

FINANCE COMMITTEE
Minutes
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MILLBURY, MASS.

Date: January 30, 2023

Time: 6:30 p.m.

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

Absent: Cooney

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

Motioned by Wells, seconded by Pratt to accept the minutes of January 25, 2023 as written.
Unanimous.

Jennifer Barrett, Finance Director, Sean Hendricks, Town Manager, Karyn Clark, Deputy Town Manager were present at the meeting.

Judith O'Connor was present at the meeting.

Keith Caruso, DPW and Warren Gardner, Tree Warden were in to discuss their budget at 6:36 p.m.

Warren Gardner: When I first started, we had 148 trees that were infested with gypsy moths.

Russell Wells: What does the \$6,300 for Tree Warden consist of?

Sean Hendricks: That is the Administrative Salary.

Warren Gardner: This is all the work that I do. I also have a part timer.

Russell Wells: Is this all in the first two lines?

Sean Hendricks: That is under the seasonal workers.

William Pratt: Is the assistant 2 days a week or do both of you work 2 days a week?

Warren Gardner: It is both of us. We go around town looking at what needs to be done.

Jen O'Connell: Who is under Professional Services?

Warren Gardner: That would be Go Tree Service.

Jen O'Connell: Do we pay them as we use them or do we pay a flat fee?

Warren Gardner: They are on an as needed basis. They are paid for the day.

Jennifer Barrett: We pulled \$20,000 out of this and put it in the Police line.

Jen O'Connell: Are you finding that there is more work to be done?

Warren Gardner: Yes, there is.

Jen O'Connell: Do you have anything for Capital?

Warren Gardner: I am looking for a bucket truck.

Russell Wells: Do we always buy new?

Keith Caruso: We are a green community so we have to buy new.

Warren Gardner: This truck would eliminate my having to hire a contractor to do some of the work. The town should be able to get about 25 years out of this truck.

Jen O'Connell: At some point are we looking at putting someone on full time in this position?

Keith Caruso: If Warren leaves, we may have to think about this.

Warren Gardner concluded his meeting at 6:58 p.m.

Gary Nelson, Sewer Commissioner, was in to discuss his budget at 7:00 p.m.

Jen O'Connell: What is going on in the Sewer Department?

Gary Nelson: Nothing major is coming up. The Upper Blackstone Assessment went up \$100,000.

Jen O'Connell: How often do you meet?

Gary Nelson: We meet once a month. If we need to add an additional meeting, we do.

Jen O'Connell: Do you have enough staff at the treatment plant?

Keith Caruso: We are putting in for another position. We were going to fill it this year, but we held off.

William Pratt: Is there a connection between the water and sewer?

Sean Hendricks: All sewer flow goes to the Upper Blackstone.

Jennifer Barrett: All the water comes from Aquarion.

Sean Hendricks: They are your vendor.

William Pratt: I don't have a choice of who I get my water from. This is a monopoly. Who holds them accountable?

Sean Hendricks: The State holds them accountable. The Town has to get water from somewhere. Aquarion owns those wells in town.

Jen O'Connell: What percentage of the Town does not have sewers?

Gary Nelson: About 30% is not sewerred. Mostly West Millbury.

Russell Wells: What do you have under Professional Services?

Gary Nelson: That would be our engineering firm.

Keith Caruso: Infrastructure repairs are also in there. We subcontract some of the jobs that we cannot do.

Russell Wells: What about Capital Outlay?

Keith Caruso: That would be for replacing pumps, sewer covers etc.

Jen O'Connell: Is the sewer rate going down?

Jennifer Barrett: This will be calculated once we figure out the indirect costs.

Russell Wells: How would you assess our sewer system?

Gary Nelson: We did an I/I study and repairs are being done. We are working in phases to get the town done. We do need to upgrade one of our pump stations.

Jen O'Connell: Is your Enterprise Fund doing okay?

Gary Nelson: We have about \$3,000,000. The cost of replacing a pump station is about \$2,000,000. We do look for federal money to help with the cost.

Russell Wells: There is a truck mentioned under Capital Outlay.

Keith Caruso: We were going to wait on that because of the pump station.

William Pratt: Would this also be used to plow?

Keith Caruso: Yes, it would.

Gary Nelson concluded his meeting at 7:34 p.m.

Public Works

Jennifer Barrett: I broke down his departments by sections.

Jen O'Connell: Are you down one mechanic or two?

Keith Caruso: I am down one.

Russell Wells: How long have you been in charge of the DPW?

Keith Caruso: I have had this position for 4 years. I have been with the DPW for 16 years.

Jen O'Connell: Are you looking for an assistant?

Sean Hendricks: That would be more like a co-director, with engineering certification.

Russell Wells: Did you lose your assistant?

Keith Caruso: When the Director left and I took on his duties, no one replaced my position.

Jen O'Connell: Our Charter states that the DPW Director needs to have an engineering degree. That is why we haven't technically filled that position. Even with the engineering degree, we would still have to have someone come in to do some of the engineering.

Sean Hendricks: We pay \$175.00 an hour for engineering services. If we get someone with an engineering degree, it would save us money in that respect. We would also be able to have Keith and that person to share duties and be able to focus on what they need to focus on..

Jen O'Connell: You are not adding anyone else?

Keith Caruso: No, I am not.

Jen O'Connell: Why is there so much more money in overtime?

Keith Caruso: This is because they received an increase in salary due to their contract.

Jennifer Barrett: The hours did not change, just the rate.

Keith Caruso: A lot of the overtime is for the Transfer Station. They only have 2 people there and if one or both of them is out on a Saturday, we have to pay overtime for the people to replace them for the day.

Sean Hendricks: If you look at the financial model, the Public Works category only changed by ½ %.

Jen O'Connell: What is the priority on the roads?

Keith Caruso: We are working on potholes as they come in. We bought a hot box to patch holes. This can only be used if we keep it hot. We do use cold patch, but that won't last as long.

Jen O'Connell: How are the roads and bridges?

Keith Caruso: We will be finishing Millbury Ave this year. I would like to get all the main roads done.

Sean Hendricks: We do have a paving plan.

Keith Caruso: We are still waiting on permitting for the bridge on Wheelock.

Russell Wells: Who writes the grants?

Sean Hendricks: The engineer does this.

Jen O'Connell: Why the difference in the clothing allowance?

Keith Caruso: The boot allowance went up.

Sean Hendricks: That is in their contract. They are allowed 2 pairs of boots a year.

Russell Wells: What is happening with the leases?

Jennifer Barrett: We paid off one of the leases. We are looking at the cost difference to buy versus leasing. We are also going to look at what is left of our Free Cash once the other capital expenses are paid for.

Snow and Ice

Keith Caruso: The overtime is for the guys coming in during the night to plow or sand.

Jen O'Connell: Are all of these people driving town trucks?

Keith Caruso: Yes, they are.

Jen O'Connell: Do they need special licenses to drive these vehicles?

Keith Caruso: They are pick up trucks, so no there are no special licenses needed.

Jen O'Connell: If we need to cut budgets, we can take some of it from the increase in this budget.

Jennifer Barrett: The Contracted Services also includes if we have to send trucks out to be repaired. There are some things that our mechanic cannot do.

William Pratt: Are you looking for more help?

Keith Caruso: I am looking for another mechanic.

Sean Hendricks: We also maintain all of our cruisers with the mechanic that we have.

Street Lights

Jen O'Connell: Why is this going up?

Keith Caruso: It is not just the lights that are involved in this budget. We had to replace a street light that was hit. We also had to fix the pads by Gorettis. We try to keep this as low as we can.

Transfer Station

Jen O'Connell: There is no real increase in costs.

Keith Caruso: We have a 1998 tractor that needs work. We did purchase some used trailers. The average cost of a new trailer is between \$300,000-350,000. We have been talking about having a subcontractor to come in to tow to Wheelabrator. We have found that there are times that it takes up to 3 hours or so for us to make one trip to Wheelabrator. If our person is gone that long, it leaves us with only one person at the Transfer Station. If we have a subcontractor, the cost would be about \$40,000-\$45,000 a year. This would save us from hiring another employee for about the same cost, without insurance.

Sean Hendricks: We have already been budgeting for this, but we haven't used it. We have been turning it back in to the Town.

Jennifer Barrett: We can start using the revolving fund to help pay for the hauling.

Jen O'Connell: How much in Transfer Station Revenues do we get a year?

Jennifer Barrett: In 2022 it was \$85,400. We also get a supplement from Wheelabrator. We budget for that revenue. The supplement is based on the tonnage processed.

Parks

Jen O'Connell: We knew that the Downtown Project was going to cost us more. What is under Professional Services?

Keith Caruso: That would be fences at the fields and irrigation work, etc.

Cemetery

Keith Caruso: We are working on a new Cemetery off of West Street. We have done the design. We have a plan once the current ones are full.

Fuel

Jen O'Connell: Do you have enough in the budget for this year?

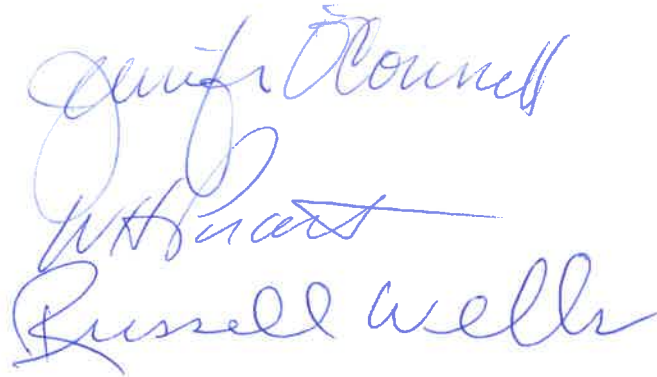
Keith Caruso: We are watching it.

Jennifer Barrett: We are estimating the prices for next year.

Keith Caruso: I am ok right now. We will need a fill up soon. We did raise this account last year, because we couldn't get through the year with what we had, given the excessive increases.

Keith Caruso concluded his meeting at 8:48 p.m.

Motioned by Pratt, seconded by Kuphal to adjourn at 8:54 p.m. Unanimous.



Handwritten signatures in blue ink:

- Jennifer O'Connell
- W. Pratt
- Russell Wells