



Town of Holland, MA – Finance Board

Meeting Minutes

January 21, 2015

Call To Order

The Chairman called to order a meeting of the Holland Finance Board at 7:30 PM on January 21, 2015 at the Holland Town Hall.

Roll Call

Finance Board members present: Andrew Harhay (Chairman), Ernest Fancy, John Phelps, John Ebersold and Mike Brady. Also present was Select Board Chairperson Lynn Arnold.

Approval of Minutes

The minutes of the January 14, 2015 meeting were approved.

New Business

Review of Board of Highway Department Budget Request for FY16:

The Highway Budget Request for FY16 had been submitted, but the Highway Surveyor indicated that afternoon that he needed more time to review his data. The Chairman had met with the Surveyor a week earlier and was able to offer comments on a number of line items.

The Fuel Charge for FY16 was level funded from the FY15 amount of \$55,000. It was questioned whether this amount should be lower for FY16 due to the recent significant decrease in fuel prices. It appears that the actual fuel charge through mid-December is about \$20,500. As significant snow plowing has not yet been done, the \$55,000 may be a reasonable amount.

No detail was provided for the items included in the Routine Highway Expense and Road Improvement areas of the Budget, nor a breakdown between these two areas. The Budget Request for FY16 reflects a 16% increase over the FY15 budget for these items.

The Budget Request for Snow and Ice Costs reflects an increase from \$45,000 to \$100,000. Historically, the Town has had to look to Free Cash to cover for Snow and Ice deficits. The amount budgeted for both FY14 and for FY15 was \$45,000. For FY14 the actual Snow and Ice costs were \$98,540.

Tree Warden Budget Request:

There is a significant increase in the Tree Warden Budget Request, both in the Salary line and for a new Tree Removal line. Under Mass. General Law, each town must have a Tree Warden. The Tree Removal line was due to there being about 14 large trees that have to be removed in one particular area. It was suggested by attendees that this should probably be handled as a Warrant article at the Annual Town Meeting rather than as a budget line item.

Open Issues:

FY16 Levy Limit:

The Chairman prepared an initial 'guestimate' of the FY16 Levy Limit for the Town. The result was an increase in the Limit of about \$100,000 over the FY15 Limit.

Ambulance Expense:

As a follow-up to the Board of Health Budget Request meeting it was discussed whether the Ambulance Expense should be moved from the Board of Health budget to

the Select Board budget, as that Board develops and signs the contract; the BOH has no involvement. Select Board Chairman Lynn Arnold will consider.

FY16 Budget:

John Phelps has prepared a 'first cut' of the FY16 budget. Comments on some of the items were:

Public Building and Street Lighting will reflect the significant increase in Supply Charges. Also, the amount for General Insurance is not known at this time as renewal numbers have not been received.

Capital Planning—the outstanding amount owed for the October, 2011 storm loan will hopefully be covered by FEMA.

Finance Board—it was suggested that it might be appropriate to increase the \$20,000 Reserve Fund line.

Library—the salary for the Director is lower than last year because a new Director has been hired, and the Trustees felt that the new Director should start at a lower level than what the prior Director was making.

Stabilization Fund—there was no entry yet for the amount going into the General Stabilization Account.

Regional School—the Debt Assessment for Tantasqua was estimated to be \$16,000.

Veterans—for FY16 we will need a budget line for Salary as the Town now has its own Veterans Agent. Previously, we shared a Veterans Agent, and were assessed a fee that included salary. It is also expected that Veterans Benefits will increase significantly due to the fact that the new Agent will increase outreach efforts.

Action Items Being Carried:

This section was added to the meeting minutes.

The Chairman will re-schedule the Budget Review meeting with the Highway Department.

Select Board Chairperson Lynn Arnold will investigate the moving of the Ambulance Expense to the Select Board budget.

Select Board Chairperson Lynn Arnold will check on the status of the reimbursement for the October 2011 storm expense.

Next Meeting:

The next meeting will be at 7:30 on January 28, with the key item being review of the Police Department budget request.

Adjournment

^The Chairman adjourned the meeting at 9:35 P.M.

Minutes submitted by: Mike Brady, Secretary