

**Town Of West Boylston
Finance Committee
Meeting of April 3, 2013**

The meeting of West Boylston Finance Committee (Fincom) convened at 6:12 pm in meeting room 2 at Town Hall. Those attending were: Ray Bricault, Chris Berlund, Dave Eckhardt, Pat Crowley, Aaron Goodale, Jim Marinelli, Eric Reddy, and Pete Murphy. Absent was Bill Fay. Aaron Goodale left the meeting before the department presentations began.

Town Manager Leon Gaumond presented information about the status of the budget process. The FY2014 revenue budget is unchanged at \$21M. State aid is still level funded in the budget but remains an unknown. More information may be available next week when the legislature clarifies the budget process. The revenue budget is not likely to change.

The FY2014 expense budget was discussed. There was some confusion about the spreadsheets distributed and the updated current expense number. The updated current budget expense was determined to be \$21,029,569. Discussion included:

- The budget does include special election funding.
- Health insurance did not grow significantly. Claims are down and the insurance rate has stabilized.
- The school requested budget increase is high at \$720,965. The request cannot be met. The money is not available. A settlement with the school committee is required. So far the schools have been allowed a budget increase of \$278,586.
- A 1.5% increase for non-union town workers was added to the budget at the request of the Board of Selectmen (BOS). The extra money came from salary savings in the position of director of the senior center.
- Police department salary increases are 2%. Savings were taken in the uniform budget. New cruiser costs are higher and have been added to the budget. Police department training has been moved to salaries instead of a separate budget line item.
- The DPW salaries are increased by 2.5%.
- All ambulance expenses are being paid out of ambulance receipts. These have been added to the revenue and expense budgets. This is a change that eliminates the need for a warrant article.
- The dispatch center budget is reduced due to expected one time grants of \$10,000. Regionalization is still under discussion for next year. This could save as much as \$100,000 in future budgets.
- The board of health expense declined due to regionalization savings.
- A street sweeper for the town is likely to be a fall acquisition. This is in process.
- The library budget still does not meet the state standards and a waiver will be required. The state is expected to issue the waiver.

Pat Crowley gave a review of the budget presentation by the Town Manager to the BOS last week. This was a list of budget items that had major changes.

Demolition of the Mixter building and swimming pool was discussed. BOS wants to proceed and bids have been solicited. They fear trespass and injury. The committee is not currently interested in spending capital on demolition for property that will be sold.

There is a proposed warrant for Town Meeting from the Cemetery board to transfer money from sale of lots to the tractor and maintenance funds. This transfer will be the interest earned only.

The first department presentation was by Police Chief Dennis Minnich. The budget items are:

- The transfer of police equipment to new cruisers is more costly due to the change in models. The new cruiser in this budget will be purchased in about 9 months after town meeting approval. It will be all wheel drive, a cost addition. The cruiser purchase plan is 4 vehicles every 5 years. 150,000 miles is the life of the vehicle. Purchase could be skipped in 2015, but more likely 2016.
- Some savings in salaries and sick time buyback in the police budget allowed a further \$5,000 savings from the submitted budget.
- The Communications budget had \$15,000 in additional savings due to anticipated state grants for the 911 system.
- All officers but one are at the top salary step. Step increases are not expected to be significant over the next few years.
- Several officers could potentially retire. At least one retirement is expected in the next year.
- The police contract salary increases are 2% each year for the next 3 years.
- The approved capital expense for communications equipment is on hold due to discussion of regionalization. This is progressing slowly. Radio needs should be included in the regionalization agreement. Negotiations are underway with both Worcester and Holden/Princeton.

The second department presentation was by Fire Chief Tom Welsh. The budget items are:

- The budget was originally prepared by the previous Fire Chief.
- Fire salaries have decreased by \$10,000 due to an error found in overtime calculation and a change in paramedic scheduling.
- A new ambulance is due in June. The second ambulance is 3-4 years old and in good condition. A new fire truck (replacement of engine 3) should be needed in 3 years. The truck is in the capital budget for 2017.
- Other capital needs:
 - Replacement of the garage doors is required. These were included in the capital budget for 2013, but with a need for more information. The need for the doors is still uncertain and it is unlikely that any action will be taken in this budget.
 - Conversion of the retired ambulance to a service vehicle is also a capital possibility.

- The parking lot condition is poor and a repaving is needed. This is a more urgent capital need than the doors.
- The capital needs will be reviewed by the Chief with subcommittee members.

The third department presentation was by the DPW Chief Anthony Silva. The budget items are:

- The budget was originally prepared by the previous DPW Director.
- Salary increases are contractual, including step increases, for union employees. Non-union employees will receive the increase granted by the BOS. 5 of 6 DPW employees are at the maximum step, so step increases should be minimal.
- There was confusion between the DPW budget sheets and the numbers carried in the budget prepared by the Town Manager. The DPW Director was asked to review the numbers and prepare a revised detailed estimate to distribute to the committee by email.
- The snow and ice budget will be level funded in FY2014 at \$108,742, even though the expense for this year will likely be close to \$240,000. This is the standard practice since the expense varies so much.
- The trash budget detail is needed.
- The landfill monitoring expense is a consulting expense. The true cost is \$11,000. The budget line is reduced to \$9,000 this year because the additional cost is covered through other funds.
- There is concern with the supplies line item, particularly the fuel account. There is no bulk fuel purchase contract to minimize cost.
- Capital needs:
 - Sweeper replacement will be requested this year at a cost of \$185,000.
 - Tractor BA14 is now requested for FY2014.
 - The new loader is now requested for FY2015.
- New Requests
 - 2 wing plows for \$18,000 for more efficient snow removal. Mr. Silva will investigate if Chapter 90 moneys can be used to fund it.
 - Clam shell at \$10,000 to clean basins.
 - Construction steel plates at \$10,000 to cover trenches.
 - Lawn mower at \$17,000 for the parks.
- Sewer system capital budget increased from \$180,000 to \$240,000 for pump station pump replacement. This is a one-time replacement and the budget will be reduced in coming years. Operational budgets are stable. Reserves are adequate, but will be increased in coming years.

The minutes of meeting for October 15, 2012 and March 18, 2013 passed unanimously.

Ray Bricault reviewed the future meeting plans. The next committee meeting is with the school administration on Monday, April 8. The subcommittee need to complete their meetings with the departments to report by the committee meeting on April 17.

The meeting adjourned at 9:45. The next meeting will be Monday, April 8.

