242,000. The Town Capital Budget is \$5,656,450. The amount that we are seeking approval is \$30,443,370. Jennifer said that she has 2.8 million dollars funded by grants. \$2.7 is what is planned to borrow; \$14,000 is the amount of available funds. The total proposed expenditure is 24.8 Million dollars.

#### **Sources on how we fund the budget:**

66% is from taxes. We have state receipts at 3%. Our Capital borrowing at 9%, grants and Chapter 90 at 10%, local receipts 5% and reserves at 9%.

The uses: The largest uses in the town budget are public works and safety. General government is up at 5% and the capital work is sizable as well.

The following is an example with the school budget removed and how the money is spent.

General Government – 13%, public safety 20%, public works 19% and our debt payments are 14%. \$1,566,785 is the annual debt payment.

We are looking at an increase of \$140,494 or 1.3%. This is comparing this year's operations compared to prior year's operations.

This year we have a larger amount of capital expenditures – \$5.7 million. The debt payment is decreasing. The \$50,000 we were able to save in health costs for retired employees was done with administrative changes by having the retirees being reimbursed through the federal program rather than having the town do upfront payments and then waiting to be reimbursed. The town is seeking a more competitive price for electricity.

The Bridge Street Bridge is being done by the commonwealth. They did not include painting in their scope of work. There will be meetings with the Mass DOT to clarify the scope.

The current tax rate is \$14.29. Assuming the school's budget is stays the same as FY16 the tax rate would be \$14.48. The school budget at the last presentation was \$14.5 and that raises the tax levy to \$21,005,047 for FY17. The estimate tax rate from that would be \$15.15 per thousand. The maximum levy limit is \$21,872,103.

The Town Summary Property Tax Rate was reviewed.

### **IV. FY 17 Budget.**

#### **GENERAL GOVERNMENT:**

- a. Select board/ Manager
- b. Finance/Accounting/ Technology
- c. Assessor
- d. Treasurer/Collector
- e. Town Clerk
- f. Commissions and Boards
- g. Planning/Community Development

Jennifer gave a presentation on the increase in staff request. The proposal is to not fill the ½ time position in the Treasurer/Collector office but instead have a full time position split between the Town Clerk's Office and Treasurer Collector's Office. Line # 45 in the Clerk's budget and Line 32 in the Treasurer Collector's budget- for a total salary to be \$32,900.

The second change is in the Town Manager's Office - a new full time position is proposed to be created. This position would be Operations Management Coordinator and the proposed salary is to be \$72,331.00. It was noted that the consultant line item has been reduced by \$10,000. Jennifer will return to a later meeting with additional information on the Operations Management Coordinator position.

Michael Wise stated he would like to see the Selectboard be changed to all volunteer which would save the Town the benefit cost. Shaun noted that it costs approximately \$5,000 a year for insurance plus extensive hours to serve on the board.

Line 21 22 and 23 Technology Budget - \$20,696 increase. Line 21 for \$10,000 is to purchase a Tax Title Program and \$5,000 per year for Munis Transparency program, \$925 for new web software for the Town's website, and \$2,400 for library internet which is now free. The library is requesting that we pay for service that would increase the speed of the library service. Also Board of Health Air Cards for \$1,080 and a finger print machine software for \$800.00. The Board of Health received a grant from the Berkshire Regional Planning for approximately \$7,500 to \$8,000 for the on line permit application program which includes 2 tablets and the Police also received a grant of about \$19,000 for the finger print machine.

The Town Clerk's office is requesting 5 Poll Pads that will be used to check in voters. This will replace the paper check in system. The requested amount is \$4,400.00. Marie noted that the poll pads will communicate with the new voting machines. The cost of the new voting machines is \$33,000.


Office of Planning/Community Development – office supplies has been reduced because the Master Plan will be published out of the FY 16 Budget so that line item has been reduced by \$3,000.

The next meeting is scheduled for Monday, March 7, 2016.

**V. Adjournment.**

The meeting adjourned at 7:40 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

  
Carolyn Wichmann  
Secretary