

Members Present: Ian Johnson, Chair, Judy Lucas, Cliff Watts, Ronn Moody, J. J. Malone, Jo Lown, Polly Howard, Carolyn Spring (arrived 7:13 p.m.) Absent: John Arnold.

At 7:03 p.m. Mr. Johnson called the meeting to order in the Selectmen's Meeting Room.

Open Forum

There were no requests to address the Committee.

Approval of minutes – Meeting No. 13, March 15, 2007

Ms. Lucas corrected the date of her meeting with Assabet Valley Regional Technical School District to 3/27/07. Mr. Moody corrected the number of members present and in favor of adjournment to 7. Mr. Watts moved approval of the minutes of Meeting No. 13, March 15, 2007 with noted changes. The vote to approve the minutes was 6 in favor and 1 abstention, with 7 members present.

Liaison Updates

Ms. Lown will be meeting with Jack Goodall on 3/21/07

Ms. Howard has changed the School Committee presentation to 4/12/07, after the DPW. Matt and John O'Neill have agreed to a tentative presentation date of 4/7.

Mr. Johnson met with Chief Nick Perron and Cal Lawrence on Saturday to go over their budget. There will be increases in salary as their contract is still in effect. There will also be an increase in expenses of approximately 5.8% in response to comments from prior years about underbudgeting.

Mr. Moody reported on the site visit to the Library on Sunday. There is visible damage to the ceiling, and water marks on pipes which will need to be rewrapped. The two possible renovation plans will cost \$36,000 to \$70,000. The tank is not currently affecting the ability of the town to get insurance on the building, but will need to be replaced.

Budget Review – Youth and Family Services

Youth Commission Board Members Katie Welch, Brigitte Casemyr, Cheryl Amie, Oscar Nejerian, Lyn Heggerick, Michelle Grasso, and Director John Badenhansen, MA LMHC, presented the budget proposal for FY2008. There are no major changes in the proposed budget. The salaries (\$148,586) include a cost of living increase for the director, step increases for the 2 counselors, and the Youth Activities Coordinator position has been changed from the M scale to the H scale to increase the number of steps in the scale and to allow more flexibility with the range. The Administrative Assistant recently resigned so there will be some unused funds from this year, and the replacement hired will likely be at a lower step. Interviews will begin tomorrow and there should be a new hire within one month.

The only increased expense – line 5218 Training and Education – provides continuing education for counselors to keep up with changes in the field and presenting problems of clients. Continuing education is required to maintain licenses and the cost of courses has increased.

The program's census is usually 70 to 75 families per year, and 1,000 to 1,100 clinical hours. This is the service of last resort in the area. If possible, clients with other resources are referred out at the beginning contact. Referrals come mostly from police and schools. One service provided is a youth diversion program. Referrals from schools may also be for more in-depth services, and come from the school adjustment counselors and school psychologists in the high school and middle school. In the lower grades the guidance counselors make most of the referrals.

Article 9. Regularly Recurring Articles. Section B. (in draft warrant dated March 10.)

This article is to authorize a revolving fund to administer the Hot Summer Nights program and the Baby-Sitter Training. Last summer the program was well attended.

Article 4. Fiscal Year 2007 Budget Transfers (in draft warrant dated March 10.)

This transfer is to cover the costs of advertising the open position, and is paid from funds that will not be paid in salary this year since the position is currently vacant.

Article 6. Amend Salary Administration Plan (in draft warrant dated March 10.)

See previous discussion.

Members of the Youth Commission pointed out that this program is well run and efficient. Last year in a joint effort with the Rotary Club they were able to offer a Holiday Store which served 55 families at Christmas.

Budget Review – Library

Trustees of the Public Library Pat Fontes, Karen Fay, MaryLou Conna, Lisa Freeman, Jim Holmes, Helena Engberg, and Carolyn Delude, Library Director presented the proposed budget. Salaries and wages increase (to \$613,610) includes cost of living and step increases only as their contract is currently being negotiated.

Other Expenses include:

- Advertising (\$200) for salary positions other than librarians. Advertising for librarians is done using an on line resource which is free.
- Line 5205A office equipment is to replace worn and broken equipment. Desktop computers (\$2,596) are for public use. Laptop computers (\$3,028) are for staff use. The carpeting in the community meeting room (\$2,050) is 10 years old and shredding. This room is heavily used.
- Line 5211 and 5213 represents increased costs of electricity, fuel and oil.
- Lines 5224, 5224E, and 5227 together (\$125,443) equal 15% of the operating budget mandated to be spent on books and periodicals for accreditation.
- 5224F book supplies (\$3,300) includes all costs associated with circulation of materials.
- 5243C Misc service-computer (\$27,149) is the membership charge for the C/W MARS service.

This budget provides the minimum amount needed to maintain certification.

Two quotes of \$6,950 and \$6,690 have been received for the replacement of the air tank recommended by MIIA insurance inspection. A third quote is coming. At this time the cost is not included in FY2007 or FY2008 budgets.

Article 12. Improvements to Library Building. (in draft warrant dated March 10.)

The library is asking for \$62,250 to make improvements to the library building. All figures are from quotes not bids. \$36,250 is to re-insulate HVAC pipes in the Children's Room, and would include removal and repair of ceiling tiles. In summer the pipes tend to drip from condensation causing a humidity problem in the room. \$16,000 is to paint the exterior wood trim and the fire escape. The paint is lifting and does need to be redone. Next year is the 100th anniversary of the library and it would be good to have the building in the best shape possible for the many events planned in 2008. Ms. Delude will inquire about using the Worcester County Sheriff's Community Service Program to lower the cost of painting. \$10,000 is to install wireless capability in the Library Building. Currently it is difficult to wire internet access to many parts of the building without damaging this historic building. The wireless network would allow internet access in the front reading rooms, community room, more areas of the children's room, and the 3rd floor. \$10,000 is the initial cost only – there may be an increased annual cost as well. There are currently 11 public access computers in the library. The wireless network would be secured for staff use.

Westborough's library building is well designed and in good shape. Over the next few years the Trustees will be looking at space utilization and goals, to look at the changing ways people use libraries.

Request for Transfer from Reserve Fund

Maryanne Bilodeau is requesting a transfer from the reserve fund to pay for Police and Fire Department overtime associated with attendance at mandatory town-wide Harassment Training. All other town employees can attend on paid time, but police and fire department employees contracts states this training must be done on overtime. The Training itself will cost \$1,000 from the insurance budget, and will result in a 1% discount to the professional liability insurance. Dr. Malone moved to transfer from reserve funds the amounts of \$5,000 to Police OT budget line 12102 5105, and \$5,899 to Fire OT budget line 12202 5105E. The vote to approve the transfer was 8 in favor, with 8 members present.

Budget Review – Buildings and Grounds

Frank Cornine, Supervisor, and Maryanne Bilodeau, Assistant Town Coordinator, presented the proposed budget of \$362,510. This budget represents a 2.7% increase in expenses, mostly for electric and fuel costs and \$1,000 increase in cost of materials. The salary and wages increase includes two step increases. The overtime budget is for evening and weekend snow removal and coverage the Senior Center events. Budget includes \$69,000 to cover emergency and planned repairs at the eight Town buildings. Projects for this year include: replacing rotting doors at Forbes Community Building (\$1,000) and Town Hall (\$1,500); sandblast and paint fire escapes at Forbes Community Building (\$2,000) and Forbes Municipal Building (\$1,500); remove trees at the Senior Center (\$1,800); replace fire alarm panels at Harvey Building (\$3,000) and Spurr House (\$3,000); install door alarms at Forbes Community Building (\$350); repair damaged ceilings at Senior Center (\$1,000); repair leak in Harvey Building roof (\$2,000); and replace baseboard heating in restaurant at Country Club (\$1,600).

Mr. Cornine keeps a list of repairs needed on every town building. Some repairs are urgent and/or unexpected.

Article 11. Various Town Buildings and Grounds Repairs. (in draft warrant dated March 10.)

The town is requesting (\$130,555) for repairs to town buildings including:

- waterproofing exterior of Town Hall and re-caulking all windows (\$10,000) – this has not been done for many years
- sandblasting and paint fire escapes on Town Hall (\$9,000) – this has been on the list of projects for at least 6 years. The corrosion has not yet gotten bad enough to require replacement but is progressing.
- paint and repair exterior wooden surfaces on the Country Club Building (\$10,000) – most of the building is covered in vinyl siding, but the trim and windows around the porch area are peeling. The Worcester County Sheriff's Community Service Program will not take on this job due to the presence of lead paint.
- replace boiler at Spurr House (\$20,000) – this boiler is the original manufactured in 1924. There is asbestos covering the boiler and pipes that will need to be removed. The boiler currently works but has problems.
- replace 7 HVAC units in Forbes Municipal Building (\$14,000) – there are 45 air conditioner units and 2 heaters in the Forbes Municipal Building. Most of the units were installed in 1989, and this is a planned replacement to occur over several years. The new units come with a one-year guarantee.
- replace portion of municipal fire alarm system (\$120,000 total project over two years, \$60,000 this year) – there are 20 boxes in town buildings that need to be replaced with wireless technology. This project will be spread over two years, with the boxes furthest from the center of town being replaced first.
- replace refrigerator/freezer and pass through refrigerator in Senior Center (\$7555) – current units are 18 years old and are inefficient and leak. This money would replace them with 2 new refrigerators (one pass through) and 1 new freezer.

Article 34. Amend Town Bylaws. (in draft warrant dated March 10.)

This article will change the town bylaws to conform to Massachusetts General Laws. Procurement laws have changed since the bylaw was added in the 1990s. Surplus goods include vehicles from DPW and other departments, small goods from the Country Club, etc.

Budget Review – Town Insurance

Maryanne Bilodeau presented the budget proposal for Town Insurance.

- Line 5245 Other Professional Services (\$15,000) – covers deductibles and medical bills not covered by insurance
- Line 5703 Unemployment Compensation (\$120,000) – the town is a reimbursable employer and must pay as claims are made. This is more cost effective than being a contributory employer.
- Line 5704 Medicare Tax (\$460,000) – increased by \$10,000 from last year. This is the matching 1.45% of employees' contribution.
- Line 5705 Group Insurance Life (\$31,200) – this represents a 4% increase over last year.
- Line 5706 Group Insurance Medical (\$8,119,161) – This represents a 16.5% increase over last year. The town currently has 828 employees, and offers Fallon Community Health Plan, Blue Cross, and Harvard Pilgrim Health Plan. The number on the plan does not decrease when someone retires as they stay on the plan. The rates of employee contributions are set by contract. Currently town employees contribute 25% of the cost except for School Department employees who choose FCHP for which they contribute 10%. The town has been working with each insurance company to negotiate lower rates, and has managed to save \$422,000.
- Line 5750 Surety (\$2,900) – no increase.
- Line 5751 Fire/Casualty/Workers Compensation (\$832,213) – this represents a 25% increase over last year. There have been several large liability claims recently, including damages from sewerage backups. For Workers Compensation the cost of insurance is based on the number of employees, job type, and claims type. Other mandated insurance costs include the McNamara Bill, GASB 45 Audit, and IOD Call claim.

Maryanne Bilodeau presented the proposed budgets for the following departments:

- **Selectmen/Coordinator (\$322,725)** No increase in expenses.
- **Communications (\$41,500)** No increase from last year. This budget covers the town's telephone system.
- **Central Purchasing (\$96,000)** Increase of \$6,000 over last year includes \$5,000 increase in postage and \$1,000 in repair /maintenance of vehicles. Mr. Moody wondered if the increased income from sending out 4 water bills per year covered the increase in postage.
- **Weights and Measures (\$2,250)** No increase from last year, and hasn't changed in many years.
- **Animal Control (\$70,930)** The new dead animal disposal site will cost \$400 more per year. Ms. Howard asked if Mr. Danis met with Mr. Keefe to go over his budget.
- **Street Lights (\$52,000)** The town is currently reviewing the street lights near pedestrian crossings and may need to increase budget by \$3,000 to replace current bulbs with higher wattage bulbs to increase visibility at these sites. AFC members agreed this is a problem and suggested other ways to increase visibility at pedestrian crosswalks as well.

Comments and concerns of Committee members

- Mr. Johnson reported that Mr. Len Mead will be present at the AFC meeting to be held on Thursday March 22.

Adjournment

At 9:40 p.m. Mr. Watts moved to adjourn the meeting. The vote to adjourn was unanimous (8 present and in favor).