

FINANCE COMMITTEE
Minutes

Date: March 5, 2016

Time: 8:00 a.m.

16 MAR 22 AM 8:29
MILLIS, MA 01947

Present: O'Connell, Cofske, Kupcinskis, Noonan

Absent: Khalife, Hebert, Kennedy

Meeting called to order at 8:00 a.m.

Motioned by Kupcinskis, seconded by Cofske to accept the minutes of February 16, 2016 as written. Unanimous.

Bob Spain and Katie McKenna were in at 8:00 a.m.

Rich Hamilton, Fire Chief and members of the Board of Fire Engineers were in to discuss their budget at 8:10a.m.

Rich Hamilton: Everything is level funded except Salaries. The percentage of the raise is similar to everyone else. We need a Forestry Warden by law. A lot of what we do is what the DEP regulates. The Chief and the Assistant Chief have administrative stipends. We take care of the day to day operations. We are budgeted for 62 firefighters at \$3,335 a year. They all have to pass the academy to be paid on the Fire Department. They are paid quarterly and it is based on the amount of calls you respond to. Most towns pay by the hour. Our guys are paid by the call. The more calls you respond to, the more you get.

Jennifer O'Connell: What is the maximum amount of people you have had on the Department?
Rich Hamilton: We have had up to 85, but only 70 paid people. Our Head Clerk is the only full-time person that we have. We also still maintain the lines in the system. Businesses take care of their own. We also take care of inspections. If someone sells a home, it needs to be inspected. We do about 400 inspections a year. Any money left over at the end of the year goes to maintenance, which we have a list of. We usually wait until the end of the year to do these. We apply for many grants too.

Capital Items

Rich Hamilton: We are looking for Turn-out Gear, Hoses and Hydraulic Tools. We have a cutter that we cannot get parts for anymore. We do have some cordless equipment which has

replaced some of our old equipment. We have a cordless jaws of life. The hoses are on an 8-year plan. We would like to outfit one truck a year, which would alternate the life of the hoses. They are now color coded, per NFPA regulations. We are looking to replace our bucket truck. This is only used for fire alarm repairs. The School Department uses it to get to their roof and it is used for decorations around town. A new one costs about \$75,000. We are looking at a used one for about \$20,000.

Rich Hamilton: The Department of Public Utilities sets the rates on the hydrants. They charge \$220 per year for new hydrants. The Town has 219 hydrants. There are some private hydrants, which the Town is not responsible for at this time.

Bob Spain: When the Town takes over a road or development, the Town also takes over the hydrants.

Fire Chief and Fire Engineers left at 8:40 a.m.

Don Desourcy, Police Chief and Lt. Rush-Kittle were in to discuss the Police Budget at 8:45 a.m.

Don Desourcy: I would like all of my Lieutenants, Sergeants and Officers to understand how this budget works. I would like to go over some issues with the current year's budget. I took over in August. The by-out provision for the previous Chief came out of my operating budget. I have had an officer out since October, injured on duty. That person is still out. This comes out of my budget. We are supposed to get reimbursed once this case is settled. I have a couple of officers out on Paid Administrative Leave. We have to pay them until the case is completed. I have four officers out, due to their spouses having children. The leave is a law. We have, in the past, had one or two out at one time, but never four. We have had to pay overtime to replace them. We have had a dispatcher out since 2014. We have had to pay someone overtime to cover this shift. This left us with a deficit of \$30,012. This position has since been remedied. We are running at a bare minimum on some shifts just to get through the budget year. We are trying not to go backwards with positions.

Bob Spain: If things stay the way they are right now, we should be fine. We are working with one less officer right now.

Police Department FY2017 Budget

Don Desourcy: I put in a 2% increase. Negotiations with the union have not started.

Bob Spain: We have 21 uniform officers on duty including the Lieutenant and the Chief.

Don Desourcy: I am not filling the other Lieutenant's position. I need to prioritize. Work needs to be done on the policies and procedures. The Sergeants are taking on more responsibilities. I

want a transition plan in place in case something happens. We have 4 dispatchers. Two are at max pay and two are at starting pay. We had a retirement so I had new hires. I would like to get some new officers from the Civil Service list. It would be at a lower pay than having a lateral transfer. They wouldn't get to the max pay for 60 months. Lateral transfers get credit from their years in another department.

This year I added an extra cruiser. As of right now this is still in the works.

Jen O'Connell: What is the physical fitness bonus?

Don Desourcy: It is \$2,000 per year to take the test. They need to pass the test at least two times a year. The testing is done four times a year. We are addressing the fairness in the testing. They are supposed to take and pass the test.

Bob Spain: They can, at some point, be terminated if they continue to fail the test.

Chief Desourcy and Lieutenant Rush-Kittle left at 10:00 a.m.

Rob McNeil, DPW Director, was in to discuss his budgets at 10:00 a.m.

Tree Warden Budget

Rob McNeil: There is a slight increase from this year. There is a 1-1/2% increase for the Warden. Outside Tree Service is up slightly. The Tree Warden cuts the trees and the DPW takes out the stumps and does the cleanup. We want to fund more for plantings in the future. We have been cutting down trees, but not replacing them. We should have pre-designated spots to replant.

Budget #33

Rob McNeil: There is an increase of 4% over this year. This is contractual. There is a part time clerk doing mostly Sewer Department duties. This person would eventually be a utility clerk which would handle both departments. When I started, we had two full time clerks. I would like to go back to two full timers. I feel the office needs two. We invested in scanning the sewer records. We are now requesting PDF files from the contractors. We had been cut/paste from one system to another.

Cemetery

Rob McNeil: The records go back to the 1800's. There are books that are duct taped together. All of this has been scanned. The new ones need to be updated. The GIS worked on all the scanned records. We have a massive data base that is not 100% reliable. We need to find time to enter everything in the data base. Each grave has a 75 year life expectancy. After 75 years, we could essentially re-use the graves. We are not doing that at this time.

Snow and Ice

Rob McNeil: We cannot deficit spend if we budget less than the previous year. We budgeted \$170,000 and spent \$194,000. We are migrating away from owning sidewalk plows. We do a 3-4 month rental then send it back.

Street Lights

Rob McNeil: This covers the cost of electricity. There are some minor repairs. Traffic Lights are a concern of mine. The newest ones are about 20 years old. Most of them are not working correctly. We have seven sets of traffic lights in Town. There is an investment for traffic cameras of about \$4,000 per month for five years. If we had them, they would be monitored by the Police Department and the DPW. If someone is parked, blocking an area during a snowstorm, I wouldn't have to call the Police Department since they would already know about it.

Transfer Station

Rob McNeil: This is costing us more money due to the amount of recycling being done. We are paying \$20.00 per ton for recycling. We are paying just under \$7,000 per month for this. The tonnage on trash is down. We do not pay to get rid of trash. If we do not bring the allotted amount of trash to Wheelabrator, we receive a refund on the difference. Some people are still not recycling. One a random day, we checked several bags and found that 60% of what was in the bags was recyclable. We also have a compost area for food scraps. A lot of the food scraps were previously in the trash. Now there is an area to put them.

Rob handed out an analysis for the Transfer Station with data concerning use of an Enterprise Fund.

Jen O'Connell: How many free stickers do you give out?

Rob McNeil: We have 2800 that are paid for. If I had to guess on the amount of free stickers, I would say about 65. I can get you a more accurate figure.

Bob Spain: I think it is more than that on the free ones.

Sewer Enterprise Fund

Rob McNeil: We need to start investing in replacing some of the pipe in the system. Some of the pump stations should be replaced. We have 15 pump stations. After this next pump station is fixed, we will only need to upgrade 4 more.

Bob Spain: There is not enough money in the Retained Earnings to replace or repair the pump stations.

Rob McNeil: We have ample capital reserves. We are at the mercy of the Upper Blackstone on the treatment costs. We pay them quarterly. People are going to be angry when the rate

increases by 30-35%. If were adequately staffed, we could bill quarterly, in-house. Steady, heavy increases are anticipated for the next 10 years. The users will be bearing the brunt of the cost.

Parks Department

Rob McNeil: Butler Farm has a line in this budget. Paving of the parking lot came out of this budget.

Bob Spain: I took it out of the budget and put it in a Warrant Article.

Jen O'Connell: What about Jake's Park?

Rob McNeil: That will be taken care of by the Rampshorn Dam project because the watershed drains into Rampshorn Pond.

Gasoline/Diesel

Bob Spain: The budget is down due to the cost of gasoline.

Rob McNeil: The new fuel island has been completed, so we shouldn't have the added maintenance.

Rob McNeil left at 12:30 p.m.

Steve Noonan: When will the Rampshorn project going to be completed?

Bob Spain: There is not enough money to complete the project. We need to go for an additional amount to the Town Meeting. It would be an additional debt exclusion. We did not anticipate the gate valve breaking. We had already started the project, so we need to complete it.

Jen O'Connell: Will it be on this Warrant or a Special Meeting?

Bob Spain: I plan to put it on this Warrant. I want to keep it within the tax levy.

Town Manager

Bob Spain: This includes the cost of my retirement. I will be retiring this summer.

Jen O'Connell: You have a new HR Manager position in this budget.

Steve Noonan: Have you started the process of hiring yet?

Bob Spain: I can't do anything until it is approved and funded. People cannot believe that we are running without this position. The cost of an HR person should not be an issue.

Finance Director

Katie McKenna: The Purchase of Services is up due to an actuarial report that is required every two years. There are new standards coming out.

Board of Assessors

Bob Spain: The State mandated evaluations have been taken out of the budget and put into a Warrant Article.

Treasurer/Collector

Katie McKenna: We reduced a position by 6 hours a week. Changing of the duties makes this position more efficient.

Bob Spain: She is also a General Clerk, not a Head Clerk.

Town Counsel

Bob Spain: We are gradually increasing this budget.

Computer Operations

Katie McKenna: We are replacing the servers. This is a 3 stage process.

Jen O'Connell: Chris asked me to find out what the rate is for the billable hours from the consultant.

Katie McKenna: I can get that for you.

Town Clerk

Bob Spain: She originally had an additional person. This is a General Clerk position.

Elections

Bob Spain: There is an extra election this year. It will go down next year.

Bob Spain: I combined the Conservation Commission and the Planning Board budgets.

Town Planner

Jen O'Connell: Should you add another \$10,000 to this budget?

Bob Spain: I try to wait on changing numbers until I get through some of the interviews. I may actually be able to have an accurate number for Town Meeting.

Jen O'Connell: We have a part time manager in this department?

Bob Spain: We split her with Sutton.

Emergency Management

Bob Spain: This is for the Code Red System.

Animal Control

Bob Spain: This is a three town agreement. We pay the Town of Sutton for this service.

Blackstone Valley Tech

Bob Spain: This budget is down because there are 8 less students going from Millbury.

Board of Health

Bob Spain: Worcester does our inspections. They provide us with an agent.

Council on Aging

Bob Spain: This is for the Senior Center. There is a salary increase. The position was partially grant funded.

Veterans Services

Bob Spain: This is up due to the Veteran's Benefits. The Town does get some money back, but it goes into the General Fund. The caseload has gone up.

Library

Bob Spain: We had a Children's Librarian in 2009. I need to give her someone. She has taken on so much, almost too much. This budgeted position is only for ½ a year. We probably won't hire anyone until January.

Asa Waters

Steve Noonan: How many hours does she work?

Bob Spain: She works 40 hours a week.

Jen O'Connell: The salary is budgeted. How else is the cost being funded for this?

Bob Spain: They use the Revolving Fund.

Debt Service:

Bob Spain: We paid off the Fire Truck and refinanced the Sewer Tie-in. Our bond rating was much higher and allowed us to go for a lower rate.

Employee Benefits

Bob Spain: This is mostly retirement costs and Health Insurance. I think it is that last of the increases.

Next Finance Committee meeting scheduled for Monday, March 21st at 7:00. This will include the public hearing.

Motioned by Kupcinkas, seconded by Noonan to adjourn at 2:05p.m. Unanimous.

Jane O'Connell *Albert P. Kupcinkas*
Steph Moore *Steve Noonan*