

**Finance Committee Meeting Minutes**  
**Town Hall ~ March 30, 2017**  
**Sturbridge, MA**

**Call to Order:**

The chair called the meeting to order at 7:00pm. The following committee members were present: Kathleen Neal (KN), James Waddick (JW), Suzanne Smiley (SS), Joni Light (JL), and Mike Hager (MH).

Absent: Bruce Boyson (BB) Jared Burns (JB), Larry Morrison (LM), and Michael Serio (MS)

Guests: Lynn Girouard (LG), Tom Ford (TF), Leon Gaumont (LGa), and Barbara Barry (BBa)

**Budget Review – Town Clerk, Recreation and Elections & Registrations – Lynn Girouard**

KN recused herself from Town Clerk and Elections & Registrations budget discussion. LG explained the changes in the Town Clerk's office with a new employee replacing the assistant town clerk, and her role as the interim town clerk. Her 40-hour week is being split with 5 hours against the Recreation Department, and 35 hours against the Town Clerk Department. An acting coordinator is working at the Recreation Department between 12 to 19 hours per week. JW asked if LG would be returning to the Recreation Department if she is not elected as town clerk. LG indicated that her position is being held for her pending the election outcome. MH asked for clarification on her salary as the Town Clerk and the Recreation Department. LG clarified that the salary in the Town Clerk budget for FY18 is not her full compensation, rather it is the amount budgeted for the newly appointed clerk at full time status.

JW asked about the salaries and wages for the Recreation Department's 11 workers. The minimum wage increase is accounted for in the budget.

Moving onto capital requests, LG explained the request for \$306K for resurfacing the tennis courts at the recreation area. They are requesting funds from the Community Preservation Commission. It has yet to be determined if all or part of the funding will be borrowed. Additionally, the Recreation Department will receive funds from Betterment for a new ping pong table, and their annual request for Concerts on the Common. LG commented that the concerts are becoming more popular and they have additional concerts scheduled for this year. JL asked if any funds for the concerts would be requested from the Sturbridge Tourist Association (STA). LG said she intends to go before the STA and request funds as she has in the past. There was discussion on the town common and the scheduling of events, as well as the gazebo maintenance which was confirmed to be managed by the Lions Club.

**Budget Review – Police Department – Tom Ford**

JL asked if the chief had hired an emergency coordinator yet. TF did say the position was advertised and they received applicants but had not yet hired anyone for this part time position. JW and KN both asked about the marijuana fee in the line item budget, and if the new law on the drug has changed the process. TF reminded the committee that the new law does not include minors (under age 21), and that there is still a fine for those found with marijuana under the age of 21. The marijuana fee is to cover the small claims court fee required to pursue violators who fail to pay the fine.

KN asked about the capital requests for the Police Department. TF explained the defibrillators are to replace older ones and add new ones to the administrator vehicles. A total of 9 are on hand with one to spare. The palm scanner is a new recognition device used in place of the "finger printing" machines. This new device will also cut back on required paperwork as information is easily downloaded to police systems. A recurring

maintenance fee will be included in forthcoming budgets. From Betterment, TF is requesting protective vests for each police officer, and new LED signs for crosswalks in town that will hopefully reduce crosswalk incidents.

### **Budget Review – Town Budgets – Leon Gaumont, Barbara Barry**

Departmental budgets under the oversight of the town administrator and the finance director were reviewed. Many were level-funded and no additional requests for funds were entered, such as the Board of Selectman, the Finance Committee, the Town Accountant and Finance Director budgets.

JL asked about the matching grants fund in the Town Administrator budget. BB clarified that there were no requests requiring matching funds last year, and there was nothing anticipated at this moment in time for FY18. Regarding the Town Counsel budget, level funded from FY17, LGa explained that the Board of Health could essentially tap into it for legal counsel on the Casella landfill issue if needed.

BB explained the increase in Charter Cable for the Town Hall as they will be installing fiber. This is being requested due to recent connectivity issues that prevented access to vital systems. A new server is also being estimated.

There was a long discussion on the Facilities Department budget. LGa explained the new function is taking on a list of projects now that the role is filled. The two custodian positions, however, are vacant and applicants are being accepted. Many of the town contracts, such as HVAC, trash removal and other maintenance contracts are being reviewed for consolidation and ultimate cost savings. The discussion continued onto the various feasibility studies being done on the town buildings. SS asked if the windows were still going to be replaced in the Senior Center Building, which LGa confirmed they are moving forward. KN asked when the town will be benefiting from the solar net-metering credits in electricity. BB explained that most of the electricity line items in each building have been level-funded for that reason as it is unclear when the credits may be applied. She continued that once the credits start to come in the budgets for next year should show a decrease in electricity. Discussion around the solar projects continued before moving onto other town building budgets. LGa explained that the plan is to have a maintenance plan in place for each of the town buildings, including 8 Brookfield Road. He is taking a proactive approach and seeking suggestions from the BOS, FinCom and residents.

BB confirmed a line item inadvertently omitted from the Fire Department budget; tuition costs in the amount of \$2,500.00 for the new fire chief who is under contract.

LGa explained the change in the Veteran's Agent budget which was reduced this year due to a decrease in those seeking veteran benefits. The current agent is also planning to scale down hours as he considers retirement.

Discussion continued with Debt Services, Group Insurance and the Insurance Advisory Committee, the latter to secure more competitive insurance rates for the town. Insurance continues to increase. JL asked if the amount in the group insurance line item included vacant positions as well as active employees. BB confirmed it includes actuals on plan plus two additional family plans. JW asked who the current carrier was; Blue Cross (HMO Blue).

Moving to Central Purchasing, BB explained that window washing was included as the town hall has not had windows cleaned in several years. Additionally, there is funding set aside for painting of exterior pillars and doors to the TH and COB.

**No New Business**

**No Public Access**

MH moved the motion to adjourn at 9:25pm; JL seconds. Meeting adjourned.

/jml