

FINANCE COMMITTEE  
Minutes  
Zoom Meeting 871 4448 6667

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2022 APR -5 AM 8:07  
MILLBURY, MASS.  
Time: 6:30 p.m.

Date: March 14, 2022

Present: Cooper, Pratt, Wells, O'Connell, Cooney, Kuphal

Absent: None

Meeting called to order at 6:35 p.m.

Motioned by Cooney, seconded by Kuphal to accept the minutes of February 26, 2022 as written. Cooper, yes; Pratt, yes; Wells, yes; Cooney, yes; Kuphal, yes; O'Connell, yes

Jayne Davolio, Town Clerk, Jennifer Barrett, Finance Director and Sean Hendricks, Town Manager were present at the meeting.

Ann Dallair, Library Director, was in to discuss her budget at 6:38 p.m.

Ann Dallair: The only thing that I added to this budget is to take over the cost of the 5 "hot spots". This service was previously paid for by a grant. People can borrow them, like books, so that they have the internet when they need it, like on vacation.

Jen O'Connell: The salary is up. Is this due to contracted raises?

Ann Dallair: Some are cost of living increases.

Jennifer Barrett: These are step increases.

Sean Hendricks: Some are super step increases. These are for people that have been here 20 years or more. People max out with the steps.

Jen O'Connell: Are we in line with surrounding towns?

Sean Hendricks: We are about in the middle. Mr. Kelley, when he was here, had a study done on the salaries.

Jen O'Connell: Supplies went up \$1,200. Why are we spending so much on paper when everyone is going paperless?

Ann Dallair: There are still some transactions that need to be hard copy.

William Pratt: What is driving the 6% increase for materials?

Ann Dallair: Our supplies have to come to 16% of our budget to keep our certification.

Sean Hendricks: The hot spots will be moved from the utilities to materials next year.

Jen O'Connell: Why can't we do that in this budget?

Jennifer Barrett: I will make the change and also reduce the amount to 9 months instead of 12 months. Also, Ann is going to need a transfer to get through this year. We cannot take materials, but we are working on this to figure out where we will be transferring it from.

Charles Cooper: Pages make \$14.63 per hour with an increase in 6 months to \$15.00. Why is there nothing in here for raises based on the minimum wage?

Jennifer Barrett: The average yearly increase in the minimum wage is included in the \$14.63.

Russell Wells: What is a Page?

Ann Dallair: They shelve the books and help any patrons that come in.

Kristen Livoti, Asa Waters Coordinator and Chris Naff, Board of Selectmen/Asa Waters Task Force, were in to discuss their budget at 6:56 p.m.

Kristen Livoti: Things are going well at the Mansion. It looks like we will have an estimated \$70,000-75,000 in the Revolving Fund at the end of the fiscal year. The tents are helping us a lot.

Jen O'Connell: It looks like you are looking for additional help.

Kristen Livoti: We are. This would be a 9 hour a week position for an assistant to help with social media and some administrative duties.

Jen O'Connell: Do you need more than this person?

Kristen Livoti: This should take care of what I need.

Jennifer Barrett: We did have to adjust the advertised rate.

Kristen Livoti: We were able to purchase a convection oven and a commercial refrigerator.

Jen O'Connell: How many events have you had over the past year?

Kristen Livoti: The total sales for last year was \$31,000. This year we are in the \$80,000 range. We are now able to accommodate weddings, up to 200 people. This is due to having the tents. We have many events already scheduled through the summer.

Jen O'Connell: What are the Professional Services?

Kristen Livoti: The tents need to go up and come down and also be washed. It is not in the past year's budget. Also, pest control services have gone up.

Jennifer Barrett: We need to add \$570 to the pest control line.

Jen O'Connell: Are there any issues with the previous oil spill?

Sean Hendricks: We are still working on this. I am handling this myself.

Chris Naff: We still have Warrant Articles to fund the remediation on the oil spill. We may be under the amount that was voted on.

Jen O'Connell: How much do you think we will be using?

Chris Naff: I would say \$8,000-10,000. We have been trying to button things up with DEP.

Nicole Cooney: How many years has this been going on?

Chris Naff: I am not sure. It has been a while. It was before I was involved.

Jennifer Barrett: It was voted on at the 2011 Annual Town Meeting.

## Fire Department

Sean Hendricks: The Fire Chief is currently at a fire. Jennifer and I will be the ones that will be able to answer your questions. He hasn't been the Chief very long and was not part of the budget process.

Jen O'Connell: What went up in the Professional Services?

Jennifer Barrett: Things weren't aligned right in previous budgets.

Sean Hendricks: We have 40 plus call firefighters. The Headquarters Committee will be coming to Town Meeting looking for a new station.

Russell Wells: What is the LOSAP Benefit?

Jennifer Barrett: That is a special insurance only available to call firefighters.

Rich Hamilton: This is a length of service reward. This averages \$120.00 per month when they retire. It is their retirement benefit.

Jen O'Connell: Did we add additional articles this year?

Jennifer Barrett: No, we did not.

Jen O'Connell: How much are we thinking that the new station is going to cost?

Sean Hendricks: The total project is about \$14-15Million. We don't know what the cost to the Town will be. It depends on what we get in grants.

Russell Wells: What is Hydrant Rentals?

Jennifer Barrett: This is a flat fee to Aquarion. They make sure that there is water in the hydrants.

#### Town Department Budgets

Sean Hendricks: We cut \$25,000-30,000 from the Town Manager budget.

Russell Wells: Are you still looking for an Assistant Town Manager?

Sean Hendricks: The Board of Selectmen are supportive of this.

#### Finance Committee

Jen O'Connell: Why did you reduce the Salary on our budget?

Jennifer Barrett: You hadn't used all of it in the past couple of years. You had less meetings.

Jen O'Connell: I would like to see that put back in.

#### Finance Department

Jen O'Connell: You have a reduction in your budget. Why is the salary down?

Sean Hendricks: We didn't have a Finance Director at the beginning of last year. We re-calculated it to the correct number.

Russell Wells: Under Professional Development, are there certificates required for this?

Jennifer Barrett: I need to keep my certifications up to date. I budgeted training for my new assistant, when this person is hired. Also Fixed Assets is outsourced. The Consultant Fee was given to me by the Consultant himself. This is a 2 year valuation and the cost is split over the 2 years.

#### Town Audit

Sean Hendricks: This is the last year in the contract. This is a real cost for the new auditor. We have to change out auditors every 6 years, per the by-law.

#### Assessors

Jennifer Barrett: Salary is up because he needs someone for cyclical inspections when they come up, not someone in-house that is here when they are not needed.

#### Treasurer/Collector

Jen O'Connell: Is this another super step on the head clerk?

Jennifer Barrett: Yes, it is.

Sean Hendricks: We are also trying to reduce the amount of copiers in the office. They have printers at each location.

Jen O'Connell: Why aren't we scanning things in, instead of copying. Why are we using so much paper, when we are in a paperless world?

Jennifer Barrett: We need to copy things in the Treasurer/Collector's office. We need to have the hard copies for the audit. Once the audit is done, we can destroy them.

William Pratt: Are you doing this for legal requirements?

Jennifer Barrett: Yes.

William Pratt: There is technology out there that can take care of this.

Jennifer Barrett: Mass General Law requires us to have hard copies for the audit.

Jen O'Connell: How many transactions are handled in the office versus the lock box? I don't see where we are getting more efficient in this respect.

Jennifer Barrett: We have on-line, lock box and walk-ins. There is a significant amount of checks that come into the office that have to be processed.

Russell Wells: What percentage of taxes have we collected?

Jennifer Barrett: It is at about 70% right now, instead of 75%. We haven't sent out the last quarter bills yet. We collected 99% of last year's taxes.

#### Discussion of Retirement Benefits and Medical Insurance

Sean Hendricks: OPEB deductions will start in July, with employees contributing ½-1%.

Jen O'Connell: How many years before we can reduce the contributions by increasing the co-pays?

Sean Hendricks: We didn't do an analysis this year. With the loss of Fallon, we are limited on what the existing companies can do. We will look at it again next year.

#### Back to the Treasurer/Collector Budget

Jen O'Connell: What is the stipend for?

Jennifer Barrett: The Assistant Treasurer/Collector is not in the Union. She is certified. The previous Assistant was not certified.

Jen O'Connell: I am, personally, against stipends.

Nicole Cooney: Are we paying for all of her classes too?

Jennifer Barrett: Yes, we are.

Charles Cooper: If it is part of the job description, there shouldn't be a stipend. If it isn't part of the job description, then there should be one.

## Legal Services

Sean Hendricks: We are in pretty good shape with this budget. You should see a reduction in the next couple of years. Getting away from the retainer helped a lot.

## Personnel/Human Resources

Sean Hendricks: We had to leave the expenses here, but the salary was moved to the Town Manager Budget.

## Technology

Sean Hendricks: The \$22,000 is moving lines from other budgets in order to reorganize.

## Town Clerk

Jen O'Connell: The expenses are down. Is this from moving things around?

Jennifer Barrett: The copier and the postage machine were moved to the MOB processing side. They are used by everyone, so it shouldn't be in this department. This change created a false decrease.

## Elections and Registrars

William Pratt: What is the jump in poll workers?

Sean Hendricks: There is an additional election.

Jennifer Barrett: We had 2 elections this year and will have 4 next year.

## Planning Department

Jen O'Connell: Are you having any luck finding a new Planner?

Sean Hendricks: She has only been gone for a week. The posting will go out next week.

Jen O'Connell: Are we okay with this salary?

Sean Hendricks: Yes, we are at a good level.

## Municipal Office Building

Jen O'Connell: This has a lot of shifting of funds from the other budgets?

Jennifer Barrett: Yes, it does.

## Town Reports

Sean Hendricks: This is at zero because it is rolled into the Town Manager Budget.

## Committees and Commissions

Jennifer Barrett: This is a culmination of lateral transfers from other budgets.

#### Veterans Services

Sean Hendricks: We are joining a consortium with other towns. We needed to regionalize. We are assessed based on population.

Jen O'Connell: What happened to Phil?

Sean Hendricks: He retired. This is why we are doing this.

Jen O'Connell: Our Public Hearing is next Monday. We should do this on Zoom. This may bring more of the public in on our meeting. We also have Blackstone Valley Tech joining to discuss their budget.

Jennifer Barrett: The estimated number that I received from Blackstone Valley Tech is right on target with their actual figure.

Discussion was held comparing Blackstone Valley Tech, Norfolk Agricultural and Millbury Public Schools.

Jen O'Connell: Following the Public Hearing next Monday, Blackstone Valley Tech will be in to discuss their budget, then we will finish discussing the rest of the Town budget.

Motioned by Wells, seconded by Pratt to adjourn at 8:59 p.m. Cooper, yes; Kuphal, yes; Pratt, yes; Wells, yes; Cooney, yes; O'Connell, yes

*Tracy Wells*  
*Rachel Wells*  
*Jen O'Connell*  
*Ned H. Cooney*