

Finance Committee Minutes

January 12th 2012

The meeting was called to order at 7:15PM with Mr. David Herrick, Mr. Bill Hattendorf, Mr. Edgar Zukauskas and Mrs. Prudence Spaulding present. Mr. Michael Skorput was present.

The minutes for January 5th were approved as read, Mr. Zukauskas 1st, Mr. Herrick 2nd passed unanimously.

Prior to reviewing the budgets in hand, Mr. Zukauskas stated that he was concerned that departments were coming to the Finance Committee for funds from the Reserve Fund that should have been requested in their yearly budgets. He was searching for a way to remind the department heads that the Reserve Fund was not designed for this purpose. Mr. Skorput suggested that for the past years the departments have been asked to keep their budgets as low as possible and this might be the cause of the shortfall in the requests.

Budget requests for the loader loan and the septic tank loan were passed since both of these loans are being paid off this year. Mr. Zukauskas will ask the town treasurer to provide the committee with a list of existing loans and when they will have been completed, so that better planning for large items can be made with that knowledge.

The Police and Highway budgets will be reviewed in a joint meeting with the selectmen and therefore expedited.

The committee then turned their attention to the budgets requests:-

Council on Aging-Transportation [7054111.00] (\$5,497) level funded, {\$5,497} Mrs. Spaulding 1st, Mr. Hattendorf 2nd passed unanimously.

Ambulance 2010 [80750.14] (\$30,176) now requesting {\$29,505.30} to make a partial payment to pay off the loan on the new ambulance. Mrs. Spaulding 1st, Mr. Zukauskas 2nd unanimously passed.

Town Accountant Expenses [10135.03] (\$3,494) now requesting {\$3,635} Mrs. Spaulding 1st, Mr. Hattendorf 2nd passed with Mr. Zukauskas recusing himself.

Board of Health [70510.01] (\$1,500) level funded {\$1,500} Mrs. Spaulding 1st, Mr. Hattendorf 2nd passed unanimously.

Board of Health Expenses[70510.02] (\$5,000) level funded {\$5,000} Mrs. Spaulding 1st, Mr. Zukauskas 2nd passed unanimously.

Board of Health Salaries [70510.00] (\$1,250) level funded {\$1,250} Mrs. Spaulding 1st, Mr. Hattendorf 2nd passed unanimously.

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Berkshire County Retirement Association [90911.00] (\$67,440) now requesting {\$79,497}, there was some discussion about the raise in the requested amount. Mr. Skorput stated that the state had offered "early retirement" in 2007, which two staff took, but then the town now has to contribute its share to the Berkshire County Retirement system to pay for this incentive!. Our town is looking at a few people who are approaching retirement age and the state is insisting that we are fully vetted! Mr. Zukauskas 1st, Mr. Hattendorf 2nd passed unanimously.

Hatchery Road [80750.12] (\$27962) now requesting {\$26,975} this is to pay off the loan that has been used to supplement the state's grant which did not cover such things as engineering costs, drainage, and some paving. (This loan will be paid off by the next payment after this one!) Mrs. Spaulding 1st, Mr. Herrick 2nd passed unanimously.

Assessor's Tax Map Update [10141.55] (\$2,900) level funded {\$2900} prior to making the motion Mr. Zukauskas asked Mr. Herrick if this map service was helpful when assigning "911" numbers? Mr. Herrick stated that before assigning numbers where there was a large property he often had to walk measuring the lengths on the roads! Mrs. Spaulding 1st, Mr. Herrick 2nd passed unanimously.

Assessor's Consultant [10141.77] (\$5,000) level funded {\$5,000} Mr. Zukauskas 1st, Mr. Herrick 2nd passed unanimously.

Assessor's Revaluation [10142] (\$15,000) level funded {\$15,000} Members were reminded that this only paid for 1/3 of the total cost, which costs \$45,000 every three years. Mr. Zukauskas 1st, Mr. Herrick 2nd passed unanimously.

Assessor's Computer Contract [10141.44] (\$5,234) now requesting {\$5334} Mrs. Spaulding 1st, Mr. Hattendorf 2nd passed unanimously.

Assessor's General Expense [10141.01](\$2,900) level funded {\$2,900} there was some question about why there is a charge of \$500 for the "Deeds" part of the budget, Mr. Skorput stated that the Registry charges \$75 every time we change the listing! Mrs. Spaulding 1st, Mr. Zukauskas 2nd passed unanimously.

Tax Title (Treasurer) [10149.00] (\$3,000) level funded {\$3,000} Mrs. Spaulding 1st, Mr. Hattendorf 2nd passed unanimously.

Interest Expense [80752.00] (\$5,000) level funded {\$5,000} this money is used when the cash flow does not cover the bills. And the committee needs to remember this since there is some question arising from the present exploration of quarterly billing and comparing those costs with the interest payments needed to cover the lack of adequate cash flow. Mrs. Spaulding 1st, Mr. Zukauskas 2nd passed unanimously.

Banking Services [80753.00] (\$200) level funded {\$200} Mrs. Spaulding 1st, Mr. Zukauskas 2nd passed unanimously.

Treasurer Computer Service [10147.88] (\$3280) level funded {\$3280} Mr. Herrick 1st, Mr. Zukauskas 2nd passed unanimously.

Cemetery Officer's Salary [20491.00] (\$400) level funded {\$400} Mrs. Spaulding 1st, Mr. Hattendorf 2nd passed unanimously.

Cemetery Expenses [20491.02] (\$1,300) now requesting {\$2,700} this budget sponsored a lot of discussion. There was a covering note on the budget request stating that the gentleman that "did" the cemeteries each summer was requesting that the town pay for the gas and expenses for his own personal truck which he uses to carry the mowers and the gas cans to the various sites where he is working. While all the members feel that this gentleman (Bobby Palmer) does an excellent job of keeping the cemeteries in New Marlborough looking just beautiful, and they were concerned that he should not be "out of pocket" and probably has been in the years past, there was some question as to how to rectify this situation. A suggestion was made that he use the "red" highway pick-up during the summer months and thus the town would provide the gas for that truck and do the maintenance on that vehicle. Meanwhile the Cemetery Expense Budget should be passed to cover the various costs incurred as a result of the work on the cemeteries. Mr. Zukauskas 1st, Mr. Hattendorf 2nd passed unanimously.

The committee is putting "on Hold" all the salary budgets requests.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:15PM and the next meeting will be held on January 19th at 7:00PM at the Town Hall.

Respectfully submitted,

Prudence Spaulding, Secretary.

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