

Sturbridge Finance Committee
Meeting Minutes
March 17, 2015 ~ Sturbridge Town Hall
7:00pm

Call to Order:

The chairman called the meeting to order at 7:00pm with the following committee members present: Kevin Smith, Chair (KS); Joni Light (JL); Kathy Neal (KN); Mike Serio (MS); Larry Morrison (LM); Bob Jepson (BJ); absent Eric Perez (EP); Arnold Wilson (AW) and Alex Athans (AA)
Guests: David Zinther (DZ)

Eric Perez arrived at 7:04pm.
Arnold Wilson arrived at 7:26pm.

Reserve Fund Transfer – Police Chief Ford

Request for \$700.00 was made by Chief Ford for additional expenses; tolls, memberships, dues and meal reimbursements from the Reserve Fund to Other Charges. Outlined in the original request Chief Ford indicates unanticipated increases in current membership’s fees, EZ Pass increases and meal reimbursements not adequately budgeted in FY15. BJ asked why the police are joining the Hamilton Rod & Gun Club if the police have a shooting range, and also wanted to know why the town barn area is no longer “feasible”. LM suggested that it may be that the police cannot discharge patrol rifles at the Safety Complex range, or perhaps the indoor range is not long enough. KS commented that he too, would like to have these questions answered and would follow up with Chief Ford.

LM moved the motion to transfer \$700.00 from the Reserve Fund to the Police Other Charges Account 12102-57000 as requested; BJ seconds. Motion accepted 7-0-0.

Reserve Fund Transfer – Fire Chief Zinther

Request for \$2,500.00 was made by Chief Zinther for additional funds due to unforeseen office supply expenditures at the Safety Complex. JL asked if this expense was related to the \$2,300.00 request for office re-allocation requested in the FY16 budget, or if it was truly for supplies as the amount funded in both FY14 and FY15 was \$7,500.00. KN asked if what the supplies category entailed. BJ suggested he ask Chief Zinther to attend the next meeting on March 19.

Budget Overview – Kathy Neal

Accountant

KS asked the committee to hold off on all salaries/wages line item budgets until all other categories have been voted on and discussed. KN noted that she was waiting for step increase details from the finance director. FY16 budget for the accountant has slight increases in registration fees due to additional training and government testing for the new accountant, and a slight increase for costs to forms.

KN moved the motion to accept the Town Accountant Budget line items as follows:

Line 18	11352-52000	\$1,100.00	Purchase of Services	JL seconds; Motion accepted 7-0-0
Line 19	11352-54000	\$900.00	Supplies	JL seconds; Motion accepted 7-0-0
Line 20	11352-57000	\$625.00	Other Charges	JL seconds; Motion accepted 7-0-0

Assessors

KN noted that most items were level funded due to some categories being decreased, for example the cost for forms decreased as most government forms are available online and can be printed in-house; MLS software and Registry of Deeds costs have decreased, and the revaluation is done over a three year period to defray additional budget increases.

KN moved the motion to accept the Assessors Budget line items as follows:

Line 24	11412-52000	\$49,375.00	Purchase of Services	JL seconds; Motion accepted 7-0-0
Line 25	11412-54000	\$1,700.00	Supplies	JL seconds; Motion accepted 7-0-0
Line 26	11412-57000	\$1,708.00	Other Charges	JL seconds; Motion accepted 7-0-0

Finance Director

KN noted that this budget was also level funded except for the maintenance budget for the envelope stuffer. A new machine is requested out of the capital budget program for FY17.

KN moved the motion to accept the Finance Director Budget line items as follows:

Line 29	11452-52000	\$7,150.00	Purchase of Services	JL seconds; Motion accepted 7-0-0
Line 30	11452-54000	\$7,250.00	Supplies	JL seconds; Motion accepted 7-0-0
Line 31	11452-57000	\$1,575.00	Other Charges	JL seconds; Motion accepted 7-0-0

Continued * Reserve Fund Transfer – Fire Chief Zinther

At this point in the budget discussion, Chief Zinther (DZ) stopped into the meeting after watching on community network. He was kind enough to answer questions from earlier on his Reserve Fund Transfer request. He noted there were two specific items he was looking to fund. One was the springs for the garage doors. Under the guidance of the town accountant it was suggested to purchase these items out of the Purchase of Services account. One set of springs cost \$600.00 and there would be a need for two sets at a cost of \$1,200.00. The other additional expense was the calcium chloride for the walkways along the Safety Complex. This was unforeseen due to the extreme winter. JL asked why the DPW was not providing this for the building. KS noted that all buildings have this cost into their own budgets, and that the DPW only provided rock salt which is different. KS was curious to know how often the springs had to be replaced, while MS was also curious to know if they were on a replacement schedule. DZ confirmed that the springs are replaced only when they break, and how often they break are dependent on the amount of use. MS also asked why the difference in office supplies for “fire department” and “police department” in previous years yet no longer in FY16. DZ noted he could not answer as he was not present during those budget years.

MS moved the motion to accept the transfer of \$2,500.00 from the Reserve Fund to the Public Safety Supplies account 11972-54000; BJ seconds. Motion accepted 7-0-0.

Central Purchasing

KN noted the increase in telephone was due to the need for internet (data plan) for town tablets used in the field, and also included in the budget is a cell phone for the newly appointed town administrator. Water/sewer was up for anticipated increase. KS asked if this budget was based on an estimate or if the actuals were factored into the sewer increase. MS was curious to know why the increase was anticipated; is usage down? KS and KN were both unsure. KS suggested the question be put forth to the DPW director when his budgets are reviewed. LM commented that the central purchasing account may not truly be a town wide budget if other departments are requesting and funding similar office items, such as toner. It would appear that the cost may actually be higher than what is budgeted in central purchasing. Further, if the town is part of a consortium of towns to purchase items in bulk perhaps one should look into buying office supplies in larger quantities to get a better price. MS noted that some prices can be transparent and some office items, such as toner, have a shelf life and can't stay in storage too long. KN noted that the town cleaning contract is higher as the windows in the town buildings are in need of cleaning. The slate roof maintenance plan may or may not be affected after the repairs are made to the senior center building. MS asked if the gasoline budget included diesel; the majority felt it was included. BJ further asked if the school buses were included in this budget, which they are not, according to AW.

KN moved the motion to accept Central Purchasing Budget line items as follows:

Line 180	19152-52310	\$27,000.00	Telephone	JL seconds; Motion accepted 7-0-0
Line 181	19152-52315	\$21,000.00	Postage	JL seconds; Motion accepted 7-0-0
Line 182	19152-54800	\$178,500.00	Gasoline	JL seconds; Motion accepted 7-0-0
Line 183	19152-52320	\$10,000.00	Water/Sewer	JL seconds; Motion accepted 7-0-0
Line 184	19152-52325	\$49,000.00	Town Building Cleaning	JL seconds; Motion accepted 7-0-0
Line 185	19152-54200	\$6,100.00	Copiers	JL seconds; Motion accepted 7-0-0
Line 186	19152-53420	\$10,000.00	Slate Roof Maintenance Plan	JL seconds; Motion accepted 7-0-0

Debt Service

KN noted that the pumper truck will come off the budget in FY17, and Burgess still has approximately \$2M to be bonded yet the finance director expects to confirm in the next week.

KN moved the motion to accept the Debt Service Principal Budget line items as follows:

154	17102-59193	\$785,000.00	Burgess Elementary Project	JL seconds; Motion accepted 7-0-0
155	17102-59188	\$0.00	Dump Truck/Loader	JL seconds; Motion accepted 7-0-0
156	17102-59189	\$35,000.00	Burgess Schematic	JL seconds; Motion accepted 7-0-0
157	17102-59190	\$0.00	Dump Truck	JL seconds; Motion accepted 7-0-0
158	17102-59191	\$0.00	Pumper Truck	JL seconds; Motion accepted 7-0-0
159	17102-59192	\$175,000.00	Town Hall	JL seconds; Motion accepted 7-0-0

KN moved the motion to accept the Debt Service Interest Budget line items as follows:

160	17502-59250	\$25,000.00	Short-Term Interest	JL seconds; Motion accepted 7-0-0
161	17205-59188	\$0.00	Dump Truck/Loader	JL seconds; Motion accepted 7-0-0
162	17502-59189	\$525.00	Burgess Schematic	JL seconds; Motion accepted 7-0-0
163	17502-59190	\$0.00	Dump Truck	JL seconds; Motion accepted 7-0-0
164	17502-59193	\$415,427.00	Burgess Elementary School	JL seconds; Motion accepted 7-0-0
165	17502-59191	\$0.00	Pumper Truck	JL seconds; Motion accepted 7-0-0
166	17502-59192	\$93,493.00	Town Hall	JL seconds; Motion accepted 7-0-0

Unclassified

KS asked if there were any “unknowns” in this budget, such as the group insurance. KN noted that it may be updated once the rates are given to the finance director. Also the street lights contract has not yet been confirmed. MS asked if the town was using or planning to use LED lights as it may be more cost effective in the long run. LM was curious to know if the legal fees in this budget were the different from what is budgeted for town counsel. KN stated that these fees are more specialized, for example, may be for tax liens and often uses a different counsel. KS asked if the committee preferred to defer voting until more information on outstanding rates were confirmed and the committee agreed.

Information Technology

KN stated the IT support from Tantasqua was increased to be more realistic. The town workers have been using the support and it’s working very well for the town as they actively use this service. For supplies, the firewalls and wireless access points are one time charges for the DPW and Senior Center, with the additional cost for technical equipment is for the Barracuda back up software for the police department. The computer replacement program is based upon a five year plan and includes additional funds for printer replacement plus a shared laptop purchase for the assessor and the finance director.

KN moves the motion to accept Information Technology Budget line items as follows:

Line 33	11552-52000	\$78,723.00	Purchase of Services	JL seconds; Motion accepted 7-0-0
Line 34	11552-54000	\$8,700.00	Supplies	JL seconds; Motion accepted 7-0-0
Line 35	11552-58080	\$34,500.00	Capital Outlay	JL seconds; Motion accepted 7-0-0

The chair asked if anyone was prepared to be on Thursday's schedule. JL commented she'd be reaching out to her departments this week; LM noted same; and AW felt he could present the budgets for education on March 19 as both budgets have now been approved by the two school's committees.

Old Business

KS confirmed that the ad for the clerical position is back in the newspapers as the one candidate who applied has declined.

JL updated the committee on the STA and how the STA was planning to put together a budget for FY16 to be presented to the finance committee. KS noted that the general bylaws have a deadline for all warrants and that it has passed. JL will communicate this to the STA chair as he was wanting to get the budget together, this time by the STA, and presented to the finance committee. Additionally, JL noted that the BOS were presenting the town with a warrant article for the MOU (Memorandum of Understanding) that was voted out by the residents at the Special Town Meeting in February.

Motion to adjourn the meeting was moved by BJ; LM seconds. Motion accepted 7-0-0. Meeting adjourned at 8:16pm.

/jml