

Sturbridge Finance Committee
Meeting Minutes
March 25, 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), Joni Light (JL); Prescott (Scott) Arndt (SA), Alex Athans (AA), and Kevin Smith, Chairman (KS), Larry Morrison (LM) arrived at 7:18pm

Absent: Arnold Wilson (AW)

Guests: Alyssa Rusiecki (AR); Mary Blanchard (MB)

Line Item Budget – Scott Arndt, Liaison:

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

Landfill/Recycling Center – SA invited Alyssa Rusiecki (AR) to join in to give an overview of the landfill. AR explained the hazmat funding, which is for five hours per month or approximately \$210.00 per month. Historically the fire department paid for the hazmat position. AR feels it would be more expensive to outsource this work. The town is only in need of one tarp cover this year for a reduction in supplies over last year. The salary item shows an increase of 1.7% which is a blended rate for the position that is paid out of both the Landfill/Recycling Center and the DPW.

SA moved the motion to accept the Landfill/Recycling Budget as follows:

Account 14301-51130 for \$100,832.00; BJ seconds. Motion accepted 7-0-0.

Account 14301-51300 for \$1,500.00; BJ seconds. Motion accepted 7-0-0.

Account 14302-52000 for \$166,672.00; BJ seconds. Motion accepted 7-0-0.

Account 14302-54000 for \$15,270.00; BJ seconds. Motion accepted 7-0-0.

Board of Health – SA noted that the original department request was seeking additional funding in the salaries account. AR stated she was seeking additional hours for clerical help in the office to cover more operational hours. KS asked if the additional hours for the clerk would be solely for taking minutes, and if the clerk would also attend the meetings. After further discussion, AR stated that the additional four hours being requested would be solely to cover meeting minutes, which are currently being done by Alyssa. This would free up more time for AR to do BOH Health Agent tasks. The clerk would not attend meetings but would listen to recordings of the meetings. MS asked about the current number of hours the office is opened, which AR responded to be 35 hours. JL stated that last year the agent salary was increased significantly, and part of the rationale included the additional work done on taking meeting minutes, and was a task of the agent. AR confirmed. KS wanted to know why the town administrator rejected the request for additional hours and additional health inspector. KN asked about the frequency of the board meetings. AR noted that meetings are generally every other week.

KS asked about how the revolving fund was working with last year's change in utilizing the funds. AR said it was working well. The nurse is currently working on communicable disease and they are staying on budget. Follow ups are continuous by the nurse. AR explained how the nurse was put into place once the Harrington Health contract ended in October, which is why there are still funds in the revolving fund; funding for the nurse is to come out of this fund. KA asked how the fund was subsidized. AR explained the various fines and fees, such as the fees for the tattoo convention at the Host Hotel each year, temporary food permits, title 5 permits. KN further asked about the lake testing and AR said it went well with one lake association not participating.

MS asked about the flu shots and who was executing that task. AR said that Rite Aid is not doing the senior center at no cost to the town because they accept Medicare, and for those not covered, they take a fee direct.

SA moved the motion to accept the Board of Health Budget as follows:

Account 15101-51100 for zero dollars; BJ seconds. Motion accepted 8-0-0.

Account 15101-51120 for \$66,189.00; BJ seconds. Motion accepted 8-0-0.

Account 15102-52000 for \$2,390.00; BJ seconds. Motion accepted 8-0-0.

Account 15102-54000 for \$1,938.00; BJ seconds. Motion accepted 8-0-0.

Account 15102-57000 for \$1,370.00; BJ seconds. Motion accepted 8-0-0.

Community Health – SA moved the motion to accept the Community Health Budget as follows:

Account 115152-53850 for \$4,000.00; BJ seconds. Motion accepted 8-0-0.

Inspections & Testing – SA moved the motion to accept the Inspections & Testing Budget as follows:

Account 115202-53150 for \$19,610.00; BJ seconds. Motion accepted 8-0-0.

Old Business:

KS wanted to review the line item budget book to ensure items have been approved and voted, and to also take a pulse on what is still outstanding for discussion.

With AR still present, KS asked AR if there had been any discussion over the DPW potentially overseeing the Landfill/Recycling Center. AR said she spoke to Shaun and the board to look into a study committee. However, further discussion revealed that this was specifically a professional review about the potential effects to closing and capping the landfill. KS clarified and AR indicated that the BOH would still have to have operational jurisdiction over the landfill, especially as it pertains with the health and safety of the residents and the environment. There would continue to be coordination between the DPW and the BOH, regardless of who took over the management of the operation. The contracting of the leachate, for example, is performed by a shared employee from the DPW and BOH.

New Business:

KS announced that a recording secretary for the finance committee was hired and will begin on April 1, 2014. There were additional questions and comments around the conference costs. KS explained how there were state conferences available for anyone to attend if they wished, and there are two meetings annually just for town finance members. The majority of the funds in the purchase of services account go to the printing of the budget binders for town meeting, however.

As a result KS asked to review the finance committee line item budget and move the motion to accept the Finance Committee Budget as follows:

Account 11311-51130 for \$2,534.00; BJ seconds. Motion accepted 8-0-0.

Account 11312-52000 for \$3,400.00; BJ seconds. Motion accepted 8-0-0.

Account 11312-57000 for \$200.00; BJ seconds. Motion accepted 8-0-0.

LM moved the motion to reconsider line 3, Account 11221-51130 from the Board of Selectman Budget; KN seconds. Motion to reconsider was accepted 7-0-1 with SA abstaining. LM stated the \$923.00 item was added to the budget as a placeholder for the GSSC recording secretary. It was being held until such time that the GSSC had a complete board. It is not clear if the GSSC will continue.

JL moved the motion to remove the \$923.00 from Account 11221-51130 and vote for zero dollars; LM seconds. Motion accepted 8-0-0.

BJ stated that the Police and Fire Departments' budgets will be on hold for another week or more due to other commitments and priorities on their end. KS asked if the Fire Chief was still the one who administered the operation of the safety complex, which BJ confirmed. BJ explained that the chief had requested more funding for the oil as he is currently working beyond the designated bulk amount, and is paying fair market price. JL and KN voiced concerns for the additional \$11,000.00 request. This year was one of the coldest winters on record for Worcester County and understandably the additional oil this year is justified. BJ stated that repairs are still on-going to the 30 year old building, such as floor repairs budgeted in FY14.

BJ moved the motion to accept the Safety Complex Budget as follows:
Account 11972-52000 for \$100,320.00; SA seconds. Motion accepted 8-0-0.
Account 11972-54000 for \$7,500.00; SA seconds. Motion accepted 8-0-0.

The next budget discussion was the salary line item for the Building Inspector Budget. AA got answers from many questions from the town administrator, and he had confirmed that the building inspector is not continuing after March. In fact, MB confirmed that his last day was March 17, 2014. The salary line item is not an increase for the position, rather a shift of funds from the Purchase of Service Account to the Salary Account. Initially the funding was sitting in this account because the town did not have a building inspector and it was being contracted.

AA moved the motion to accept the Building Inspector budget as follows:
Account 12411-51120 for \$71,750.00; BJ seconds. Motion accepted 8-0-0.
Account 12412-52000 for \$1,620.00; BJ seconds. Motion accepted 8-0-0.
Account 12412-54000 for \$3,317.00; BJ seconds. Motion accepted 8-0-0.
Account 12412-57000 for \$700.00; BJ seconds. Motion accepted 8-0-0.

JL was prepared to discuss the Veteran's Services Budget. JL confirmed the position is part-time and is a member of the Worcester County Veteran's Association. He currently works with the six veterans' on the town rolls. With additional visits and work being made to find employment and get the veteran's self-sufficient, the Veteran's Agent would be amenable to the town giving additional hours to the position as he puts in more hours. However, he's happy with the work and enjoys working with the veterans'. There was discussion around the American Legion's payment and KS asked if it was the Legion who requested the increase. JL confirmed that it was the Legion's request. Additionally, JL noted that 75% of the funds for veteran's benefits are reimbursed to the town in the following year, as well as the cost of the flags for cemeteries from the purchase of services account.

JL moved the motion to accept the Veteran's Services Budget as follows:
Account 15431-51120 for \$4,439.00; BJ seconds. Motion accepted 8-0-0.
Account 15432-52000 for \$250.00; BJ seconds. Motion accepted 8-0-0.
Account 15432-54000 for \$175.00; BJ seconds. Motion accepted 8-0-0.
Account 15432-54100 for \$1,600.00; BJ seconds. Motion accepted 8-0-0.
Account 15432-54400 for \$2,782.00; BJ seconds. Motion accepted 8-0-0.
Account 15432-57000 for \$500.00; BJ seconds. Motion accepted 8-0-0.
Account 15432-57700 for \$52,000.00; BJ seconds. Motion accepted 8-0-0.

AA reviewed the open line item on the Conservation Commission Budget. He confirmed the 4.2% increase on the salaries/wages line is due to the recently filled position was at a higher rate of pay.

AA moved the motion to accept line 48, Account 11711-51130 for \$8,668.00; BJ seconds. Motion accepted 8-0-0.

KS asked JL if the library trustees would be available to attend a meeting and field questions from the committee. In addition JL informed the committee that the finance director was willing to attend the April 1 meeting to talk about the salaries and any other question from the committee.

KS confirmed that the Thursday, March 27, 2014 meeting will be cancelled.

Meeting Minutes:

Minutes of March 18, 2014 were reviewed and approved as amended. AA moved the motion; KN seconds. Motion accepted 7-0-1 with BJ abstaining.

KN moved the motion to adjourn; BJ seconds. Meeting adjourned at 8:59pm.

/jml