

**TOWN OF GREAT BARRINGTON**  
**BOARD OF SELECTMEN/FINANCE COMMITTEE**  
**GREAT BARRINGTON FIRE STATION**  
**37 STATE ROAD, GREAT BARRINGTON, MA**  
**MINUTES**  
**FEBRUARY 26, 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.

Stephen Bannon requested that the meeting be kept to the budget related items and not stray to other subjects, therefore making the meeting exceptionally long. We may need more meetings to further discuss the budget. Sean noted that there is an additional meeting scheduled. Jennifer also suggested to keep with the agenda and asked Lauren to be the keeper of the list of issues to be discussed at a later time. Sharon said the revenue ideas and fees are all budget related and suggested we have a revenue and fees discussion later on.

Re: 20 Castle Street fire station building: Jennifer said we have an extension request letter and a TIF agreement letter. The TIF agreement letter requires the Selectmen's signature and reflects the prior agreement. It is a Tax Increment Financing Agreement on the amount of the improvements that will be made to the Castle Street building and does not mean that we would not continue to receive taxes based on the assessed value of the building. It's an incentive for the developer, in the first years of construction, to make the investment because the assessed value has been abated from real estate taxes. The extension of contingencies is until April 15, 2014 and closing until May 6, 2014. Jennifer noted she has a final version of the lease which will be signed after the closing. The extension doesn't require a signature but it requires a motion for the extension for the contingencies and closing.

**MOTION:** Deborah Phillips to approve.

**SECOND:** Stephen Bannon

**VOTE:** 5-0

It was noted that Monday will be the wrap up of the operating budget, capital and debt.

**LIBRARY: - PAGE G-01 AND G-02**

Holly Hammer introduced the new Library Director, Amanda DeGiorgis who will be starting March 3, 2014. Jessica Magelaner has been acting as the interim director for the Ramsdell and Mason Libraries. There is a slight increase in postage of \$100.00. The non-print materials are \$33,000 for FY 2014 and have been decreased by \$3,000 for FY15. There is consideration to take a senior librarian position and elevate it to a second director position. There are currently 8 full time staff and 5 part-time staff. It was noted that in order to qualify for state funding the budget has to show that 19% of the budget is for print and non-print materials. It was noted that approximately \$4,500 was collected in copy fees. People who are using the computers for research and school projects use the supplies.

**MOTION:** Tom Blauvelt to add \$400.00 back into the copying supplies budget

**SECOND:** Buddy Atwood

**VOTE:** 4-1 (Sharon Gregory opposed)

Tom Blauvelt noted he would like to add the \$3,000 back into the non-print budget. Jennifer said that she would be able to determine if the funds would be available after the assistant director is hired and would like to return to this before the public hearing so we can have a discussion on the assistant director position, etc. She said she would like to be sure we are set up with the staff structure to give the director the support. It was noted that the Friends of the Library supplement museum passes, movie performances. Revenues come from the public from the fines and the use of copy machine.

**POLICE DEPARTMENT: - D-01 AND D-03**

There were 17 full time and 11 part-time officers. Currently there is one vacancy for a full time position. Currently, there are 8 reserve officers. We are looking to hire 2 or 3 more part-time officers. There are two patrol cars out and one officer at the station. There is an occasional bike patrol and canine. Training – Line 88 In-service training – Jennifer put back the amount that was budgeted in 2014. Every year, the Police Academy sets the standards as far as training of police officers. They have no budget to pay for any trainings, but mandate what the classes should be. The Pittsfield Police Department has taken the lead to provide their officers and instructors for in-service training. We pay about \$25.00 a person. Line #91 – Oil – the plan is to transition from oil to gas that is why the budget was cut. The revenues for the department include parking tickets and motor vehicle violations. Chief Walsh explained that the \$121,335 in Overtime, covers sick time, personal time, elections, court time, town meeting, vacation, investigations, and comp. days. \$60,000 is to cover sick and vacation. All officers have a different overtime rate. An officer can't work more than 16 consecutive hours. They have to have 8 hours off. The town is reimbursed on details. Sharon noted that changing the dispatch system might save money. Sean said that they have been reviewing how Great Barrington can offer the same services the sheriff's department is offering to towns closer to Great Barrington that would be better served by our officers.

Under Objectives – it was noted to remove the civil service age cap of 32. This would give the department more flexibility in hiring because now you can't be older than 32 in civil services. Chief Walsh said that it is something he is still working on and it may have to go to a town meeting vote.

**FIRE DEPARTMENT:**


Chief Burger noted that he presented a level funded budget. The calls are continuing to go up as well as training requirements. An increase of \$50,000 in the stipend for the fire fighters is proposed. It is a struggle to staff the trucks in a timely manner for responses. Many employers do not allow their employees to leave or the employee doesn't get paid. The new system would be based on a call base amount of \$12.00 per call with incentives for certifications and seniority. Some would receive between \$12.00 and \$16.00 per call. It is not an hourly rate. The stipend system was \$100,000. It was cut back to \$75,000 as the membership decreased and the number of fire fighters responding decreased. Currently the firefighters have to pay for their own training. It is proposed to reimburse the training up to \$1,000 along the way. It was noted that the Fire Department responds to emergencies, does fire inspections and fire prevention and reviews construction drawings. Steve suggested that we put on an agenda item to do a long range plan as to how we can keep a volunteer fire department. It was also suggested to cost out what a full time fire department would cost.

**WASTEWATER TREATMENT PLANT:**

Joe Sokul noted that Tim Drumm is the Wastewater Superintendent. He advised that Phase 1 of the upgrade contract will be re-awarded soon. Tim said that the overall budget has increased a little over 1%. Line 248 Repairs/Maintenance takes care of everything in the plant, the pumps, repairs, etc. Line 251 – engineering/architect – extra testing. Line Item 254 – Postage – it went up because of printing and mailing materials to address the issues of improper disposing of materials into the sewer system. Line #272 – Contracting Hauling – we have a private hauler from Waterbury, CT who takes the sludge to Waterbury, CT to be burned. It was noted that a sewer rate increase has not been proposed for 2015. Sharon asked what percentages of the revenues are generated by outside Great Barrington services. Tim noted about \$200,000 a year in septic tank waste is collected. There is also sewer tie in fees of \$500.00 for a home and \$2,000 or more for a commercial business. Line 268 (Transfer to General Fund) is the annual cost for what the Wastewater Department pays to the general fund, which is a percentage of the DPW Superintendent's time, Town Manager's time and a variety of other staff time for sewer billing. Sharon noted that we have 1.7 million in retirement insurance for full time employees, of which 7 are employees in the Wastewater. Lauren said there is a line item in the sewer budget that specifically says health insurance and retirement and all those line items are self-sufficient. Tim noted that the flow went down between 2011 and 2012. Tim noted that when Rising Paper ceased, the flow was cut by half, and the flow went down even more because we found there was ground water getting into the system, which was repaired.

DPW and capital will be reviewed on March 3, 2014.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 8:15 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,  
  
Carolyn Wichmann  
Secretary