

JOINT FINANCE COMMITTEE AND SELECTMEN'S MEETING MINUTES
UPSTAIRS MEETING ROOM
1 AVENUE A, TURNERS FALLS, MA
FEBRUARY 15, 2017

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Chairman John Hanold opens the meeting

- Meeting was opened at 6:00 PM in the Upstairs Meeting Room
- **Finance Committee Members Present:** John Hanold, Fred Bowman, Greg Garrison Michael Naughton and Patricia Pruitt. Chris Menegoni was absent.
- **Selectmen Present:** Richard Kuklewicz. Chris Boutwell arrived at 6:26 PM. Michael Nelson was absent.
- **Others Present:** Town Administrator Steven Ellis, Town Accountant Carolyn Olsen, DPW Superintendent Tom Bergeron. Building Inspector David Jensen, WPCF Superintendent Bob McDonald, and Richard Widmer.
- The Finance Committee Chair announced that the meeting is being recorded by MCATV, and asked if anyone else was recording the meeting. No one identified themselves.

Reserve Fund Transfer

The DPW Superintendent is requesting a Reserve Fund Transfer in the amount of \$15,000. A 2006 F350 just blew its motor and a repair would cost \$16,000 to replace the engine with a new engine. Since the repair cost is so high, and the vehicle is 11 years old the DPW Superintendent would like to replace the truck rather than fix it.

- This truck is critical for plowing roads in a timely manner. One whole section of roads would not be plowed until other trucks were finished with their routes. This could result in lack of access for emergency vehicles.
- After taking the truck for diagnosis, and getting a repair estimate, Mr. Bergeron began investigating the cost of replacing the vehicle. There are a variety of options available, and he believes that he will be able to purchase a replacement truck, with any necessary accessories, for \$38,000 or less.
- Mr. Bergeron noted that used vehicles are not much cheaper than new vehicles and have less available in warranties.
- There is currently about \$51,000 in the DPW Discretionary Account. Of this, \$28,000 is already earmarked, leaving \$23,000 for a replacement vehicle and other uses. An additional \$15,000 would provide enough to replace this vehicle.
- Mr. Kuklewicz is in favor of the transfer.

Finance Committee Moved:

To approve a reserve fund transfer in the amount of \$15,000 to the Article #16 of the May 7, 2016 ATM (DPW Discretionary Account 001-5-950-5420-030).

Vote: 5 In Favor 0 Opposed 0 Abstained

Mr. Boutwell arrived at 6:26 PM.

Selectmen Moved:

To recommend a reserve fund transfer in the amount of \$15,000 to the Article #16 of the May 7, 2016 ATM (DPW Discretionary Account 001-5-950-5420-030).

Vote: 2 In Favor 0 Opposed 0 Abstained

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Department Budgets

Building Inspector and Zoning Board of Appeals – Mr. Jensen presented his budgets.

Building Inspector

- The Building Inspector's Budget has been fairly level for several years.
- There is a problem with expenses creeping forward as permit activity increased sharply.
- The FY2018 request includes a request for assistance with filing.
- Travel has been under-budgeted in recent years, and as a result, Mr. Jensen has not submitted reimbursement requests for all of his travel. The FY2018 budget requests an increase of \$500, as Mr. Jensen plans to request full reimbursement for his mileage and is budgeting appropriately.
- The plumbing inspector has requested mileage reimbursement.
 - While it has not been researched, Ms. Olsen and Mr. Jensen believe that the per-inspection wage was always intended to include the cost of travel.
 - If a mileage reimbursement is granted, it would be easier for everyone if reimbursements were done as an annual stipend rather than a direct reimbursement of miles traveled.
 - Mr. Jensen's real preference would be to increase the per-inspection stipend to \$30 per inspection. While his budget was not created with that assumption, Mr. Jensen feels his request should be sufficient to cover a stipend increase. Since the wage schedule for appointed officials has already been approved, it was suggested that any increase be requested for Fiscal Year 2019.
- The workload has increased dramatically, and most notably the electrical inspections needed for solar installations. This is reflected in a request to increase the Electrical Inspector line from \$725.
- Solar installations also take a surprisingly high amount of office time, particularly for the Administrative Assistant.
- Mr. Jensen is requesting \$2,000 in a new line for someone from a temporary agency to come in and help with filing. Filing is currently further behind than it has been in over 20 years. This is mostly due to the increased volume of permit requests, particularly for solar permits, which is taking a proportionately larger amount of office time. Mr. Hanold asked if this will be a continuing request in future years. Mr. Jensen expects it will be.
- Mr. Naughton asked how Mr. Jensen expects the new software to impact the situation. In the long term, it should allow the office to function with two people. The implementation is expected to require significantly more work in the short term.

Zoning Board of Appeals

- Mr. Jensen is requesting \$300 for maps, including paper maps. The problem with using the assessors' maps is that they are computer scaled, meaning they are scaled to fit the computer screen rather than showing with a consistent scale, so you can't use a ruler to determine distance via a scale.

WPCF

- When Mr. McDonald took over, his first day on the job included a call from DEP saying that his pilot test was supposed to start Oct. 1st. Mr. McDonald was able to delay the start until January. This has involved a lot of work, coordination with different agencies, and applying for a grant for the

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pilot study itself. Mr. McDonald hopes to hear about the grant soon, but has requested a special article for the same amount as the grant in case the grant is not received.

- The operating budget itself shows a slight overall decrease from FY2017, although some of the numbers have moved around. There is a fair amount of unpredictability due to the 12 months of the pilot test
- It's been hard to restart the Montague Process after it was stopped for so long, and more so because we're trying to restart it in the winter.
- The Chief Operator position is currently filled on a part-time basis by a retired employee to provide needed expertise in the Montague Process through the pilot test period. The position is budgeted as a full-time position at the first step for FY2018 because there is no guarantee that Mr. Little will be able to continue to work part time through next January.
- Mr. McDonald feels that there are two employees that would be able to be promoted into the Chief Operator position once they are able to pass the test for the required Grade 6 license.
- Professional Services is quite large for FY2017 because we had to rearrange budget lines to increase that account and prove to DEP that \$62,000 was available towards the costs of the pilot test in addition to other needs from that account.
- The \$60,000 request for Sludge Disposal is a risk. We aren't shipping sludge out right now, but since we won't know until January 2018 if we can continue with the process, Mr. McDonald budgeted for sludge disposal for the last five months of FY2018 in case they have to return to traditional treatment methods.
- If the process is brought back to the level it was at before the shut down, it seems unlikely that the state will require the plant to go back to traditional treatment methods.
- The CSO expense is about controlling the flows coming into the plant. The problem now is that if we get ½ inch of rain, the flows into the plant increase dramatically in a short period of time. The budget request has increased in part to put sensors in different locations to determine where the leaks are coming from so they can be eliminated. The state mandates a certain level of expenditure for addressing inflow and infiltration each year.
- Mr. Hanold expressed pleasure that the operating budget was decreasing, but asked about other requests.
- Special Article Requests will include:
 - \$48,500 for a new truck. The WPCF currently has a 2002 pickup with a rotted frame and rotted body. Mr. McDonald is asking for a F350 so equipment can be added to the vehicle so staff will be able to do work at the pump stations rather than contracting it out.
 - \$85,000 for a feasibility study. At the end of the pilot study, they will have to look at what will be needed to maintain the process. The study would provide information on the best approach for needed upgrades.
 - \$35,000 for valve automation, relocation of VFD's, and to complete the SCADA alarm system.
 - \$120,000 for pilot tests expenses as a safety valve if the requested state grant is not received. If we receive the requested grant, we will know in time to remove this article from the Annual Town Meeting warrant.
 - \$80,000 to remove and replace two underground fuel storage tanks. We're under a state mandate to pull the underground fuel storage tanks and replace them. One is right under a lot of electrical

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lines, so we will petition the state to fill it with concrete rather than take it out. The other will be removed, and two new tanks will be installed to replace it.

- Mr. Hanold noted that we usually ask if any requests can be postponed, but it doesn't appear that any of these can wait. Mr. McDonald noted that he originally asked for more items, but scaled it down to what he absolutely needs.

Ms. Pruitt left the meeting at 8:06 PM

Special Articles at March 2, 2017 Special Town Meeting

1. Receive the report of the Public Works Facility Planning Committee and act thereon.
2. Amend the classification plan by adding WPCF Chief Operator at Grade F.
3. Amend the classification plan by changing the title of the WPCF Senior Clerk/Lab Technician to Administrative Assistant/Lab Technician at Grade D.
4. Amend the classification plan by modifying the duties of the WPCF Operator/Laborer.
5. Amend the classification plan by changing the title of WPCF Operator to Wastewater Technician at Grade D.
6. Amend the classification plan by adding the title of WPCF Lead Mechanic at Grade E.
7. Amend the classification plan by adding the title of WPCF Lead Operator at Grade E.
8. Establishment of a special injury leave indemnity fund for payment of injury leave compensation or medical bills incurred by a police officer during the performance of his/her duties. This acceptance would also allow insurance reimbursements to go into this fund rather than being a general receipt.

Selectmen Moved:

To recommend approval of Article #8, establishing a special injury leave indemnity fund under MGL Chapter 40, Section 111F.

Vote: 2 In Favor 0 Opposed 0 Abstained

Finance Committee Moved:

To recommend approval of Article #8, establishing a special injury leave indemnity fund under MGL Chapter 40, Section 111F.

Vote: 5 In Favor 0 Opposed 0 Abstained

9. Appropriate an additional \$3,000 as the town's share of AIP-19. \$8,350 was previously appropriated.

- Mr. Naughton asked why the additional funding was needed. This information will be received at or before the Town Meeting.

Selectmen Moved:

To recommend approval of Article #9, appropriating an additional \$3,000 as the town's share of AIP-19, to be funded by \$2,500 from Airport Retained Earnings and \$500 from Free Cash.

Vote: 2 In Favor 0 Opposed 0 Abstained

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Finance Committee Moved:

To recommend approval of Article #9, appropriating an additional \$3,000 as the town's share of AIP-19, to be funded by \$2,500 from Airport Retained Earnings and \$500 from Free Cash.

Vote: 3 In Favor 0 Opposed 1 Abstained

10. Appropriate money to stabilize the Strathmore Building per order of the State Fire Marshal.

- Final cost is expected to fall in \$60,000-\$80,000 range. The goal will be making the building weather tight and relatively intruder proof.
- The RPF will cover the areas of boarding access points, roof work, and debris removal.
- Mr. Hanold noted that if we fund this article from Town General Stabilization, we are sort of obligating ourselves to replenish the fund at our earliest convenience.

Selectmen Moved:

To recommend approval of Article #10, up to a request for \$100,000, to stabilize the Strathmore Building, to be funded from the Town General Stabilization Fund.

Vote: 2 In Favor 0 Opposed 0 Abstained

Finance Committee Moved:

To recommend approval of Article #10, up to a request for \$100,000, to stabilize the Strathmore Building, to be funded from Town General Stabilization.

Vote: 4 In Favor 0 Opposed 0 Abstained

Topics not anticipated within in the 48 hour posting requirements - none

Next Meeting Dates:

February 22, 2017 FCTS, Initial meeting with CIC

March 1, 2017 GMRSD

Meeting adjourned at 8:32 PM

List of Documents and Exhibits:

- February 8, 2017 Minutes
- WPCF FY2018 Budget Requests and Budget Q & A
- Airport Budget Q & A

Minutes Approved February 22, 2017

John Hanold, Finance Committee Chair

Richard Kuklewicz, Selectboard Chair

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Airport Budget Q & A

1. The marginal notes on several lines don't seem to indicate why FY2018 requests money for items not requiring any spending in FY2017 (Dues, Postage, Legal, Professional & Technical, Lights, etc.). What is behind the continuation?

The Commission is trying to get a handle on the expenses related to our direction to the Manager to attend seminars to remain current in his position, so we have adjusted the Dues line to reflect the dues to MAMA (Mass Airport Management Association). That allows us to separate the Dues from other seminars and training that may occur throughout the year.

Postage is always a guess, but we felt that the \$100 is in line with the nearly \$70 spent last year. The Legal line is based on the fact that this year we have some potentially contentious leases coming to the end of their term that may require the assistance of counsel to renegotiate.

MassDOT sometimes has grant programs that the FAA does not participate in, so we have the Professional & Technical line to cover our up-front costs of getting a consultant, bid advertising, etc., so we can take advantage of those opportunities. We also eliminated Advertising, as it is better covered in this line. For example, we are in the queue for a fencing project in the neighborhood of \$100,000 that will be funded by a grant, but we will need to advertise for the bids in advance of the grant award.

In a recent project, the Beacon lights were changed from the previous models and we want to be sure we have the bulbs on hand to replace them as they burn out. In the past, we paid for those out of Buildings & Grounds maintenance, but with the upgraded towers, we want to better track the effectiveness of our new equipment and maintenance program.

2. Office Supplies and House Expenses seem erratic from year to year. Is spending being pushed between years?

The house expenses do vary quite a bit, we have tried to make a "best guess" on what's next. Last year we had to replace a toilet, and do some other minor repairs (including some interior painting); we expect that only some routine maintenance will be needed this coming year.

Office supplies are erratic due to the changes in technology and our printing needs. I don't recall exactly why the expenses were so great the previous year, but we may have needed to purchase parts and supplies for our printer. Also, we received a new security system, and I think we purchased a replacement chair or other ancillary office materials at that time.

Overall, we are trying to keep our spending to a minimum, while maximizing the safety of the Airport. Whenever possible, we look to have grants cover our expenses, as our share is usually 5%, with the state kicking in 5%, and the FAA carrying the lion's share at 90%. This is the year that the FAA has approved our Master Plan to go forward, which (in addition to other things) we expect will allow us to free up some land for industrial development that won't interfere with Airport operations.