

Sturbridge Finance Committee
Meeting Minutes
April 7, 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); Larry Morrison (LM); Mike Serio (MS); and Arnold Wilson (AW); Alex Athans (AA); Bob Jepson (BJ). Absent: Eric Perez (EP).
Alex Athans (AA) arrived at 7:04pm.

Meeting Minutes

The meeting minutes of February 19, 2015 were reviewed. MS moved the motion to approve the minutes as amended; AA seconds. Motion accepted 6-0-2 (BJ & AW abstaining)

The meeting minutes of March 31, 2015 were reviewed. KN moved the motion to approve the minutes as amended; MS seconds. Motion accepted 7-0-1 (AA abstaining)

Reserve Fund Transfer Request – Library Building

Before review of the request, KS confirmed the balance of the Reserve Fund to be \$83,018.00 not including the requests set before the committee this evening. KS noted that this request from Becky Plimpton, Joshua Hyde Librarian, was to cover the usage of propane for FY15 and not addressing or related to the propane repair issues previously discussed. The other issue with the valve repairs will be reviewed separately. Since it will need to be repaired sooner rather than later, a Reserve Fund Transfer will be forthcoming to have it repaired in this FY. This will also cover unforeseen gutter repairs and HVAC maintenance, and electricity and trash removal overages.

MS moved the motion to approve \$5,500.00 from the Reserve Fund to the Library Building Purchase of Services account 11962-52000; LM seconds. Motion accepted 8-0-0.

Reserve Fund Transfer Request – 8 Brookfield Road

KS stated that this request is for the fuel for the building which was previously paid for by the tenant who has since vacated the premises.

LM moved the motion to approve \$2,500.00 from the Reserve Fund to the 8 Brookfield Road Purchase of Services account 11985-52000; MS seconds. Motion accepted 8-0-0.

Reserve Fund Transfer Request – Fire Department

KS stated that this request from David Zinther, Fire Chief, is for necessary plumbing to be in compliance with 310 CMR 22.22 by the town water department. Specifically, the hose connection on the apparatus floor does not meet the standards. LM asked if the building should be inventoried to see what else is in need of repair or what may fall into “non-compliance”, or perhaps the new town administrator could request a code compliance for all the town buildings rather than repair on an as needed basis. KS noted that there was a report done on the town hall and center office building a few years back for that reason, and agreed it may need to be revisited, especially where the buildings are aging.

MS moved the motion to approve \$6,614.95 from the Reserve Fund to the Public Safety Complex Purchase of Services account 11972-52000; AW seconds. Motion accepted 8-0-0.

Budget Overview – Alex Athans

Building Inspector

AA noted that the building inspector does not have any issue with the budget as put forward by the town administrator. Salary is lower than previous year as the current building inspector is part-time.

AA moved the motion to approve the line item budget for the Building Inspector as follows:

Line 86	12411-51120	\$55,485.00	Department Head Salary	MS seconds; motion accepted 8-0-0
Line 87	12411-51130	\$25,362.00	Salaries/Wages	MS seconds; motion accepted 8-0-0
Line 88	12412-52000	\$1,620.00	Purchase of Services	MS seconds; motion accepted 8-0-0
Line 89	12412-54000	\$1,600.00	Supplies	MS seconds; motion accepted 8-0-0
Line 90	12412-57000	\$700.00	Other Charges	MS seconds; motion accepted 8-0-0

Tree Warden

AA received details from the tree warden on the Emerald Ash Borer. AA also confirmed that the tree warden was aware of the water trough fund, and the Joshua Hyde fund, but he was of the impression that the funds were only to plant trees on or around the common, and not necessarily for maintenance of trees on the common. AA did say that Tom Chamberland confirmed the beetle is not yet in Sturbridge, and that the only way to confirm the presence is to cut down the tree and inspect or wait for the tree to die. BJ wanted to know if it was better to protect the tree or to kill the tree. KS asked if the tree warden had any information on the effects of the chemicals on the environment and ground water with the majority of residents dependent on wells for their drinking water. Since the majority of the committee had not yet received the details on what was sent via email KS suggested to read the materials and take up voting at another meeting.

KS moved the discussion to the Annual Town Meeting warrant, still reviewing file “draft ATM Warrant 3-19-2015-2” Word document.

Turning to Article 15 – Revolving Funds, discussion on the “Pay as you Throw Program” which has a recent request to increase from \$10,000.00 to \$20,000.00. KS confirmed that this means the maximum expenditure from this fund would be \$20,000.00, yet this fund has already exceeded the \$10,000.00 maximum this year. A vote from the BOS and the finance committee can change the authorization to a revolving fund. LM asked if the usage was being tracked by the total number of bags being purchased. KS was unsure how the usage of the program was calculated. AW noted that the revenues from this program is supposed to go to an account that would be set aside for the capping of the landfill, so when you pay the town to have something disposed of that money goes to this landfill fund, but he was unaware of any accounting of these details.

KS confirmed that the BOS accepted the rates for water and sewer as put forth to them by the finance director and the DPW director at their April 6 meeting.

Article 16 Sturbridge Tourist Association brought more discussion on the impending budget and revised “Memo of Understanding”. LM stated that the MOU that he read made for a strong statement for a contract and not an MOU. JL noted that the STA would be discussing the budget categories at their April 15 meeting, and ultimately the chair would present the approved budget to the finance committee at a later meeting date. JL also noted that the bathroom budget was now up to \$15,000.00, as opposed to what she thought was an equal amount from STA and Betterment. Currently Betterment budgets for \$5,000.00; while this year the STA budgeted \$8,500.00. KS suggested JL reach out to the finance director for more details on how the bathrooms were paid, who paid what, and how it was done.

MS reminded the committee that he was expecting the CPC board at the Thursday meeting to discuss Articles 8 and 9.

Old Business

AW confirmed the contract for the TRHS was expected to be ratified by the end of April. He also confirmed the owned fleet as: 19 mini vans; 13 small buses; and 5 15-passenger vans. The school committee was also looking to refinance the Tantasqua Debt which would be approximately \$1M, with 75% going to the state, and 25% spread across the 5 towns over 5 years.

Motion to adjourn the meeting was moved by BJ; MS seconds. Motion accepted 8-0-0. Meeting adjourned at 8:46pm.

/jml