



Town of Medway  
**FINANCE COMMITTEE**  
155 Village Street  
Medway MA 02053

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**Special Meeting**  
**January 30, 2013**  
**Medway High School Library**  
**88 Summer Street**  
**7:00 PM**

Present: Chairman Jeff O'Neill; Chris Lagan, Clerk; Members: Meghan Bernardo, Christine Devine (7:08), Frank Rossi, Barry Schroeder.

Absent: Kevin Dickie, Vice-Chair; Neil Kennedy; Jim Sheehan.

Also Present: Melanie Phillips, Finance Director; Jeffery Lynch, Fire Chief; John Givner, Veterans Agent; Selectman Dennis Crowley; Town Administrator Suzanne Kennedy.

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There being a quorum present, Chairman O'Neill called the meeting to order at 7:05 PM.

**Finance Committee Reserve Account Review:**

Mr. Chris Lagan, Clerk, briefly reviewed the balance sheet for the Finance Committee Budget which indicates that there is \$90,000 remaining in the account at this time.

**Emergency Transfer – Veterans Services Expenses, \$19,750;**

*The Committee reviewed a Request for Transfer from the Finance Committee Reserve Fund, dated January 17, 2013, from the Veterans Agent. Mr. Givner included background information on how the program works, caseload, available benefits, etc.*

Mr. John Givner briefly outlined his role as Veterans Agent for Medway and three other communities, explaining that Massachusetts is the only state that has a Veterans Agent to represent each community, either individually or by district. Referring to the background information, he stated the caseload as such has not changed, but the numbers have gone up, mostly due to the type of benefits received. He distributed a handout comparing various services and benefits within the current caseload. Mr. Givner noted it is difficult to predict what the future caseload might be as several recipients are elderly. It

sometimes takes 14 – 18 months for benefits to kick in, so these monies the Town can provide helps people over the tough spots in the interim.

Responding to a question from the committee, Mr. Givner stated there are 14 cases now, compared to only 4 when he came to Medway in 2011. Each recipient's benefits vary depending on income and family status. While there does not seem to be a direct correlation, it was suggested that Medway has a higher caseload than surrounding communities because of increased awareness and the availability of a Veterans Agent. Mr. Givner noted that 8 of the 14 cases are widows of veterans.

Ms. Kennedy theorized that there should be a reimbursement of approximately 75% of the benefits that are disbursed to recipients, though the reimbursement funds go into the general fund. There are other monies within the Veterans Benefits budget that will be used before the transferred money will be used. Chairman O'Neill asked if there could be other requests this fiscal year. Mr. Givner estimated that this transfer should be sufficient for the remainder of the fiscal year, but could not guarantee it. He knows of one person who is expecting to move out of Medway. Discussion followed on the various benefits, income levels and other aspects of the recipients.

**Mr. Chris Lagan moved that the Finance Committee approve the Transfer from the Reserve Fund as presented in the amount of \$19,750.00 to VETERANS BENEFITS; Ms. Christine Devine seconded. No discussion. VOTE: 6-0-0.**

**Emergency Transfer – Fire Department Salaries and Stipends, \$40,000:**

*The Committee reviewed a request for Transfer from the Finance Committee Reserve Fund, dated January 23, 2013, from Jeffery Lynch, Fire Chief, plus supporting documentation.*

Chief Lynch stated a recent state inspection revealed insufficient staffing to cover the ambulance runs between 7 PM and 7 AM. The Fire Department is trying to recruit additional personnel, but the process is slow. As a result of the lack of staff, the department was not issued a license to operate an emergency medical vehicle. It is difficult to fill all the shifts with the on-call personnel, but there are not enough people to fill the shifts, no matter how much present staff wants to work. The state inspector decreed that there must be 24-hour coverage. Four scenarios have been developed, which were presented to the Board of Selectmen at their meeting on January 22. Chief Lynch briefly outlined the differences in the scenarios.

Ms. Kennedy explained that the state wants the services to be memorialized in a formal agreement, which has not yet been done. The existing agreement is more geared toward operations, and not a contract for services. The Town is required to have adequate staffing, and the requested funds will be used to hire additional staff prior to the start of the new fiscal year.

Chairman O'Neill asked why this situation has come up now if the staffing has not changed significantly. Ms. Kennedy noted that this particular state inspector has a reputation of being one of the strictest, and he is determined to bring all communities up to the required level of compliance.

Ms. Christine Devine asked if this affects staffing for fire service and other tasks. Chief Lynch stated all new hires will be trained in both areas and will serve wherever they are needed when the various calls come in. He noted that this is a short-term solution to obtain the license for ambulance service, but the long-term solution is to hire additional staff. This will get the department through June 30. Data will be gathered in order to determine how to go forward for the next fiscal year.

Selectman Crowley stated the Selectmen looked at the scenarios long and hard, and opted for the scenario that allows for two additional people. Additionally, there is concern that on-call personnel are not consistently responding to calls. The Selectmen wanted to look at the analysis longer in order to determine if two additional people (total of 4) should be worked into the budget for FY14. It was noted that the addition of four more full-time firefighters will bring the total of full-time staff to eight (8). Additional staff provides additional coverage for the Town, and increased coverage generates more revenue to the Town as the department will be able to cover more calls. The Board also discussed stipends for the on-call personnel. Discussion followed on what may happen at Special Town Meeting and resulting transfers if the warrant article passes.

Ms. Melanie Phillips, Finance Director, stated that the transfer funds are to cover short-term costs and Special Town Meeting would appropriate \$40,000 to cover other costs until June 30. \$40,000 will come from the Finance Committee Reserve Fund, and \$40,000 will come from the Operational Reserve if the matter passes at Special Town Meeting. Ideally, the hiring will be complete, and the actual numbers will be refined before Special Town Meeting. Chairman O'Neill wanted to know if the money will be transferred back to the Reserve Fund to replace the funds this vote will transfer out. It is anticipated that these costs will be built into the budget for FY14.

Chief Lynch reported that today was the deadline for applications, and six were received. Interviews will be on Friday, and background checks through the Police Department are in process. It could be 3-4 weeks before the hiring process is complete. Ms. Devine asked why the department needs the money now if funds could be approved at Special Town Meeting. Chief Lynch explained that stipends are being paid to get the shifts filled, so overtime funds are being hit pretty hard. The \$40,000 from the Reserve Fund will help restore those funds, and the \$40,000 appropriated at Special Town Meeting will finish out the fiscal year. Ms. Kennedy pointed out the \$75,000 estimated includes paying full benefits, and she rounded it up to \$80,000. Chief Lynch explained this money will provide enough funds to support the new hires as well as pay the stipends in the coming weeks. At the time this was presented to the Selectmen, the date for a Special Town Meeting was not known.

Ms. Kennedy theorized that if the Town does not rectify this situation, the state will mandate who the Town will hire for a private ambulance service; the state is looking for a signed agreement with a private-for-profit, plus a staffing scenario that covers 24 hours. The scenario that was presented will satisfy the inspector on a short term basis, but not long term. One contract is still not signed; one is signed, but the certificates of insurance are still outstanding. Brief discussion followed.

Chief Lynch indicated that calls are going up every year, noting that many times someone needs assistance lifting a family member who has fallen. The population is aging, and many calls involve elderly. A billable call is one where the patient was transported; a non-billable call means the patient was not transported. There are also calls for Medway residents who have no insurance, and those fall into a hardship process. Discussion followed on the dispatch center, and analysis of those calls. Data indicating trends may be helpful, though it is noted that the information may be skewed because of how the information was recorded.

Brief discussion followed on the Fire Departments in surrounding communities and their staffing solutions. Holliston has all on-call staff except the Chief. On-call gets a \$5,000 annual stipend and insurance benefits. Hopkinton has a full-time dept. Norfolk has 13 full-time firefighters including the Chief. It was noted that departments in nearby communities have significantly larger budgets.

Mr. Chris Lagan, Clerk, pointed out that approval of this transfer leaves a balance of \$30,250 for the rest of the year, as it is unclear when the transfer funds will be reimbursed into the Reserve Fund. Chairman O'Neill asked what happens if the article does not pass at Special Town Meeting. Ms. Kennedy responded she would have to review the Operational Reserve Account and see what can be done.

**Ms. Meghan Bernardo moved that the Finance Committee approve the Transfer from the Reserve Fund as presented in the amount of \$40,000 to EMS FT/EMS PT SALARIES/STIPENDS; Ms. Christine Devine seconded. No discussion. VOTE: 6-0-0.**

**Special Town Meeting – February 25, 2013:**

*The Committee reviewed a draft of the February 25, 2013 Special Town Meeting Calendar.*

Chairman O'Neill announced that the Finance Committee is required to hold a Public Hearing before any Annual or Special Town Meeting. According to the draft calendar, this would place the public hearing on the Finance Committee's regular meeting night of Wednesday, February 13.

After discussion, it was agreed to hold the Public Hearing at 7 PM on Wednesday, February 13, 2013 in Sanford Hall, 155 Village Street. The regular Finance Committee meeting will follow after the public hearing is closed. Ms. Christine Devine reported she will not be able to attend.

**Next Meeting:**

The next regular monthly meeting of the Finance Committee will be held following the conclusion of the Public Hearing relative to the February 25, 2013 Special Town Meeting.

**At 8:20 PM Ms. Christine Devine moved to adjourn; Mr. Barry Schroeder seconded. No discussion. VOTE: 6-0-0.**

Respectfully submitted,  
Jeanette Galliardt  
Night Board Secretary