



Finance Committee
 Town of Halifax
 499 Plymouth St.
 Halifax, MA 02338

Meeting Minutes
 Wednesday, March 13, 2019

	Frederick McGovern	Leonard Teceno	Bill McAvoy	Melinda Tarsi	Brad Graham	Vacant
Present	X	X	X	X	X	

Also in attendance was Sandy Nolan, Town Accountant, Charlie Seelig, Town Administrator; Kim Roy, Selectman

Melinda opened the meeting at 7:03 p.m.

The meeting was recorded by Area 58

Melinda began the meeting by reading the agenda. There was no mail. There are no meeting minutes. She advised that we will table the budget discussion and opened the discussion with the Water Department. Article I – regarding the transfer of \$520,000. Patrick O’Neil of Tata & Howard Engineers introduced himself to the committee. He completed an asset assessment of all the water department’s vertical assets (not underground tanks). The process of putting together costs and ranking is ongoing. An immediate need at both facilities is new roofs. Two tanks need to be replaced as well. Richman Park has an active leak over an electrical panel. The metal decking supporting the roof is corroded and chemical feed systems piping is leaking. Keith stated that this is a hazard and is getting to be where he would classify it as an emergency situation. The Richman Park tank has a 4,500 gallon capacity. Keith stated they try not to store more than 1,000 gallons. Bill asked if it was possible to replace the tanks with removing the roof. Patrick O’Neil stated yes but the roof will be removed because it is needed. All work is included in the amount of the article. The tank at the Y camp is a plastic tank and is 30 years old. The manufacturing company recommends replacement every 10 – 12 years and one of the tanks is approximately 30 years old. Melinda asked what the contingency budget is and Mr. O’Neil stated 10 percent. Brad asked about the brown water that happens in town. Keith stated that pertains to the filter plant at the YMCA wells which is not being addressed right now. Brad also asked if we can store more in the tank after the work is completed. Keith states once the tanks are new we can probably store about a couple thousand gallons. Part of the reason we don’t store more is that chemicals degrade over time. Kathy (secretary) states that we have tiered pricing. We are using about 450 gallons per month at this time of year. Mr. O’Neil stated we will probably do two tanks for the redundancy factor and they are easier to store. It’s going to be about the same volume. We are bound by DEP requirements.

The tanks have to be sized for a 30 day supply. We are permitted for 1 million gallons a day, assuming that we get the wells back to capacity. The water quality will eventually be addressed with this assessment as well in the future.

Regarding pumping, we average 480,000 per day. Brad asked how many wells we have. Keith stated we have four. Melinda asked Mr. O'Neil and Keith how they feel about this plan, and does it address the most critical issues? Keith stated we need to do this. It's a good thing. Our equipment is old and it's not a maintenance issue, it's wear and tear. We can't have high voltage, chemicals etc. with a roof that leaks. Bill asked what materials will be used. Mr. O'Neil stated the same materials will be used, metal. They'll be replacing like with like.

Brad asked Sandy what the Water Department's retained earnings balance was. Sandy stated over \$917,000. This year the department paid off all their debts. The water rates brought in \$1,020,000.00 which more than supports their operating budget. Keith stated that tank was just rehabbed three years ago and should last a long time with routine maintenance. Brad asked if just the chemical feed side of the two sites is addressed in this plan. Eventually we'll have a longer term plan after assessment study is complete. Keith informed the committee that a well field is a very valuable asset. It takes at least five years to permit one. Protecting this asset is a good investment.

Len asked if this project has to go out to bid. Sandy stated this is treated the same way as the fire suppression project. Mr. O'Neil stated they've just finished another similar project that they looked at the bid pricing on and they also looked back at several other projects they have done in the past. He tries to make sure there's adequate funding, and is confident in the pricing. Bill stated that he has viewed the property and agrees there is a need for this. Melinda asked Sandy if we can vote on the

article since there is no number on it. Sandy stated she believes so, but the current wording may change and Charlie will confirm.

Melinda read and then entertained a vote on Article I – To see if the town will vote to transfer the sum of \$520,000 from the Water Department's Retained Earnings Account to fund upgrades including roof replacement at the Richman Park Treatment Plant and the YMCA Camp Chemical Feed Facility

Motion: Bill

Second: Len

AIF

Melinda stated the committee will revisit when the article is numbered and the wording is complete.

Melinda then moved on to Article II. Purchasing and equipping a new service truck. Keith discussed that the department will be purchasing a truck which is a downsized model compared to the one being replaced. There department does a lot of driving. The proposed truck is a ½ ton 4 wheel drive pick up truck. A 2005 F450 is being replaced. That is a dual wheel diesel utility truck. It had a crane that was inoperable and no longer needed. Bill asked if the new truck is diesel. Keith stated no. Len stated we may be able to use the new highway truck in a pinch if a lift is needed. Brad asked what other vehicles the department has. Keith stated a small 2007, F350 pick up, a newer F250 four

wheel drive with a plow that we purchased about a year ago, and a 2011, F150 four wheel drive. Bill asked why there is a plow on a water department truck. Keith stated three trucks have plows. The water department plows the pump houses and also assists the highway department with plowing when needed. This saves the town from hiring sub-contractors. Len asked if we could trade in the old truck or somehow repurpose it. Keith stated he is not sure yet. Melinda asked how many miles are on the 2005.

Keith answered 136,000 miles. Bill asked what specifically is wrong with truck. Keith stated it just isn't practical anymore. It is a big, old truck that guzzles diesel. Len asked when he will know what is going to be done with the truck. Keith states typically the department stores them at the town barn, and then they go out to bid as surplus. Sandy stated Charlie handles this. He will know soon what direction they will take.

Melinda stated we will revisit this article when it is numbered and entertained a motion to recommend the transfer of \$34,000.00 from the Water Department Retained Earnings Account to purchase and equip a new service truck.

Motion: Bill

Second: Len

AIF

Melinda asked Sandy and Keith about establishing a new revolving fund. Kathy informed the committee that there's a new request to upgrade the cell tower antennas. AT&T gave the town money to pay for the review. Sandy stated it's money in and money out, and is separate from the operational budget. AT&T wants to upgrade their equipment but we need to make sure no damage is done to our tower. AT&T pays us and we use that money to pay our engineer to review the plans. Bill asked if this is a temporary revolving account. Sandy said it's probably a good idea to leave it on the books in case something like this comes up in the future. Keith asked if this same process will be used if Sprint upgrades their equipment and Sandy stated yes. The same revolving fund will be used. The Selectmen have voted and approved this. It is called a special revenue account. Melinda entertained a motion to recommend establishing a new Revolving Account for the Water Department.

Motion: Bill

Second: Len

AIF

The meeting continued with voting on the level funded and decreased line items.

Line #97 – Water Insurance – level funded at \$60,579.00. Len stated we didn't vote on this before because of the gap in what was requested and what was spent. Sandy clarified that it is level funded based on what they asked for in the past. Charlie stated we should not see an increase. Sandy said she is more comfortable leaving the money as is because it just goes back into their retained earnings. Len stated if it goes back into their retained earnings, he doesn't see the harm in it.

Bill made a motion to approve voting Lines #97 along with Line #101 – Water-Gas and Oil, which is level funded at \$13,750.00

Motion: Bill

Second: Len

AIF

Line #7 – Town Hall – Electricity: Decreased amount of \$17,700.00

Motion: Len

Second: Bill

AIF

Line #9 – Audit – Decreased amount at \$25,500.00

Motion: Len

Second: Bill

AIF

Line #23 – Treasurer – Expense – Level funded at \$6,500.00

Motion: Len

Second: Bill

AIF

Line #24 – Collector – Expense – Level funded at \$14,850.00

Motion: Len

Second: Bill

AIF

Line #26 – Tax Title-Treasurer – Level funded at \$5,000.00

Motion: Len

Second: Bill

AIF

Line #32 - Wage and Personnel – Expense – Level funded at \$250.00

Motion: Len

Second: Bill

AIF

Line #48 – Police Expense – Level funded at \$62,485.00

Motion: Len

Second: Bill

AIF

Line #49 – Police – Station Maintenance – Level funded at \$24,100.00

Bill asked if this line accounted for HVAC maintenance. Kim and Sandy both stated that has all been taken care of. This account mainly pays for their electricity and other small items.

Motion: Len

Second: Bill

AIF

Line #83 -Highway-Town Roads – Level funded at \$74,355.00

Bill made a motion to recommend Line #84 -Highway Snow & Ice \$177, 509.00, Line #85- Street Lights - \$27,300.00, Line #86 – Traffic Lights \$5,500.00, Line #87 – Tree Warden Salary \$1.00, Line #88 – Tree Maintenance \$3,500.00, Line #89 – Insect & Pest Control \$1.00, all level funded

Motion:

Second:

AIF

Line #72 – Vocational – Education – Level funded at \$244,719.00

Motion: Len

Second: Bill

AIF

Line #73 – Special Needs – Tuitions – Decreased amount of \$1,777,377.00

Motion: Len

Second: Bill

AIF

Line #76 – Debt Exclusion Budget Silver Lake – Decreased amount of \$475,150.00

Motion: Len

Second: Bill

AIF

Line #92 – Cemetery – Supplies & Equipment – Level funded at \$6,020.00

Motion: Len

Second: Bill

AIF

Line #108 – Hazardous Waste Collection – Sandy asked the Committee to hold on their vote, because the final figures are not in yet.

Line #132 – Parks-Expense – Level funded at \$450.00; Line #139 – Beautification Commission – Expense – Level funded at \$500.00; Line #141 – Website Committee Expense – Level funded at \$3,050.00

Motion: Len

Second: Bill

AIF

Line #156 – Telephone – Level funded at \$26,200.00; Line #Gas & Oil – All Departments – Level funded at \$110,000.00; Line #158 – Heating Oil – All Buildings – Level funded at \$62,500.00

Motion: Len

Second: Bill

AIF

Melinda stated that although the committee has only been voting on level funded and decreased line items, she would entertain a motion on Line #142 – Music Rights – in the amount of \$357.00, which is a \$7.00 increase over last year.

Motion: Len
Second: Bill
AIF

Line #154 – Insurance – Level funded at \$250,000.00

Charlie stated no increase is needed.

Motion: Len
Second: Bill
AIF

Melinda requested to go back to the Public Safety line items because the committee had spoken to the departments.

Line #46 – Police – Training – Increase amount at \$10,000.00

Motion: Bill
Second: Len
AIF

Line #50 – Police – Cruiser Maintenance – Increase amount at \$15,000.00

Motion: Bill
Second: Len
AIF

Line #54 – Fire-Training – Increase amount at \$58,596.00

Len asked if the OSHA training is required by just us. Charlie stated it is now required for all municipalities. Len requested to hold off on voting this line.

Line #55 – Fire – Expense – Increase amount at \$46,750.00

Motion: Bill
Second: Len
AIF

Line #56 – Fire – Station Maintenance – Increase amount at \$17,124.00

Motion: Bill
Second: Len
AIF

Line #57 – Fire – Vehicle/Equipment Maintenance – Increase amount at \$28,000.00

Motion: Bill
Second: Len
AIF

Line #58 – Fire – Medical Supplies – Increase amount at \$24,000.00

Motion: Bill
Second: Len
AIF

Line #59 – Ambulance Billing – Increase amount at \$27,500.00

Motion: Bill
Second: Len
AIF

Line #60 – Emergency Management – Increase amount at \$6,550.00

Melinda stated this is to put paid town employees at a town emergency warming shelter due to a natural disaster and to have trained personnel there as well. The Red Cross will staff an overnight shelter.

Motion: Bill
Second: Len
AIF

Line #75 – Silver Lake Assessment - \$4,594,942.55. Melinda stated there is an upcoming meeting regarding the Silver Lake budget and Kim stated the hiring of a Resource Officer will also be discussed. Kim is hoping the overtime issue with this position will be looked at again, as well as the fact that it should be in the budget. Kim stated when we receive the date, she would like as many members there as possible and we can ask all the questions we have.

Melinda asked if the committee wanted to vote on the school line items tonight to communicate to the school committee where we stand. Len stated he is not ready to vote those lines. He is concerned there will be pushback from the other towns. Melinda stated the committee could try to get the Finance Committees from the other towns to attend a joint meeting, or each separately, to discuss the Silver Lake budget. Melinda asked the secretary to reach out to try to schedule a joint meeting with the other towns.

Last week, we were \$370,000.00 in the red. Now we're about \$200,000.00 in the black. An error was made on the spreadsheet per Sandy and corrections were made. We will be able to have the \$300,000.00 cushion that we want. Sandy explained that she and Charlie do separate spreadsheets and then compare them. That way, any errors can be found and corrected. It is the process that they follow every budget season. The number does not include any town employee and union pay increases. The schools pay increases are included in this. Len asked if this includes the extra manpower requested by the Highway Department and Building Maintenance. Sandy stated yes. The number also includes the two extra days. Charlie would eventually like to see the schools placed on the same level as wages for town employees whether they're union or non union.

Len asked what last year's levy was. He wants to see what we are doing to the average household. Charlie stated it was approximately \$16,460,000.00. If we were to keep the 300k, build in the solar field loss tax and the scheduled fire suppression that leaves us with \$204,947 off of the levy limit less the 300. Len stated if we have to increase taxes,

he wants to see how much. Melinda stated the committee will be sending out a detailed letter showing how and why the committee voted before the Town Meeting. Len restated that he would like to hold off on the school budget. Melinda was comfortable with that. Sandy stated the only line the committee may want to look at is Line #74.

Line #74 – Special Needs - Transportation – Increase amount at \$510,000.00

The town is legally obligated to cover this.

Motion: Len

Second: Bill

AIF

Line #80 – Highway-Expense – Increase amount at \$6,771.00

Motion: Bill

Second: Len

Melinda stated the increase is because of additional training needed, the OSHA requirements and Stormwater Management. Charlie would like to see a separate line item account for OSHA and Stormwater Management. Bill asked if we will run into trouble with departments that have not budgeted for OSHA. Charlie stated no because we will have a separate OSHA line item, and this will get done for this budget season.

Motion: Bill motioned to rescind his previous motion for Line #80.

No Public Participation

Melinda entertained a motion to adjourn at 9:05p.m.

Motion: Bill

Second: Len

AIF

Respectfully submitted,
Kathy Clark, Secretary

Len Teceno, Clerk