

Minutes of the Board of Finance Budget Review Meeting
Town Hall – March 28, 2016 - 7 p.m.

Members present: Justin Donnelly, Ryan Anderson, Chris Childs, Brian Kost, Eric Harrington, Dr. Ann Huntington Mickelson, alts. Tracy Eccles, John Sullivan, J. Michael Stevens

Also present: First Selectman Mack, Treasurer Davidson, Director of Finance Cerrato

Chairman Justin Donnelly called the March 28 budget review meeting to order at 7 p.m.

Mr. Donnelly noted that for the first time, we are streaming the meeting.

Correspondence: None

Budget Review:

Water Pollution Control Authority - Shane McCannon, Chief Operator, Julie Nigro, Business Administrator

Ms. Nigro reported that the expense budget increased by \$245,789 or 10.09%. She noted an increase in user fees: Sewer Use Fee \$300 per unit, Kent Farm use Fee, \$227 per unit, and (commercial rate) Dollar per 1,000 Gallons, \$6,55. Fees have not changed since 2009. She reported that the increase in the budget is due to capital improvement projects which include a Facilities Plan, upgrading the SCADA system, and a paving project. Ms. Nigro explained in detail, each line item in the 2016-2017 budget; thus reflecting a total of \$2,682,854. They noted increases of 2.5% for the union, the amount of the increase has not been finalized for the administrative staff and there is included a new position in the union. Also included in the budget for the first time was a contingency of \$50,000. Medical Insurance was budgeted with a 15% increase and an additional employee. Mr. McCannon reviewed the Reserve Capacity Maintenance (RCM) Revenue Budget of \$1,270,000; funding Sewer Development, \$25,000, Emergency Repairs, \$150,000, and Plant Upgrades, \$1,245,000. It is noted that in this budget, the WPCA does not owe any debt service to the Town and therefor there is not a transfer to the Town budget for FY 2016-2017. Members of the WPCA were in attendance for the budget review. It was requested by the BoF that the WPCA present a budget explanation at the Budget Public Hearing and respond to questions. The members would also like a document that explained the budget. It was difficult to understand the handout.

Information Technology – Dan Beaudoin – Mr. Beaudoin gave an explanation of his Office. And yes, we are responsible for the streaming. We take care of the Spam, we deal with 2 million emails a year, and we have blocked out 1,422,356 SPAM, and he locked out 88,000 viruses a year. We are dealing with remote vpn's, the relocation of the offices, the design and installation of networks and long range planning for the Town. We have hired a part time person and I would very much like to expand this to a full time

position. This department formerly consisted of 1 full time and 1 part time employee in addition to a consultant, but since has been reduced to me. It is very difficult to manage every thing. Having a full time person would be most helpful in addressing many of our issues. One should note that the relocation of the offices does add to the workload. The management of the maintenance was discussed. It is noted now that some of the annual software maintenance costs have been removed from other budgets and placed in Information Technology. The numbers will be clarified.

Assessor – Helen Totz - She has a decrease in her budget due to the removal of the funds for computer software that were properly placed in the Information Technology department; most of my line items are flat. We have the revaluation coming up for the October, 2018 Grand List. The work needs to begin in January 2018 which will require the expense for the Revaluation will need to be budgeted for the 2017-18 fiscal year. The increase in the Grand List was 1.4%, very healthy before the Board of Assessment Appeals. The Board of Assessment Appeals report should be finalized during this week. The problem at the state department of motor vehicles has affected most if not all towns in the state. Personal property tax went over 4%. All in all, we had a healthy increase. The Board of Assessment of Appeals met last week. She does not expect major appeals. We expect to have 28 new building permits that we will pick up after June 1.

Tax Collector and Rebates – Jill Schechtman - My budget remains the same as always. She is not asking for anything new. She has minor increases. We have been on line, and collected \$1.5 million just on line, and she is pleased. She believes the ability to view online has helped the collections of taxes in town. Her collection rate for the current year is 98.5% .

Building Department – Ted Flanders - On the revenue side, he estimated \$375,000 for the next budget year and now thinks we can change it to \$400,000. He believes we will reach the \$400,000 budgeted for this current year. He anticipates large building projects in the next year. I will have more time now, that I am not the webmaster any longer. Mr. Donnelly thanked him for both his jobs well done.

Ambulance – Chief Art Groux – He is happy to report a budget .6% lower than last year. The volunteer abatements were removed from the budget last year. They are no longer being issued a check for the taxes that have been paid. The taxes due are being reduced by the amount of the abatement. The contract is still the same, \$203,000. That remains constant.

Fire Department – Chief Chuck Flynn

Our payroll is up 5% due to my increase and for 3 union step increases. The current union contract expires on June 30, 2016. Our overall operating budget shows a decrease of 3% due to careful management. There are no major increases.

Selectmen – Melissa Mack, First Selectman -The payroll did not go up, it remains flat. The increase for the First Selectmen was effective after the election so there is an

increase in the salary line item and also the formula did not include the salary for the Heritage Secretary in the total in the amount of \$1,745.00.

Contracted services increased; The social studies commission has requested a study of needs of residents. They will need to fund the survey and the distribution costs. The dues and fees are down.

Town Counsel – Melissa Mack – Town Hall - This line is staying flat; she is re-negotiation fees. She is going to control the legal fees by screening requests. There is an amount for Union negotiations because we have 5 union agreements to negotiate in the next year.

Town Hall – Melissa Mack – Services maintenance increased because of ongoing expenses of streaming meetings.

Finance – Director Deborah Cerrato is requesting an Assistant Director of Finance, this would be a non union position. The anticipated annual salary is \$62,400. She listed the duties of such a position. The new position would begin ½ through the year. There is only one union step payment. She requested a 3% for herself and the amount in the budget is 2.5%. The board discussed that a Risk Assessment study was recommended by the Auditors and should be considered.

Insurance and Employee Benefits – Deborah Cerrato – We are pretty close to a zero percent. The insurance appears to be fine at the end of this year. Our revenues are exceeding our costs; Mr. Kost would like to see an accounting of the performance. He would like to possibly transfer from this fund to cover shortfalls in the general fund budget. There is a contingency amount included for the upcoming union negotiations. The increase in the 457 Plan match is due to the fact that new employees except for the Fire Union are no longer eligible to participate in the defined benefit pension plan. Life insurance is based on the current status. The Workers Compensation and Liability Insurance lines were estimated at a 5% increase over the current year. This will be reviewed.

The Board of Education will be on the Agenda next Monday.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:55 p.m.

Respectfully submitted, Bobbie Cratch Kling

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