



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

Meeting Minutes
 Monday, March 18, 2019

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

Also in attendance was Sandy Nolan, Town Accountant, Charlie Seelig, Town Administrator

Bill opened the meeting at 6:59p.m. by reading the agenda

The meeting was recorded by Area 58

Council on Aging: Bill asked Sandy if we voted all the non-wage lines on council on aging. They were all level funded. Barbara Brenton stated they are level funded and have been running on a shoe string budget and they do the best they can. Bill stated he has no questions. Len asked if there were any particular pain points with budget last year. She stated they will need a new duplicating machine next year. They have put many parts into it over the years, it was used, and they do not make the parts anymore. It will probably about \$1500 for a new one. Charlie is going with a grant for a new fridge, stove and dishwasher and she is very happy about that. Bill stated he met with Capital Planning regarding Pope's Tavern on Wednesday and they will have recommendations on Thursday.

Library: Bill stated the committee received an updated budget sheet this morning. Jean also passed out a revised budget sheet. Jean stated that she passed out a copy of Rich Pitter's information. Microsoft will stop supporting all Windows 7 computers. They will need to be replaced. Jean went through all the computers currently at the library. 18 computers total are used daily. 2 OPACS, that patrons use for searching, 1 main circulation computer, 8 public and 7 staff computers. Of these, 10 are running on Windows 7. We'll replace 5 this year and 5 next year. The condition of these computers is excellent. The main circulation computer is used everyday. The Director's office computer is a 2005 and needs to be replaced. Len asked if this will be done under the Capital Planning or Operational Budget. Sandy stated they have enough in their expense account budget to cover these. In order to keep certification, the town appropriates money – called X Fund – if money is left over, this goes back to the general fund. Bill asked what kind of computers will replace the old ones. Jean said Dell computers and she provided a quote from the Acushnet Library who is replacing ten computers. This

helped her arrive at her requested number of \$3,458.00. Bill noted that most of the old computers are listed in excellent condition. He asked if we could update the operating system on the computers. Jean said George is currently looking into that but the age of the computers has to be taken into account. Most are them are 2013. Jean said she tries to rotate the computers that need to be replaced. She stated she will replace five this year and five next year. A townspeople asked if there was money in the budget for this. Jean stated yes. The original capital plan request was \$2,020.00. She moved extra funds into capital plan items. Bill asked if there were any further questions. There were none. Jean then pointed out the wage line item and informed the committee that she made adjustments to this. She had a 30 hour a week employee who retired so her 35 hour a week associate was hired to take that job. Jean adjusted the hours. Her new hire, who will be 35 hours a week will be at a step one. There was a cushion provided just in case the person is highly qualified and will be a step two, but Jean is pretty sure she will be hired at a step one, and will be a step two in 2020. Jean is looking for 4 hours a month for her library tech to run a book club at the senior center. That's about 1,000.00. George was paid (PC support tech) 1752.10 last year. Bill stated he is making recommendations to Capital Planning on Wednesday and the committee is not voting wage lines at this time.

Bill entertained a motion to recommend Line #127 – Library Expense in the amount of \$92,328.00

Motion: Len

Second: Fred

AIF

Highway Department: Bill stated he and Steve Hayward had an email exchange and Steve stated he wants to rescind the stipend for the responsibilities of the Recycling Head. The stipend is \$5,524.00.

Bill entertained a motion to revoke the recommendation for Line #77 for the \$5,524.00 stipend that was to be paid out of recycling retained earnings.

Motion: Len

Second: Fred

AIF

Len stated there will be a separate line created for OSHA training for all departments. Steve stated he needs extra money for training other than OSHA training. He needs chainsaw training, etc. and is requesting \$550.00. Len asked if the departments are estimating OSHA training on their own. Charlie stated some departments probably haven't thought about it yet. Charlie clarified that Baystate Roads Program offers Highway and DPW departments training such as chainsaw training and how to drop salt properly, etc. Bill said it sounds like this is training that should have been happening all along. A townspeople asked if certain employees do certain jobs. Steve stated no, everyone has to be trained in everything. She suggested we have a list of the employees that need to be trained in specific areas and then we would know the cost. Karyn Thompson stated that the cost is not known in advance, so it can't be budgeted for until

the department receives it. Steve also stated that if he locates a place in town for the chainsaw training, the trainers will come here and he will get two people for free. He is currently identifying places for this training. Steve originally asked for \$1,000.00 but cut it down to \$500.00. Len asked what else is in the expense line. There is \$50.00 for dues. Len said the total is still less than what was expended in FY18.

Bill entertained a motion to recommend Line #80 in the amount of \$6,771.00

Motion: Len

Second: Fred

AIF

Regarding Line #81, Barn Maintenance, Steve stated the increase is for the drains. Bill asked if the drains are cleaned annually. Karyn answered they will be cleaned every six months. These drains are at the highway department. Steve discussed this with Scott in building maintenance, and they both feel it's Steve's responsibility. Bill clarified that Steve contracts this job to Patriot. There are a total of six drains and two holding tanks. Len stated he is not ready to vote on this yet.

Line #82: Bill asked about the increase. Steve stated this is for the maintenance of trucks and sandblasting and painting them. Two trucks at \$5,000.00 each. Fred stated this could extend the life of the trucks.

Bill entertained a motion to recommend Line #82 in the amount of \$58,500.00
Len stated he will abstain. He would like a better picture of the overall budget before he votes on this. Fred agrees. Len said the Fire and Police Departments also asked for vehicle maintenance increases. Steve said the town needs to look at the mechanic position. He may be retiring next year. Most of the town maintenance is outsourced. The highway department does oil changes and sometimes brakes, but they do not have the computers and tools to do more.

Bill stated the committee will table Line #81 and #82 pending further information.

Steve talked about the Article for \$18,000.00 for a fence. We get cars that pull up to our supply area and they're dumping trash. We have cameras that show cars entering all the time. We got three different quotes for a 5' chain link fence with a rolling gate. It will extend to where the fuel tanks are to the land cap to the salt shed for a total of 288' of fencing. A townspeople asked if there is a fence there now. Steve stated only on one side. The new tanks should be up and running in 90 days. The fence will not block the tanks. Len asked about the Caboda. Steve said it would include a mowing deck. A townspeople asked if it will replace a piece of equipment that was purchased a few years ago. Steve said no. The town voted to provide the Highway Department to have certain equipment. Steve also said he would like to do an auction once a year. We get more money from auction than scrap. That money goes into the general fund. Steve stated he has gotten about \$67,000.00 for past auctions. He suggested we can do this for any equipment the town has. Bill asked if the cost is \$51,000.00 or \$55,000.00. Steve said it is \$51,000.00. He eliminated two attachments. A townspeople asked if he could look at

a cheaper model. Steve stated he knows what the department needs. A lesser priced or smaller piece of equipment would not function properly enough to handle the needs and would not be cost efficient. Len asked if we still have the trackless just in case we wind up short on the articles. Steve said yes, but we have to do it in three trips with that. Bill asked about the sweeper for \$170,000.00. Steve got a price of \$168,000.00 from another company, so he'll save \$2,000.00. Steve said it's a vacuum and a sweeper that will be needed for the stormwater maintenance requirements. It is mandated that we sweep around the ponds twice a year. Fred asked what the average life of the equipment is. Steve stated the last piece lasted about twenty years and they don't normally last that long. He tries to extend the life of every piece of equipment he has. Jean asked if these are all coming out of the capital plan. Steve said yes.

Steve talked about the traffic lights. When the boxes were installed on the lights, they were installed facing the street. They have since rotted from the salt used in the winter. The cost will be \$19,500.00 to replace these. They will be installed properly – away from the street and will be plastic. These will be installed at the Walmart and Stop & Shop. Bill asked about the increased basin cleaning. Steve said this is mandated by the state now. Charlie said we will need a stormwater Management line in the budget. Steve said 248 additional hours will be needed for Stormwater Management maintenance requirements. It's Federally mandated. Charlie said we get grants when we can but not for annual operating costs. Charlie stated we will get fined if we do not comply. Steve stated this is one reason why he is going for another person. He wants to take one part time cemetery person and turning them into a full time person. Bill asked if any of this is covered under Chapter 90. Steve answered no. Chapter 90 will not cover operational expenses. Bill asked if the truck or the sweeper qualify. Steve said yes. Steve is going to try to get a used grader. Len stated we hit all the level and funded and decreased line items and police and fire, and he would feel more comfortable seeing where we are in the budget before recommending. Len instructed the secretary to schedule Scott Materna to come before the committee.

Sandy asked if the committee had any questions for the Town Clerk regarding Line #29 and #30. Fred asked what the extra \$1,000.00 covers. The Town Clerk stated they spend \$1,000.00 per year for the Assistant Town Clerk to attend training to be certified. She is in her third and final year. The Assistant Town Clerk received a scholarship for the first year.

Bill entertained a motion to recommend Line #29 – Town Clerk – Expense in the amount of \$4,649.00

Motion: Len
Second: Fred
AIF

Line #30 – Elect/Register. The Town Clerk stated that in 2020, we have a presidential primary so she has to account for workers for the election and early voting.

Bill entertained a motion to recommend Line #30 – Elect/Register in the amount of \$15,020.00

Motion: Len

Second: Fred

AIF

The Town Clerk stated she is requesting \$21,800.00 for voting machines and this will come out of the Capital Budget. The voting machines we have are from 199-2000. They are no longer made and we can't get parts. Bill stated we will table the rest of the discussion.

He asked if there are any other questions. A Townsperson asked how we get such a big discrepancy every year during budget talks. Sandy answered that every year, she does a spreadsheet and Charlie does his own spreadsheet. She tries to take into account revenues and expenditures to come up with numbers. Charlie's numbers and hers did not agree. Hers did not look good, Charlie's did. They sat down together and went over everything and they found that Sandy's numbers were wrong. After analyzing the numbers, they realized Sandy picked up a last year figure on one of the numbers, which caused the error. Len clarified that the budget is projected. It is a forecasted budget every year. Sandy said she and Charlie have been doing the budget this way for years. They each do their own spreadsheet and then compare. It is an efficient way to do it. Charlie explained some of the forecast are more definitive than others. The first one is property taxes. We get to increase the levy limit by 2.5% every year. New growth for 2018 is included in January 2019. The second is local receipts, which are motor vehicle excise tax and ambulance receipts. The third is state aide (Cherry Sheet). The Governor comes out with his budget in January. The House in April and the Senate votes in May. We look at the Governor's numbers to see how they are trending. Chapter 70 aide is more variable. We always assume that the Governor's number is as high as it is going to go. We are conservative when planning the budget.

Sandy informed the committee that Sue Johnson will be requesting more money for the Recycling Department. Recycling is funded by Solid Waste Earnings. Last year the committee cut her back, but she is comfortable with the \$45,000.00. Sue hasn't gotten a cost on the hazardous waste yet. For now she has level funded it. Sandy will ask her on Monday. More municipalities are stopping recycling in the U.S. but not in Massachusetts. The costs are too high but we are required to do so.

Bill asked what the line in the sand is for wages. Charlie stated we go to press April 1st.

Bill entertained a motion to adjourn at 9:010p.m.

Motion: Len

Second Brad

AIF

Respectfully submitted,
Kathy Clark, Secretary

Len Teceno, Clerk