

JOINT MEETING
GREAT BARRINGTON SELECTBOARD & FINANCE COMMITTEE
TOWN HALL
334 MAIN STREET, GREAT BARRINGTON MA 01230
MARCH 7, 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.

Jennifer updated the Selectboard on the process for the selection of a new Sergeant in the Police Department. She noted she is going forward with signing a contract with Wayne Sampson who runs an assessment process center approved by Civil Service. An evaluation will be done on applicants who are eligible to become a sergeant. There will be a written exam and a series of different scenarios and exercises throughout the day. There is a service fee which fluctuates depending on the number of applicants. Applicants do have to pay to apply for the position but if they are an internal candidate our policy is that they pay the first \$100.00 of the assessment fee and the town picks up the rest. External candidates would pay \$250.00. For the consultant, the rate can be between \$6,000 to \$8,000.

Jennifer updated the boards on the BHRSD Assessment. The School Committee voted a FY 17 budget of \$14,463,416. It brings the expenditure to \$31.4 million. The share for Great Barrington did not change. The current tax rate is \$14.29. The Town operational budget is \$11,020,416. The state charges and overlay are \$242,000. The estimated tax rate is \$15.15 which is an increase of \$325.00 per thousand. That is 1.3% tax increase.

Jennifer explained the request of an additional employee in the Town Manager's budget. The audit report noted succession planning and dealing with transition plans for departments and coordinating with key departments and doing restructuring roles. We signed a community compact with the Governor to be able to get technical assistance, grants and work with other towns on collaborative way. Jennifer stated she took the original dollars that were added in as

additional salary in the administrative line and put it in as a reserve in the Consultant Line 7. The scope of that would make available funds to address succession planning, shared services to integrate technology, improve efficiencies, and do management studies. This is to fund the overlap when employees leave or retire. The amount available in the consultant line would be \$67,741.00. A consultant could be used for specific research projects. Michael Wise said this person could be the point person for shared services. Sean noted he would like a process where the concept would have to come before the board to be reviewed. To date approximately \$2,000 has been spent on consultants. It was noted that the money for the interim (Tax Collector) came out of the current salary.

After discussion, it was suggested to review the other departments and return to this line item later.

II. FY 17 Budget

a. Department of Public Works

Joe Sokul presented his budget.

Dan Bailly asked Joe if he has looked into shared services.

Joe responded that they have shared services in the past and will continue to do so.

Dan Bailly said that Olympian Meadows is used by children from other towns and suggested that we ask the others towns for money.

Joe responded that this can be discussed when permits come through for the location. He added that many parents volunteer to help with maintenance.

Sean Stanton suggested that the money that results from the price reduction for gas should go back to tax payers. He feels that the money from the reduction should not be added elsewhere in the budget.

Steve Bannon said that this is something that should have been a direction in the budget policy. Town Manager, Jennifer Tabakin, responded that clear direction is needed regarding what services to cut if that is the direction desired.

There was discussion regarding the addition of a ½ employee in the budget.

Joe Sokul said that he is looking to go after grants for certain building projects.

Sean Stanton said that he would like to see the cemetery fees increased.

b. Board of Health

Jayne Smith spoke about the array of services that the Board of Health provides. Some include beaver permits, septic issues, pool inspections, housing inspections, title 5 inspections and restaurant inspections.

Jayne said that there is an aging housing stock, which results in an uptick in issues to be dealt with.

Jayne asked for an increase in hours for the PT inspector due to the activity in town. He is being cross-trained to address the needs of the town.

Jayne added that nail salons and body art facilities haven't been inspected as needed. She would like to get up to standard in this area.

She would like to increase some fees to help cover the cost of the extra person requested.

Sean Stanton suggested issuing multi-year permits to increase efficiencies.

The Town Manager said that she will check MGL to see if this is possible.

Sean asked that Jayne update the Selectboard on decisions made by the Board of Health on increasing fees.

c. Animal Inspector

Jayne Smith explained the role of the Animal Inspector.

She said that dog bites have increased and are time consuming.

Barn inspections are also time consuming.

d. Council on Aging

Elder Services provides meals but will no longer provide paper plates, utensils, etc. This is the reason for the small increase in this budget.

e. Veteran's Affairs

Jennifer Tabakin said there may be some opportunities to share services which will result in savings in our town.

f. Human Services

There are the same 13 contracts that were in the budget last year. This supports services for Great Barrington residents.

g. Libraries

Only salaries are increasing and the operating budget is level funded.

David Magadini suggested that funds be incorporated into the budget in order that MGL become available to the public in hard copy. He also suggested that a rack be installed for carts.

Sharon Gregory suggested that a bound copy of the Master Plan be put in the Library.

h. Parks/ Recreation

No questions

Charles Boyer – Blue Hill Rd.- thanked the Selectboard and Finance Committee for trying to keep taxes down. He suggested going back to a Selectman type of government with the Town Managers income being split amongst them.

Sharon Gregory distributed charts and stated that taxes keep increasing.

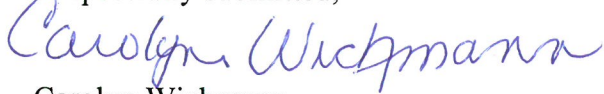
She said that the regional agreement needs to be tackled. She asked the Selectboard to put their support behind the regional amendment committee.

Sharon also asked that sharing services for things like IT be considered for the region. She suggested that goals and priorities are needed as to what is being looked at.

III Adjournment

The Selectboard and Finance Committee voted unanimously to adjourn at 8:25 PM.

Respectfully submitted,



Carolyn Wichmann
Secretary



Cara Becker
Recording Secretary