

Sturbridge Finance Committee
Meeting Minutes
March 20, 2014 ~ Town Hall
7:00pm

Call to Order:

The chairman called the meeting to order at 7:00pm with the following finance committee members present: Bob Jepson (BJ), Kathy Neal (KN), Prescott (Scott) Arndt (SA), Alex Athans (AA), and Kevin Smith, Chairman (KS), Joni Light (JL) arrived at 7:03pm,
Absent: Larry Morrison (LM), Mike Serio (MS), Arnold Wilson (AW)
Guests: Tom Chamberlain (TC), Jean Boubon (JB)

Line Item Budget – Alex Athans, Liaison:

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

Tree Warden – AA invited Tom Chamberlain to review his budget for the committee. TC shared that they planted over 250 trees with much of the money they received from the tornado. Over the years these trees will need attention and care and he will seek funding at that time. The average cost of care is approximately \$60 per tree. TC currently has a graduate student working on a tree inventory of the town using free software through the Forest Service that is to be completed this fiscal year. This may prove quite useful in the future as it calculates storm damage and can estimate a cost of repair. The town should have a new maintenance plan by FY16 as a result.

KS noted that last year the tree budget received \$7,000.00 from Betterment and was curious to know if TC would continue to seek funding from them. TC was concerned that the funding may not be available as requests are not supposed to be recurring in nature, and the Betterment funding makes up approximately half of his budget. TC continues to maintain professional memberships which are recognized in the slight increase in the line item budget. Mileage includes his travel around the town. KS also mentioned the recent RFT for dues and mileage and was curious to get TC's opinion on if the amount in the budget was adequate. TC would welcome the additional funds to avoid any RFT's in the future.

AA moved the motion to accept the Tree Warden Budget as follows:

Account 12941-51120 for \$2,180.00; BJ seconds. Motion accepted 6-0-0.

Account 12942-52000 for \$9,430.00; BJ seconds. Motion accepted 6-0-0.

Account 12942-54000 for \$650.00; BJ seconds. Motion accepted 6-0-0.

Account 12942-57000 for \$1,200.00; BJ seconds. Motion accepted 6-0-0.

Town Planner – AA invited Jean Boubon to review her budget. KS first asked if she had any warrants that the committee can expect and she indicated that they have a few still being worked. JB was happy to report that GIS services were going well and they've helped to do mapping of the town trails for the trails committee, as well as fire hydrant mapping for the fire department. KS asked about her equipment and how it was holding up, specifically the plotter. JB reported that she has a scheduled maintenance check which will cost approximately \$500.00. This should hold it for longer usage and is better than the replacement value which is approximately \$10,000.00. BJ asked how the Gateway Project was progressing. There is a meeting planned to discuss and it seems to be going well, according to JB. KN asked about the CMRPC Assessment, and was curious to know if planning board members attended conferences. JB explained the brownfield assessments and how it was based upon population, and confirmed that board members attend conferences and seminars.

AA moved the motion to accept the Town Planner Budget as follows:

Account 11751-51100 for zero dollars; BJ seconds. Motion accepted 6-0-0.
Account 11751-51120 for \$74,660.00; BJ seconds. Motion accepted 6-0-0.
Account 11752-52000 for \$31,938.00; BJ seconds. Motion accepted 6-0-0.
Account 11752-54000 for \$2,400.00; BJ seconds. Motion accepted 6-0-0.
Account 11752-56000 for \$2,346.00; BJ seconds. Motion accepted 6-0-0.
Account 11752-57000 for \$938.00; BJ seconds. Motion accepted 6-0-0.

Zoning Board of Appeals – AA stated that the budget for the ZBA is level funded from last fiscal year and consists of conference charges and mileage for the board members who use their own vehicles. JB didn't have anything more to add.

AA moved the motion to accept the Zoning Board of Appeals Budget as follows:

Account 11762-52000 for \$500.00; BJ seconds. Motion accepted 6-0-0.
Account 11762-54000 for \$350.00; BJ seconds. Motion accepted 6-0-0.
Account 11752-57000 for \$90.00; BJ seconds. Motion accepted 6-0-0.

Conservation Commission – AA stated that the majority of changes come from the supplies account, which were slightly reduced, and the computer workstation one-time request. JL asked if there was a desk available from surplus town furniture, and what happened to the "old" furniture from the departments. JB shared her knowledge that there was nothing available from the town, and that is the first place to check before having to order new. As for the old furniture, it is offered up to other departments before the TA disperses it according to state process. Currently the assistant in the office does not have any workstation or desk, and is working on a file cabinet surface. KN questioned the training and was curious to know if it was only for Glenn or the board, as well. It appears to be for both.

AA moved the motion to accept the Conservation Commission Budget as follows:

Account 11711-51100 for zero dollars; BJ seconds. Motion accepted 6-0-0.
Account 11711-51120 for \$46,292.00; BJ seconds. Motion accepted 6-0-0.
Account 11712-52000 for \$8,970.00; BJ seconds. Motion accepted 6-0-0.
Account 11712-54000 for \$1,400.00; BJ seconds. Motion accepted 6-0-0.
Account 11712-57000 for \$660.00; BJ seconds. Motion accepted 6-0-0.

Building Inspector – AA reviewed the supplies account first and noted that the inspector was asking for code books for a one-time cost. BJ asked if the code books were up to date, and how many books are being requested. It appears that there would be one for each inspector, but AA would go back and confirm. KS noted the initial mileage request from the inspector, which was high, and added that the town administrator's request was more aligned. BJ and JL added that the building inspector has access to the town fleet and should be taking advantage of it. AA stated that the inspector wanted to increase the hours for his assistant so there is someone in the office during the day at all times. In addition he was requesting a part time inspector to be used on a consulting basis. He is currently using the expertise from the Oxford inspector. KS noted that if he was requesting this service it should be included as a Purchase of Service and not a salary/wage item.

BJ stated that the town went from a part-time inspector to full-time, and that the reason was to incorporate the facilities management piece into the description. This inspector has been with the town for not more than six months and his requests for additional hours for the assistant, and an additional part-time inspector may be too soon to present. KS said he would like to understand the town administrator's explanation on the department head salary. JL noted that registrations went up but asked if it should be in the Other Charges account; perhaps inconsistent with other department budgets. AA said he would confirm with the finance director.

In addition to these personnel requests, AA shared that the inspector is seeking additional furniture at one time cost to the town. The furniture includes file cabinets and literature racks, as well as a laser printer and a camera. JL asked why he couldn't share the camera with the few that are in the other departments, such as BOH and conservation. With a fairly detailed view of the budget BJ asked that the committee hold off on voting until many questions are answered.

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Minutes of March 11, 2014 were reviewed and approved as amended. KN moved the motion; AA seconds. Motion accepted 5-0-1.

New Business:

KS wanted the committee to confirm that they received the presentation from Deb Boyd for the Tantasqua School Committee meeting on March 18. As for the bus, the town will pay for the additional bus out of free cash and KS confirmed this with the finance director. The Burgess budget and the Tantasqua budget will need to be reduced; Tantasqua transport assessment will be reduced by \$23,704.00 and Burgess will be reduced by \$40,000.00. JL asked what will happen if the committee does not vote for the Burgess School budget figures. KS said he would like to consult with town counsel for more accurate details of the process. The school committees may have to go back and revote the portion for the buses with the town paying for the bus, but not sure on if the committee does not approve the remaining budget.

KS shared the librarian contract with the committee and noted that Shaun was looking into it with town counsel to see if the town is legally binding to accept the contract. It will also be good for all to understand the exact process. KS also noted that the finance director is conducting interviews for a recording secretary for the finance committee.

KN revisited her open budget items and had information with regard to the salaries/wages for the Board of Assessors. She confirmed that the administrative assistant in the office is working 25 hours, and that the part-time data collections position is 18 to 20 hours per week, which makes up for the 4.8% increase. KN moved the motion to accept the Board of Assessors Budget Account 11411-51130 for \$41,766.00; BJ seconds. Motion accepted 6-0-0.

AA moved the motion to adjourn the meeting; BJ seconds. Meeting adjourned at 8:32pm.

/jml