

Sturbridge Finance Committee  
Meeting Minutes  
March 11, 2013 ~ Town Hall  
7:00pm

Call to Order:

The chairman called the meeting to order at 7:00pm with the following finance committee members present: Mike Serio (MS), Larry Morrison (LM), Kathy Neal (KN), Joni Light (JL), Arnold Wilson (AW), Bob Jepson (BJ), Alex Athans (AA), and Kevin Smith, Chairman (KS)  
Absent: Prescott (Scott) Arndt (SA)  
Guest: Mary Blanchard (MB)

Minutes:

Amended the minutes from the March 1 budget meeting. Motion to approve minutes of March 1 as amended was moved by MS and LM seconds. Accepted 7-0-1 with BJ abstaining.  
Amended the minutes from the March 6 meeting. Motion to approve minutes of March 6 as amended was moved by MS and LM seconds. Accepted 8-0-0.

Line Item Budget – Larry Morrison, Liaison:

LM detailed the line items for each of his areas of responsibility.

Town Moderator Budget - LM continued that there is no operational budget, yet there is a stipend review on-going that may change the zero line item budget in the future. If the town residents do vote for a stipend the current town moderator will not accept. LM moved the motion to accept the zero budget dollars for Town Moderator Budget Account 11141-51120 as submitted; AA seconds. Motion accepted 8-0-0.

KS asked the committee if they agreed with the town administrator's rationale and request for a 2.5% COLA for non-union town employees. The committee agreed with the COLA adjustment. KS asked the committee to move forward on approving total salary line item budgets.

Board of Selectman Budget - LM noted that the BOS will wait for the next election giving them a full board to implement the recording secretary. The salaries/wages item is to fund the recording secretary and does not reflect money paid to the board members. KS asked if the committee preferred to vote zero on salaries and wages until such time the position is filled. The committee agreed to accept LM's recommendation. JL asked if the board ever had a recording secretary as it was vacant in FY14. MB answered that the board used to have a recording secretary, and then the responsibilities fell to the town administrator when the secretary was no longer available. LM added that the town administrator would like to implement the recording secretary much the same as is planned for the finance committee. LM moved the motion to accept the Board of Selectman Budget as follows:

Account 11221-51100 for zero dollars; AA seconds. Motion accepted 8-0-0.

Account 11221-51130 for \$923.00; AA seconds. Motion accepted 8-0-0.

Account 11222-52000 for \$1,250.00; AA seconds. Motion accepted 8-0-0.

Account 11222-57000 for \$2,000.00; AA seconds. Motion accepted 8-0-0.

KN was curious to know what things the BOS advertised under their Purchase of Services. KS noted that they post legal notices and advertisements for town positions.

Town Administrator Budget – LM started by indicating that the salaries line item reflect an increase of 2.5% for COLA, and the Merit Based Incentive is 2% of the total salaries for the department heads of which also includes the 2.5% COLA. For the Purchase of Services it is noted that Fleet Maintenance was removed and added to the DPW line item budget, and a \$500 increase to Recruiting for a total of \$4,500.00, an overall decrease of \$2,000.00 from last year. KS was curious to know why Fleet Maintenance was moved to DPW, yet as LM noted, the town administrator moved it to the budget responsible for initiating the work. MS and BJ had questions around the Merit Based Incentive. KS explained the reasoning behind the merit pool and who is eligible, as well as how it is calculated. LM moved the motion to accept the Town Administrator Budget as follows:

Account 11231-51120 for \$114,729.00; AA seconds. Motion accepted 8-0-0.

Account 11231-51130 for \$41,385.00; AA seconds. Motion accepted 8-0-0.

Account 11232-51170 for \$20,775.00; AA seconds. Motion accepted 8-0-0.

Account 11232-52000 for \$4,500.00; AA seconds. Motion accepted 8-0-0.

Account 11232-54000 for \$2,700.00; AA seconds. Motion accepted 8-0-0.

Account 11232-57000 for \$2,000.00; AA seconds. Motion accepted 8-0-0.

Account 11232-5800 for \$10,000.00; AA seconds. Motion accepted 8-0-0.

JL had a question on the Matching Grant Funds and was curious to know if last year's funds were used up and, if not, was there was knowledge of anything forthcoming that would fully utilize the funds. LM commented that he was not aware.

Town Counsel Budget - LM noted that the anticipated costs for the remainder of FY14 are around \$128,000.00, even though the budget has historically been level funded at \$80,000.00. LM moved the motion to accept the Town Counsel Budget Account 11512-52000 for \$80,000.00 as submitted; AA seconds. Motion accepted 8-0-0.

Town Hall Budget - LM noted that the electricity increase is based upon projections as the town is part of a consortium of surrounding towns who purchase electricity in bulk. All other items for FY15 have been level funded. AW mentioned that Deb Boyd is planning to, or may have already, been in discussions with the town administrator to include the school with the town wide plan, and he was curious to know if LM had any update. LM was not aware of the request, but indicated that he would follow up. KS noted that the school (Burgess) is currently on a month to month contract with Hampshire Electric. LM moved the motion to accept the Town Hall Budget as follows:

Account 11932-52000 for \$37,975.00; AA seconds. Motion accepted 8-0-0.

Account 11932-54000 for \$2,000.00; AA seconds. Motion accepted 8-0-0.

Center Office Building Budget - LM noted again the electricity increase. KN was curious to know if the repair section was for specific repairs planned for work, or if it was set aside for what might need repair. KS noted that this was not for planned repairs. LM moved the motion to accept the Center Office Building Budget as follows:

Account 11942-52000 for \$33,375.00; AA seconds. Motion accepted 8-0-0.

Account 11942-54000 for \$1,000.00; AA seconds. Motion accepted 8-0-0.

Nursery School Budget – LM noted it is level funded with the town including a line item of \$1,000 for repairs year over year. KS mentioned that in past years it was suggested that the town revisit and review the Memorandum of Understanding, and had this been done. LM was not aware that it had gone through a review, but noted that the school is under new management and may not have been contacted for this reason. KN wanted to know if the town collects rent from the school. KS noted that this is included as part of the Memorandum of Understanding, and no rent is collected. MS mentioned that he may have the memo and would share. LM moved the motion to accept the Nursery School Budget Account 11982-52000 for \$2,000.00 as submitted; AA seconds. Motion accepted 8-0-0.

8 Brookfield Road – As previously asked by several members, LM confirmed that the lot size is 1.1 acres. In addition, the town administrator included details of the lease and plans for the building are included in the blue tab of the budget book. The current lease is due to expire on June 30, 2014 and he would like to wait for confirmation from the tenant to understand her plans and need for the building. KS noted that the building needs a fair amount of work and was curious if the BOS was going to look into it and perhaps pursue other uses for it. KN was curious to know what happens to the building when the lease expires, and if it is not renewed. KS said the building would be vacant unless another use is put forward. LM moved the motion to accept the budget for 8 Brookfield Road Account 11985-52000 for \$3,000.00 as submitted; AA seconds. Motion accepted 7-0-1 with AW abstaining.

Sealer Budget – LM noted that this is formerly Weights and Measures and explained the purpose of the budget. He then moved the motion to accept the Sealer Budget Account 12442-52000 for \$5,350.00 as submitted; AA seconds. Motion accepted 8-0-0.

Town Clerk Budget – LM noted that the changes in the total salaries are due to the 2.5% COLA. Conferences decreased by \$100 as the town clerk dropped a conference from the schedule. KN was curious to know why travel did not decrease as well, but as KS noted it's not necessarily tied in to travel and mileage. There may be lodging included. LM moved the motion to accept the Town Clerk Budget as follows:

Account 11611-51120 for \$65,722.00; AA seconds. Motion accepted 8-0-0.

Account 11611-51130 for \$33,745.00; AA seconds. Motion accepted 8-0-0.

Account 11612-52000 for \$514.00; AA seconds. Motion accepted 8-0-0.

Account 11612-54000 for \$1,400.00; AA seconds. Motion accepted 8-0-0.

Account 11612-57000 for \$2,400.00; AA seconds. Motion accepted 8-0-0.

KS asked for confirmation of the hourly waged individual in the office and LM confirmed that she is the assistant town clerk and not an administrative assistant. She performs all duties of the town clerk when the town clerk is not present. AW asked if Lorraine was planning to seek justification for additional compensation for the assistant town clerk as she had in the past. LM confirmed no, however, she disagrees with the current wage at this time.

Elections & Registrations Budget – LM noted that the salaries/wages line item reflected three elections for FY15 along with the slight increases for OSV rental, truck rental and constables. In addition, the state reimbursed the town for \$9,700.00 for the elections in FY14. LM moved the motion to accept the Elections & Registrations Budget as follows:

Account 11621-51100 for \$300.00; AA seconds. Motion accepted 8-0-0.

Account 11621-51130 for \$12,000.00; AA seconds. Motion accepted 8-0-0.  
Account 11622-52000 for \$13,175.00; AA seconds. Motion accepted 8-0-0.  
Account 11622-54000 for \$800.00; AA seconds. Motion accepted 8-0-0.

### New Business

#### Reserve Fund Transfer – Tree Warden

A reserve fund transfer request (RFT) to the Tree Warden account (12942-57000) was made by the town administrator for \$125.00. This represents additional dues and registration increases and unforeseen tree trimming. BJ moved the motion to approve the transfer of \$125.00 to the Tree Warden account; LM seconds. Motion accepted 8-0-0.

KS asked that the committee do their best to be on time for the next scheduled meeting on Thursday, March 13 at 7:00pm as there will be guests attending.

BJ moved the motion to adjourn; AA seconds. Meeting adjourned at 8:08pm.

/jml