

TOWN OF HARVARD
Finance Committee
Minutes

Meeting Date: Saturday, February 25, 2012

Meeting Place: Town Hall Meeting Room

Members Present: Marie Fagan (chair), Steve Colwell, Heidi Frank, Alan Frazer (assoc.),
Alice von Loesecke, George McKenna, Rudy Minar, Laura Vilain (assoc.)

Members Not Present: Bob Thurston

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

Meeting Time: 9:11 a.m. Adjournment Time: 12:25 p.m.

Discussion and Actions

- Marie Fagan opened the meeting at 9:11 a.m. She explained the procedure that interactions with Department Heads must go through the appropriate Finance Committee liaisons or the Finance Committee Chair.
- No public comment
- Minutes for February 22, were reviewed, and approved with changes.
- Approval of Budgets

**A motion was made to recommend the Selectmen's budget of \$212,534.
The vote was 6:0 in favor.**

**A motion was made to recommend the Finance Committee's budget of \$200.
The vote was 6:0 in favor.**

**A motion was made to recommend the Legal's budget of \$51,000.
The vote was 6:0 in favor.**

**A motion was made to recommend the Personnel Board's budget of \$100.
The vote was 6:0 in favor.**

**A motion was made to recommend the Town Clerk's budget of \$74,458.
The vote was 6:0 in favor.**

**A motion was made to recommend the Elections & Registrars' budget of \$9,550.
The vote was 6:0 in favor.**

**A motion was made to recommend the Land Use Board's budget of \$52,593.
The vote was 6:0 in favor.**

A motion was made to recommend the Public Buildings' budget of \$306,798.

The vote was 6:0 in favor.

**A motion was made to recommend the Annual Town Reports' budget of \$4,000.
The vote was 6:0 in favor.**

**A motion was made to recommend the Communications' budget of \$209,405.
The vote was 6:0 in favor.**

A motion was made to recommend the budget of the Building & Zoning Inspector of \$50,000. The vote was 6:0 in favor.

**A motion was made to recommend the budget of the Gas Inspector of \$4,000.
The vote was 6:0 in favor.**

**A motion was made to recommend the budget of the Plumbing Inspector of \$7,000.
The vote was 6:0 in favor.**

**A motion was made to recommend the budget of the Wiring Inspector of \$9,000.
The vote was 6:0 in favor.**

**A motion was made to recommend the Animal Control's budget of \$17,250.
The vote was 6:0 in favor.**

**A motion was made to recommend the Tree Warden's budget of \$14,000.
The vote was 6:0 in favor.**

**A motion was made to recommend the Transfer Station's budget of \$182,000.
The vote was 6:0 in favor.**

**A motion was made to recommend the Street lights & Traffic Signal's budget of \$5,700.
The vote was 6:0 in favor.**

**A motion was made to recommend the Water Department's budget of \$17,500.
The vote was 6:0 in favor.**

**A motion was made to recommend the Pond Committee's budget of \$33,500.
The vote was 6:0 in favor.**

**A motion was made to recommend the Cemeteries' budget of \$2,500.
The vote was 6:0 in favor.**

**A motion was made to recommend the Veterans' Services' budget of \$14,500.
The vote was 6:0 in favor.**

**A motion was made to recommend the Historical Commission's budget of \$100.
The vote was 6:0 in favor.**

**A motion was made to recommend the Agricultural Commission's budget of \$500.
The vote was 6:0 in favor.**

A motion was made to recommend the Recurring Capital Expenditures' budget of \$99,000. The vote was 6:0 in favor.

A motion was made to recommend the Property/Liability/Self-Insurance's budget of \$145,000. The vote was 6:0 in favor.

A motion was made to recommend the Non-Excluded Debt: Debt Expense's budget of \$5,000. The vote was 6:0 in favor.

A motion was made to recommend the Excluded Debt: Permanent Debt's budget of \$1,003,490. The vote was 6:0 in favor.

- Approval of Budgets - with discussion

A motion was made to recommend the Finance Department's budget of \$422,150, with the MART Dispatch remaining in that department. In discussion, the Committee suggests the Council on Aging review their current reporting and communications program. **The vote was 6:0 in favor.**

A motion was made to recommend the Council on Aging's budget of \$103,141. The vote was 6:0 in favor.

A motion was made to recommend the amending of the Police budget of \$850,586 to \$855,586 as level-service. In discussion, the Committee was correcting the baseline to include \$5,000 for one new officer uniform kit - needed for the new officer replacing one that is retiring. **The vote was 6:0 in favor.**

A second motion was made to recommend the amending of the Police budget of \$855,586 to \$860,586 as level-service. It was noted that a second new officer uniform kit was needed for the second new officer replacing the second retirement. Confusion arose because replacement body armor costs \$5,000 as well, but was removed from the requested budget because it was determined by the Committee to not be level-service. **The vote was 6:0 in favor.**

A third motion was made to recommend increasing the Police budget by \$25,000 for a total of \$885,586. In this discussion, it was determined that \$15,000 would allow Police Chief Denmark to add approximately 50 more over-time shifts, allowing for better 2-officer coverage. The Chief had asked in his Additional Priority list for a new officer at \$60,787 and overtime at \$11,000 or OT at \$15,000. The Committee decided to give the Chief overtime at \$15,000 and an additional \$10,000 in overtime allowing for approximately 83 more overtime shifts and better 2-officer coverage. **The vote was 6:0 in favor.**

A motion was made to fund the Library budget at the MAR level of \$518,631. The Committee discussed that this is the MAR, although it is \$3,000 less than the original Library budget. The Library, as we understand it, has alternate grant funding, and funds from the Friends of the Library. **The vote was 5:1 in favor. Rudy voted against.**

A motion was made to increase the School budget by \$76,945 for a total of \$11,488,532.

The intent of this Committee is to have the increase cover \$16,200 for the HES Library Assistant; \$22,745 (the net of retirement savings less the \$20,000 World Language (WL) expense); and \$38,000 for books and materials in Budget 2 at Bromfield.

The vote was 6:0 in favor.

A motion was made to deduct \$200 of the Board of Health's budget for a total of \$30,826. This was a deduction for previously purchased file cabinets.

The vote was 6:0 in favor.

George McKenna had to leave.

A motion was made to recommend increasing the Fire Department's budget by \$8,423 for a total of \$224,180. This would allow Fire Chief Sicard to fund an additional 4 hours for an administrative assistant. **The vote was 5:0 in favor.**

A second motion was made to recommend increasing the Fire Department's budget by \$5,000 for a total of \$229,180. This would allow the Chief an additional \$5,000 for an incremental pay raise in the call rate for the Fire-fighters. **The vote was 1:4 against (adding an additional \$5,000.)** Steve voted in favor. **The resulting vote kept the recommended budget for the Fire Department at \$224,180.**

A motion was made to recommend the Public Works Department's budget of \$987,167.
The vote was 5:0 in favor.

A motion was made to recommend the Park and Receptions' budget of \$71,192. The Committee determined that there was no justification for this \$84 increase.
The vote was 5:0 in favor.

A motion was made to recommend increasing the Employee Benefits' budget by \$10,000 for a total of \$3,306,672. The \$10,000 increase will account for the one position's cost-of-living-allowance (COLA) in the School's budget. **The vote was 5:0 in favor.**

A second motion was made to increase the Employee Benefits' budget by \$15,000 for a total of \$3,331,672. The \$15,000 is a computation error. **The vote was 5:0 in favor.**

- Approval of Warrant Articles

Heidi Frank had to leave.

- Warrant Articles include:

- Planner (Land Use Boards)	\$ 65,000
- Facilities Manager (Public Buildings)	\$ 55,630
- Energy Audits (Public Buildings)	\$ 19,250 \$ 12,000
- Galeota Report Issues (Public Buildings)	????
- Master Plan (Land Use Boards)	\$100,000
- Elderly Tax Plan (Other)	\$112,500
- Thermal Imaging Cameras (Fire Dept.)	\$ 12,000

- Fire Gear Lockers (Fire Dept.)	\$ 7,000
- Economic Development Commission (General Govt.)	\$ 1,000
- SAFE program (Ron Ricci's alternative to Fire Permits)	\$ 13,500
- Cemetery roof and road (Cemeteries)	\$ 4,300
- Capital Fund Funding (Other)	\$100,000

- The Committee discussed not having enough information to make qualified decisions regarding the Planner position for \$65,000; the Facilities Manager position for \$55,630; the Energy Audits cost that were \$19,250 but have since been revised to \$12,000; and the Cemetery's Roof and Road request for \$4,300. The total amount that is pending based on further discussion/decisions is **\$136,930**. The Capital Fund Funding as a warrant article was also discussed.

A motion was made to recommend \$100,000 for the Master Plan. The Committee also talked about spending down the Overlay Reserve account of \$100,000, which has been accruing over the past 10 years, on the Master Plan. This account is meant for non-recurring expenditures. **The vote was 4:0 in favor.**

A motion was made to not recommend the Warrant Article request to fund the Elderly Tax Plan. The Elderly Tax Plan was explained by Tim Bragan as a new, special legislation suggested last year by Rick Maiore, Peter Warren, and Marie Sobalvarro to provide tax exemptions for elders to stay in their homes. The question most concerning the Committee is can this "hole" in the budget be sustained, since it would not be a re-spreading of the tax burden. The first year it'll be an expense and in the out-years, it'll increase the Overlay expense to the town. **The vote was 4:0 in favor (to not fund).**

A motion was made to recommend the Warrant Article request of \$12,000 to fund the thermal imaging cameras. These cameras are used by the Fire Department, and are considered a necessity in fighting fires. Currently, one camera is broken and the other has parts needed that are obsolete. **The vote was 4:0 in favor.**

A motion was made to recommend the Warrant Article request of \$7,000 to fund the fire gear lockers. The lockers are necessary for efficiency and to lessen the equipment's wear and tear. **The vote was 4:0 in favor.**

A motion was made to not recommend the Warrant Article request of funding the SAFE program. **The vote was 4:0 in favor (to not fund).**

A motion was made to recommend the Warrant Article request of \$1,000 to fund the Economic Development Commission (EDC). The Committee understands that this funding will be spread out over two years as the EDC becomes a recognized Town committee/commission. **The vote was 4:0 in favor.**

• Other Discussion

- The Committee further discussed including \$100,000 as a Warrant Article for Capital Fund Funding as presented by Tim Bragan. The concern is that if this money is placed as a Warrant Article, it'll be the first place funding may be cut. However, town citizens may

not vote for an override to fund any additional Capital expenses. No vote was taken.

- Maintenance items and the Galeota report were also discussed. The Committee asked if they could sponsor the funding of specific maintenance items in the report. Or, if the Committee should make a recommendation to Capital coordinating with the Board of Selectmen, Peter Warren, with suggestions about where money needs to be spent. The Galeota report is publicly available on-line.
- A reminder that all liaisons should communicate today's budget decisions to their respective departments and boards before the Quad Board meeting next Wednesday.
- Next meeting – Quad Boards, Wednesday, February 29, 7:00 p.m. Town Hall meeting room, also
 - MBC meeting, Thursday, March 1 at 7:00 at Volunteers' Hall, Library

Meeting adjourned at 12:25 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Laura Vilain