

Town of Harvard Finance Committee

Meeting Minutes December 21, 2011 Town Hall

Members Marie Fagan, Chair
Present: Steve Colwell
Alice von Loesecke
George McKenna
Rudy Minar
Bob Thurston

Others Tim Bragan, Town Administrator
Present: Lorraine Leonard, Finance Director

1. **Open.** Meeting called to order by the Chair at 7:05pm.

2. **Finance Director Report.** Lorraine Leonard distributed a budget report detailing, by account, expenditures year-to-date versus budget. The Committee reviewed and discussed the report. Leonard reported that, so far, no departments or accounts are over budget, and that there are no major variances or red flags.

3. **Open Meeting Law.** The Committee discussed Regulation 29.10, Remote Participation, a provision in the Open Meeting Law, c.30A s.18-25. The Board of Selectman is considering adopting this provision, which will enable members of public bodies to remotely participate and vote in meetings (through teleconference or other means) if a quorum is physically present. The Selectmen are soliciting comments and feedback from other town committees and boards. After discussion, the Committee voted unanimously to recommend that the Selectmen adopt the provision, with the stipulation that each town committee or board implement remote participation at its own discretion.

4. **Municipal Building Committee.** The Chair reported that the Municipal Building Committee (MBC) continues to make progress in developing recommendations for the space optimization, reuse and renovations of the Town Hall and Hildreth House. Following feedback from a well-attended public forum, 2 options for Town Hall and 1 design scheme for Hildreth House are being explored further. The Committee discussed their hope that pricing would be provided for each of the options so that the cost and benefits could be objectively analyzed. Representatives from the MBC will present an update report at the Committee's January 4 meeting.

5. **Review of Budgets.**

Council on Aging (COA). Lorraine Leonard distributed a revised budget submission that reflects a level service budget for FY13. The Committee discussed the COA's request for increased funding to support a dedicated van dispatcher and additional administrative support. The COA has raised the issue with the Selectmen and a meeting has been arranged to discuss. The Chair will coordinate follow up.

Cemetery Commission. Upon review, Bob Thurston noted that substantial additional funding has been requested for one-time capital expenses, such as tree trimming, road work, and roof repair, and that budgets should reflect only recurring operating costs. Thurston will provide this feedback to the Cemetery Commission so they can revise their submission.

Fire Dept. The Committee noted the significant expense increases resulting from: (i) increased administrative support; (ii) annual testing and certification of equipment; (iii) protective clothing; and (iv) training. The Committee questioned whether these increases are consistent with a level service budget. Questions were submitted to Tim Bragan, who will follow up with Chief Sicard.

Police. The Committee reviewed the draft budget submission and noted Chief Denmark's concerns about how stretched the department is to effectively provide services on a limited staff, operating 5 shifts per week with single officer coverage. The Committee requested Tim Bragan follow up with Chief Denmark to clarify several items, including personnel.

Bare Hill Pond Watershed Management Committee. The Committee reviewed the Pond Committee's budget and collected questions for discussion with the pond committee.

6. Adjournment. Meeting adjourned at 8:52pm.