

Sturbridge Finance Committee
Meeting Minutes
February 27, 2014 ~ Town Hall
7:00pm

Call to Order:

The chairman called the meeting to order at 7:01pm with the following members present: Mike Serio (MS), Larry Morrison (LM), Kathie Neal (KN), Joni Light (JL), Arnold Wilson (AW), Bob Jepson (BJ), Prescott (Scott) Arndt (SA), Alex Athans (AA), and Kevin Smith, Chairman (KS)

Minutes:

Minutes of February 4, 2014 were reviewed and approved. KN moved to approve the minutes as written and AW seconds to approve. Accepted 7-0-2.

Review of FY15 Budget Book – Kevin Smith:

KS reviewed some of the highlights for FY15. The proposed budget as presented is \$28,195,090.00 which falls under the FY15 levy limit by \$463,522.00. This total budget is a 2.4% increase over FY14 budget, or approximately \$667,572.00.

Key revenues include an estimated \$180,000.00 in new growth; \$3.1M in estimated local receipts; \$3.9M in estimated state aid; and \$22M in estimated tax levy. Key staffing proposals include additional hours for staff in the children's room at the library, and a part-time dispatcher for the police department. A 2.5% COLA is being put forward for the non-union employees for an annual increase in wages of approximately \$47,840.00.

Special articles and taxpayer relief include \$350,000.00 for the Capital Plan; \$300K to finance the Mountainbrook Road Betterment Project; and \$150,000.00 for taxpayer rate relief. BJ was curious as to whether or not the Mountainbrook Road residents would be charged interest for the betterment costs. KS felt that it would be discussed at the Saturday kick off meeting in detail with the finance director.

The town administrator is proposing "step in grade" adjustments for certain non-union employees outlined in the Wage Adjustments Memorandum of the detailed budget book.

KS further detailed the police request for additional officers and briefly discussed the K9 grant; road maintenance which increased approximately 20%; the BOH request for additional hours for a hazmat chemist; OPEB; and five year forecast.

Specific details are on pages 1 through 6 in the town administrator's budget message.

New Business

Burgess Budget – Arnold Wilson:

Burgess is including an additional bus route in their budget which includes another bus, another driver, and additional gas. There is a need as the student population has increased by 10 students just since August 1, 2013. Additional requests may include an additional custodian mainly for field

maintenance. KS asked about the rotation of the bus replacements, as it has been 2 replacements every year and perhaps this may change now with an additional vehicle. KS noted that this is a contract year for teacher salaries, as well. BJ was curious to know where the Burgess teachers ranked amongst the other towns in salary.

The next meeting will be Saturday, March 1, 2014 at the town hall for combined budget review meeting.

Motion to adjourn made by LM; seconded by BJ. Meeting adjourned at 7:40pm.

/jml