

Sturbridge Finance Committee
Meeting Minutes
April 12, 2016 ~ Town Hall
7:00pm

Call to Order:

The chairman called the meeting to order at 7:00pm with the following finance committee members present: Kathy Neal, Chairman (KN), Joni Light (JL); Kevin Smith; Larry Morrison (LM); Jim Waddick (JW); Suzanne Smiley (SS); Mike Serio (MS)

Line Item Budget – Board of Assessors – Suzanne Smiley

SS confirmed with the Finance Director that the increase in salaries is a step in grade as well as the 3% merit increase. GIS/Web Hosing is in the Planner's budget, with interim adjustments moving to a warrant article. All other increases are for annual cost growths for contracts. KN clarified that the Revaluation is what is going on a warrant article.

SS moves the motion to accept the Board of Assessors Budget as follows:

21	11411-51100	Board Salaries	\$0.00	<u>KS seconds; motion accepted 7-0-0.</u>
22	11411-51120	Department Head Salary	\$67,257.00	<u>KS seconds; motion accepted 7-0-0.</u>
23	11411-51130	Salaries/Wages	\$46,076.00	<u>KS seconds; motion accepted 7-0-0.</u>
24	11412-52000	Purchase of Services	\$18,895.00	<u>KS seconds; motion accepted 7-0-0.</u>
25	11412-54000	Supplies	\$1,700.00	<u>KS seconds; motion accepted 7-0-0.</u>
26	11412-57000	Other Charges	\$1,708.00	<u>KS seconds; motion accepted 7-0-0.</u>

Before moving to the Annual Town Meeting Warrant, KN noted that MS will review the budget for Building Inspector on April 14, JL will review the Fire Department and Safety Complex with Chief Zinther present on April 14, and JL will review the Police Department on April 21.

Review of the Annual Town Warrant (document "ATM WARRANT 6-6-2016 without info.doc")

ARTICLE 2 - COMMUNITY PRESERVATION COMMITTEE REPORT

KS said that this was a pro-forma article and JW moves the motion to approve Article 2 Community Preservation Committee Report as written. MS seconds; motion accepted 7-0-0.

ARTICLE 8 - ROAD CONSTRUCTION, REPAIRS AND MAINTENANCE

KS noted that this article needs to be voted on and passed before the Annual Town Budget. KS moves the motion to accept Article 8 Road Construction, Repairs and Maintenance as written. SS seconds; motion accepted 7-0-0.

ARTICLE 9 - REVALUATION/INTERIM ADJUSTMENTS

KS moves the motion to accept Article 9 Revaluation/Interim Adjustments as written. SS seconds; motion accepted 7-0-0.

ARTICLE 12 - WATER DEPARTMENT

KS said the BOS used a fair amount of the capital reserves in the past and wanted to know how much would be planned to put away to build up that fund again. KN said that water fund went down lower than the sewer. JL asked if there was a required minimum to put aside. KS answered that there was not, but there should be enough in the fund to cover at least one major catastrophic failure.

KS moves the motion to accept Article 12 Water Department as written. MS seconds. Discussion continued and LM noted that the text was not accurate. KS amended his motion to accept Article 12 Water Department as amended to include the word "hundred" in capital letters after the word "four" and before the word "sixty". MS seconds and the motion is accepted 7-0-0.

ARTICLE 13 - SEWER DEPARTMENT

KS moves the motion to approve Article 13 Sewer Department as amended by striking the word "and" after the word "hundred" and before the word "forty". MS seconds; motion accepted 7-0-0.

ARTICLE 14 - PUBLIC ACCESS DEPARTMENT

KS wants to understand who it is that has the authority to spend the money in this article, and for what equipment it allows to be purchased. Upon further review of the article, LM made an observation that the phrase "or take any action relative thereto" is not used consistently throughout the warrant. If it is to remain inconsistent as noted than there should be a reason explaining. KS agrees and suggests to KN that this may be a question for Barbara Barry. He would like the changes clarified and changed before moving on as the verbiage in the article is not "owned" by the Finance Committee.

ARTICLE 15 – SEWER PROJECT DEBT

KS moves the motion to accept Article 15 Sewer Project Debt as written. MS seconds; motion accepted 7-0-0.

Discussion continued on about Article 17, and KS had questions. Additionally, the committee discussed the Betterment Article (19). JL asked if the Finance Committee had a liaison to Betterment. There were many questions raised on the police requests. JL will discuss with the chief.

ARTICLE 20 – CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PLAN

KS moves the motion to accept Article 20 Capital Improvement Plan as written. MS seconds; motion accepted 6-0-1 (KN abstained).

ARTICLE 22 – AMBULANCE STABILIZATION

KS noted that this is for \$60,000.00 which is higher than the last few years, but will continue at this level to pay for the increased cost of a new ambulance. JL asked about the remaining balance as there was an odd amount left after the purchase of the ambulance. KS confirmed the balance in the account currently to be \$12,705.00.

KS moves the motion to accept Article 22 Ambulance Stabilization as written. MS seconds; motion accepted 7-0-0.

ARTICLE 17 – REVOLVING FUNDS

This was revisited as KS confirmed via phone text from Barbara Barry that there is no change in this article from FY16.

KS moves the motion to accept Article 17 Revolving Funds as written. MS seconds; motion accepted 7-0-0.

ARTICLE 23 - OPEB TRUST FUND

KS moves the motion to accept Article 23 OPEB Trust Fund as written. SS seconds; motion accepted 7-0-0.

ARTICLE 21 – BETTERMENT PAYOFFS – DISSOLVING OF BETTERMENTS

KS confirmed that when a betterment is paid off it is “dissolved”.

KS moved the motion to accept Article 21 Betterment Payoffs – Dissolving Betterments as written. SS seconds; motion accepted 7-0-0.

ARTICLE 24 - TAX RATE RELIEF

LM noted that the article needs to include the year “2016”.

KS moves the motion to accept Article 24 Tax Rate Relief as amended to change the date from “July 1, 2015” to “July 1, 2016”. MS seconds; motion accepted 7-0-0.

General Discussion of ATM Warrant Articles

Discussion around Article 25 around misuse of punctuation, and it was agreed the article needed to be re-written for sake of clarity. Article 26 also brought discussion around the way it was written. KS noted that he would recommend a vote of no action simply because of the studies on the Senior Center, the DPW and the Safety Complex, which very well could be in the millions of dollars to repair/replace. He further suggested a plan be put in place by the town on all of these studies if and when they will be acted upon. It was agreed to hold on a vote for this article. Article 27 and Article 28 are other articles that require more information.

Additional articles on the Annual Town Meeting Warrant need more information before further discussion and proper voting can take place. Many do not identify the sponsor, and many have inconsistent language from previous years.

LM mentioned that Article 44 Amendment to the Tantasqua Regional School District Agreement was mostly “housekeeping” for more current definitions, and nothing of substance was changing. KS asked that if the school brings this warrant article forward, why can’t residents revisit the whole agreement rather than just what is being amended. LM says that it can be revisited. MS wanted to know if changes are made would the other towns still have to vote.

Review of the Special Town Warrant (document “STM WARRANT 6-6-2016 without info.doc”)

ARTICLE 44 – TRANSFER OF FREE CASH SELF-CONTAINED BREATHING APPARATUS AND STREET SWEEPER

KS moves the motion to approve Article 44 Transfer of Free Cash Self-Contained Breathing Apparatus and Street Sweeper as amended by striking the word “and” after the word “hundred” and before the word “twelve”. MS seconds; motion accepted 7-0-0.

ARTICLE 45 – RESCIND PRIOR BORROWING AUTHORITY

KS moves the motion to approve Article 45 Rescind Prior Borrowing Authority as written. SS seconds; motion accepted 7-0-0.

ARTICLE 49 – PERMITTING SOFTWARE UPGRADE

KS moves the motion to approve Article 49 Permitting Software Upgrade as written. SS seconds; motion accepted 7-0-0.

New Business – none

Old Business – none

Public Access – none

KS moves the motion to adjourn at 8:47pm. SS seconds; motion accepted 7-0-0.

/jml