



## **Town of Holland, MA – Finance Board**

### *Meeting Minutes*

January 14, 2015

#### **Call To Order**

The Chairman called to order a meeting of the Holland Finance Board at 7:30 PM on January 14, 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 member Larry Mandell.

#### **Approval of Minutes**

The minutes of the January 7, 2015 meeting were approved.

#### **Open Issues**

FY16 Budget Development Schedule: There were no changes to the meeting schedule shown in the December 16, 2014 revision.

## New Business

### Review of Board of Health Budget Request for FY16:

Two members of the Board of Health (Dana Manning and Ken Ference) attended the meeting, presented their Budget Request and responded to questions about specific items in the Request. A significant increase in the Board of Health's budget for FY16 has been requested. A large portion of the increase would be for the addition of a Health Agent, for 19 hours per week. The Health Agent would perform all Title 5 inspections as well as all other required inspections. Currently, the person who performs the Title V inspections is not in the area for approximately four and a half months of the year. When Title V inspections, perc tests, and other inspections are required and the person is not available, the town must contract with an outside firm to perform the work. The Health Agent would perform the tests, etc. on a timely basis, and the fee revenue would go to the town. The Board of Health will draw up a list of the expected duties of a Health Agent and the expected fee income generated by the Health Agent. It is not expected, though, that the fees collected would completely offset the Health Agent's compensation. The list of the Health Agent's duties will help in determining the amount of time a Health Agent would actually be needed each week. The Health Agent would also help in reviewing the Board of Health's records to determine if follow-up work is required on prior inspections, etc. It was stated that there has not been much of this activity performed over the last twelve years or so. It was also discussed whether it would be feasible to 'share' a Health Agent with another town as a way to mitigate the expense associated with the position.

There are also requested increases in other expense areas. The members of the Board of Health feel that a significant amount of Certification Training is required for the members. There are many courses available for the various types of training, such as Title V, disaster situations, health issues (such as Ebola), marijuana dispensaries, etc.

The budget request includes the cost for two additional laptop computers. Ms. Manning stated that FEMA recommends that each Board of Health member have his/her own laptop for use in emergency situations. One laptop was ordered a number of months ago, but has not been received yet.

The Board of Health members feel that the expense for Ambulance Services should not be in their budget as they have no involvement or interaction with these services.

The Board of Health budget also includes \$600 for 'Visiting Nurse Expense'. The members do not know what this is for.

And, the Board of Health members feel that their stipends should be increased significantly, back to prior levels, or larger. They cited the significant amount of time

that has been/is required of them to deal with various issues. It was pointed out that the stipends are not a 'wage/salary' for the hours volunteered to the Town and that the stipends of all of the Town's Boards/Committees should be considered in relationship to each other.

#### Free Cash:

As a follow-up to the 1/7/15 meeting, the Chairman requested from the Town Accountant detail about the sources of the free cash, which was larger than expected. The Town Accountant provided that breakdown, which came from a number of items, with the largest being turn-backs from the Police Department, Reserve Fund and the School Department. There was a discussion about possible uses of the free cash amount. The MA Department of Revenue recommends that free cash not be used for 'regular' expenses in the annual budget as it not guaranteed on a year to year basis, and can fluctuate significantly. One possibility was to use the funds to pay off the amount still owed for the October 2011 snowstorm. However, Select Board member Larry Mandell said that the check from the State for reimbursement is 'in the 'mail' and appears to be slightly greater than the amount still owed.

#### Annual Town Report:

The Select Board has notified the various town boards that annual reports have to be prepared on a Fiscal Year basis each year. The reports for FY14 are due by March 31, 2015. Boards and departments with revolving accounts must prepare statements for those revolving accounts on a fiscal year basis and also for the first six months of the following fiscal year, ending each December 31.

#### Highway Department Budget Request:

The Chairman has forwarded the Highway Department expenses for the Fixed Cost/Overhead lines to the Town Accountant; the breakdown was provided by the Surveyor. The FY15 Expenses portion of the budget was split between the two separate lines, as has been presented to FinCon for a number of years. It appears that the Overhead accounts are running short.

#### School Committee Meeting/Budget Meeting:

The Chairman, and members John Phelps and Ernie Fancy attended the Holland Elementary School Committee budget meeting and a Tantasqua Budget Subcommittee meeting, both held at the Elementary School on January 8. A first pass at the Elementary School FY16 budget request reflects about a 1.5% increase over the FY15

budget, with questions remaining about how to best use the School Choice monies. Ernie Fancy attended another Tantasqua Budget Subcommittee meeting held in Brookfield. The regional school FY16 budget request will probably reflect about a 2 ½% increase, although State aid figures are not yet available.

Board of Assessors Budget Request:

The Board of Assessors provided the Chairman additional information regarding their education expense in the FY16 budget request. It is expected that the new member will participate in an introductory course and the Principal Assessor and one other member will also take courses during the year. These courses seem to support the amount requested for education in the FY16 budget.

Next Meeting:

The next meeting will be held on Wednesday, January 21. The Highway Department Budget Request will be reviewed.

**Adjournment**

^The Chairman adjourned the meeting at 10:00 P.M.

Minutes submitted by: Mike Brady, Secretary