

Sturbridge Finance Committee
Meeting Minutes
March 18, 2014 ~ Tantasqua Regional Junior High School
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), Prescott (Scott) Arndt (SA), and Kevin Smith, Chairman (KS). Alex Athans (AA) arrived at 7:56pm.

Absent: Bob Jepson (BJ), Arnold Wilson (AW)

Guests: Greg Morse (GM), Lynne Girouard (LG)

Reserve Fund Transfer Request – DPW:

A reserve fund transfer (RFT) to the DPW Overtime account (14101-51300) was made by Barbara Barry for \$2,500.00. This transfer will cover emergency situations where overtime is necessary, and due to the new collective bargaining contract additional funds are necessary in this account. SA moved the motion to approve the transfer of \$2,500.00; KN seconds. Motion accepted 6-0-0.

Snow & Ice Deficit Spending:

The DPW requested deficit spending for supplies, purchase of services and overtime due to the weather extremes this winter. The department had particularly high call outs to keep up with the seasonal demands.

LM moved the motion to approve the deficit spending of \$15,000.00 to Snow & Ice Purchase of Service; SA seconds. Motion accepted 6-0-0.

LM moved the motion to approve the deficit spending of \$25,000.00 to Snow & Ice Supplies; SA seconds. Motion accepted 6-0-0.

LM moved the motion to approve the deficit spending of \$10,000.00 to Snow & Ice Overtime; SA seconds. Motion accepted 6-0-0.

Line Item Budget – Joni Light, Liaison:

JL detailed the line items for each of her areas of responsibility.

DPW - JL opened up the discussion on the DPW administrative assistant, which is grade 4 and at step 3. This position is one of the ten positions the TA is recommending an additional step increase, which would take this role to step 5. This person, along with others, has been frozen for several years and the department head is seeking to raise that to a more appropriate hourly wage. Greg's concerns are that she has been in this capacity for 7 years and keeps the place running by doing additional duties as necessary, like cleaning the work space since there is no cleaning contract for the DPW buildings. She is also senior to newest worker in the department, yet that worker is union and in two years is now making \$18.55, more than the assistant. She also is responsible for all FEMA filings, regardless of whether or not the emergency coordinator is added to the police budget; it will continue to be the DPW's responsibility for FEMA and other emergency management filings. LM asked that as a matter of fairness, should this person be effectively moved to a step 7, which is where she would be had the steps not been removed. There was discussion around this request. As a result, JL agreed to further examine the incremental costs to the town associated with moving up additional steps for each of the ten roles. KS asked if there would be any adjustment needed in the overtime budget if salaries and wages were increased and Greg did not feel it would change.

As part of the finance committee's "findings" report, Greg asked to have his salary reviewed further as a matter of uniformity amongst the other positions of his level. He feels with the additional tasks being put on the DPW and the occupational risks due to the nature of the work, he'd like the TA and perhaps personnel committee to review his compensation. MS stated that the DPW salary was reviewed by the personnel committee and compared with the ten town survey in last year's budget. KS agreed to include it in the findings report to the TA and the BOS.

JL explained how Greg is also requesting the finance committee to approve an additional increase to the DPW operations manager for a 3.5% increase. Reasons are similar in this case as the administrative assistant in that the union foremen are essentially paid a higher wage as they get call out pay and shift differentials whereas the job description of the operations manager does not compensate in the same terms even though the duties are similar and the operations manager is frequently called out on emergencies, as well. Again, further review of the costs will be discussed at a later time for the committee to review. The remaining budget for the DPW is more or less level funded with a slight increase in uniform cleanings due to increase in pricing from the vendor, yet some of this is offset by the decrease in oil costs.

KS asked for Greg's opinion on the DPW taking control of the landfill, and was curious to know if he felt it would work better under the DPW as a matter of organization. SA added that the DPW works everyday whereby the Board of Health does not, and perhaps it would provide better oversight and management through the DPW. Greg's position is that if the town proposed that the landfill fall under the jurisdiction of the DPW then he will take it. His crews assist with many of the landfill duties, yet he would want to better understand the contracts and current processes before making any conclusions. A lengthy discussion was made around this and other potential help requests from other departments of the DPW.

JL moved the motion to accept the DPW budget as follows:

Account 14101-51120 for \$67,757.00; KN seconds. Motion accepted 6-0-1 with AA abstaining.

Account 14101-51300 for \$8,250.00; KN seconds. Motion accepted 6-0-1 with AA abstaining.

Account 14102-52000 for \$73,055.00; KN seconds. Motion accepted 6-0-1 with AA abstaining.

Account 14102-54000 for \$64,550.00; KN seconds. Motion accepted 6-0-1 with AA abstaining.

Account 14102-57000 for \$1,300.00; KN seconds. Motion accepted 6-0-1 with AA abstaining.

Town Road Maintenance – JL provided the committee with the 2013 roads report. Approximately 5.6 miles of road is reviewed each year for rating. Increases in materials are due to the increase in private road maintenance, and the additional roads that have been approved public roads over the past year. Draper Woods is the only development not yet turned over to the town. KS asked what would be on the horizon for repair, and what a reasonable length of expectancy between road repairs would be. Greg indicated that it could be between four and five years depending on traffic, weather, etc. Chapter 90 funds should be going to Champeaux Bridge which is in dire need of attention but due to the low vehicular traffic it has never made it to the top of the list. If the bridge is repaired it will cut down on sand and gravel supplies.

JL moved the motion to accept the Town Road Maintenance budget as follows:

Account 14212-52400 for \$205,000.00; KN seconds. Motion accepted 7-0-0.

Account 14212-52410 for \$6,000.00; KN seconds. Motion accepted 7-0-0.

Account 14212-52430 for \$253,000.00; KN seconds. Motion accepted 7-0-0.

Snow & Ice – With the recent reserve fund transfers to this account, KS asked if it would be prudent to increase the purchase of services by \$5,000.00 specifically for plowing the trail parking lots. Greg was agreeable if the committee was willing to increase it. Currently the town workers are doing the actual plowing rather than a contractor. KS asked if there was storage for the sand and salt. Greg told the committee that it was stored at the town barn and it was adequate storage for the annual supplies.

JL moved the motion to accept the Snow & Ice Budget as follows:

Account 14231-51300 for \$25,000.00; KN seconds. Motion accepted 7-0-0.

Account 14232-52000 for \$65,000.00; KN seconds. Motion accepted 7-0-0.

Account 14232-54000 for \$85,000.00; KN seconds. Motion accepted 7-0-0.

Recreation – Lynn Girouard was present and wanted to apologize to the committee for not being present at the budget kick off meeting on March 1. LG continued with an overview of the recreation department, and their plans for FY15. More events have been established which open up more activities for local residents such as a walking club, and the concerts on the common. LG would like to do more with the department and hopes to be able to do more organizing of such if the additional town fields are accepted. LG would like to explore the possibility of making this position full time once the fields do get sorted as it will present the potential to expand the scope of the department. She will work with the town administrator in the future. KN asked if the town sports were only the children's teams and what usage the fields got from those various teams. LG explained that the fields are available to all town leagues and not just the children's baseball and soccer leagues. Each league is given a percentage of usage for the fields.

KS told Lynn that the STA is available to help with funding as much of what the recreation does is to the benefit not only residents, but to visitors as well. Concerts on the common, in particular, bring in visitors staying at local hotels and some of the bands have their own "following". KN asked about advertising materials and where they were distributed so people visiting town could see what was happening and where. LG said she keeps the information center stocked as well as the local hotels. JL noted that, outside of the increase in the port-a-potty line item because of the newer handicap accessible receptacles, the budget is level funded at this time. It may need to be reviewed if the minimum wage is increased as it will affect the summer hires. JL moved the motion to accept the Recreation Budget as follows:

Account 16301-51130 for \$50,706.00; KN seconds. Motion accepted 7-0-0.

Account 16302-52000 for \$9,255.00; KN seconds. Motion accepted 7-0-0.

Account 16302-54000 for \$2,050.00; KN seconds. Motion accepted 7-0-0.

Account 16302-56320 for \$7,500.00; KN seconds. Motion accepted 7-0-0.

Account 16302-57000 for \$210.00; KN seconds. Motion accepted 7-0-0.

Joshua Hyde Library Operations - JL distributed copies of state aid to libraries from the Board of Library Commissioners website. It explains the criteria needed to determine state funding. The three main requirements are hours of operation (based on population), MAR, and materials expenditure (also based on population). JL stated that the department head salary increase is due to a recently executed contract by the Library Trustees giving Becky an increase of 2% bringing up her salary to \$66,467.00. The budget further reflects the 2.5% COLA for a total of \$68,128.68. This was noted in the town administrator's budget memorandum. KN wanted to know who negotiated the contract and what communication was made with the town. JL noted that it was the Library Trustees but was not sure as to the communication with the town and would check into it. This did come up in JL's discussion with the librarian, but since it was a contract, even the librarian was of the impression that it was binding regardless of the town's involvement. JL noted that she would clarify this, as well. There was discussion around the Trustees and how they funded the library. KN was curious to know how many trustees were on the board and if they were appointed.

JL confirmed the salaries and wages line item includes the additional headcount of 27 hours at grade 4, also in the TA budget. The additional position will be \$23,452.00. JL will confirm if this new role will be solely for the

children's room as it was not clear. Additionally, JL noted slight increases in internet and C/W MARS. Mileage increased as the town fleet is not always available for Becky to use to attend monthly meetings. The additional employee will also be required to attend training and seminars. JL moved the motion to accept the Joshua Hyde Library Operations Budget as follows:

Account 16102-52000 for \$15,840.00; KN seconds. Motion accepted 7-0-0.

Account 16102-54000 for \$3,300.00; KN seconds. Motion accepted 7-0-0.

Account 16102-55820 for \$84,595.00; KN seconds. Motion accepted 7-0-0.

Account 16102-57000 for \$2,165.00; KN seconds. Motion accepted 7-0-0.

Joshua Hyde Library Building – JL confirmed that the library is working on their capital budget request for complete sky window replacement and gutter repairs to prevent further damage to the building due mostly to water leaks. The only changes to the budget from last year are for propane and electricity costs. JL noted that Becky did have concerns about the quality of cleaning from the cleaning contractors and she asked that it be noted to the finance committee. As a matter of process the matter will have to go to the town administrator. JL moved the motion to accept the Joshua Hyde Library Building Budget as follows:

Account 11962-52000 for \$25,072.00; KN seconds. Motion accepted 7-0-0.

Account 11962-54000 for \$950.00; KN seconds. Motion accepted 7-0-0.

Old Business:

KS noted that he confirmed with the finance director that only elected members are eligible for the town health insurance. This was in regards to a question that came up during the Stipend Study Committee at the March 13th meeting.

KN confirmed that the assessor's administrative assistant was a grade 2 and was moved to grade 4, which was a reason for the 4.8% increase to the salaries/wages account. KN also confirmed that the operating system used on the new computers will be Windows 7. In addition she confirmed that the three wireless access points are located at the center office building and the safety complex. The safety complex has two points; center office building has one. These were also questions that came out of the March 13th meeting. KN moved the motion to accept the Information Technology Budget as follows:

Account 11552-52000 for \$70,923.00; JL seconds. Motion accepted 7-0-0.

Account 11552-54000 for \$5,500.00; JL seconds. Motion accepted 7-0-0.

Account 11552-58080 for \$25,000.00; JL seconds. Motion accepted 7-0-0.

KN moved the motion to adjourn the meeting; JL seconds. Meeting adjourned at 9:15pm.

/jml