

Finance Committee Minutes

February 28th 2019

The meeting was called to order at 6:00PM. Present were Mr. Steven Klein, Mrs. Sandra Walker, Mr. John Pshenishny, Mr. Douglas Newman (arrived at 6:15PM), and Mrs. Prudence Spaulding. Guests included Mrs. Marsha Pshenishny, Ms. Mari Enoch, Ms. Michele Shalaby, Mr. Richard Long, and Mr. Thomas Stalker.

Mr. Klein stated that he had received a letter from Mrs. Marilyn Fracasso resigning from the Committee. The Committee expressed thanks for all of her work. There was some discussion about filling this vacancy, however the work on the budget is well underway and a replacement would have to be found by the select board which would take time and thus make it too late to be effective to appoint a replacement.

The minutes for February 21st were accepted with an amendment, Mrs. Walker 1st, Mr. Pshenishny 2nd passed unanimously.

The Building Inspector, Owen Wright, requested a transfer from the **Reserve Fund** to the **Building Inspector's Expenses** [60241.00]. The previous Building Inspector had not requested adequate funds for training and mileage. The present balance in that account is \$.45. Mr. Wright is requesting \$2071.09 to cover expenses. Mr. Klein made a motion to transfer \$2100 Mr. Pshenishny 2nd passed with Mrs. Spaulding recusing.

Mr. Klein then reviewed in general the total picture of the budget so far. He noted that all the budget requests were not yet in, but with those budgets submitted there is a total increase of \$135,146.94 which is close to the allowable increase of 2 ½%. He suggested that the committee start by reviewing some of the smaller budgets.

Unpachene Park [50650.00] (\$4,000) now requesting {\$5,000} though there was documentation included in the request stating that that committee had hired the White Engineering Inc. from Pittsfield to develop a plan to meet the DEP requirement for doing much needed river bank repairs, the Finance Committee would like the chairman of the Unpachene Park Committee to come and provide more information about their proposed plan. It was also noted that some of the past yearly funds had been put aside for the repairs of the river banks.

Mr. Klein then directed the committee's attention to the three Library accounts which came with fulsome documentation. **Library Expenses** [50610.01](\$45,915) now requesting

{ \$46,991}; **Library Salaries** [50610.02] (\$ 59,079) now requesting {\$60,257} ; and **Library Trustees** [50610.03] (\$320) level funded. A motion was made by Mrs. Spaulding to approve all three with Mr. Pshenishny 2nd , however Mr. Newman questioned the amount to be spent upon books DVD's and Periodicals stating that he thought that the Library may not need to spend so much on hard copies of DVD's or periodicals if online versions are available and less costly. He made a motion to amend the original motion with holding the Library Expense account. There was no second. The group then returned to the original motion and the motion passed with Mr. Newman abstaining

Cultural Council Trust Fund [50640.00] (\$1,000) is now requesting {\$1,250}. The documentation to support this increase reported that the costs are increasing and that the Cultural Council uses this money a seed money to get donations though a mailing to fund their various activities which benefit the town inhabitant's namely grants which were awarded so that different activities could be provided for the town. This in 2019 amounted to \$16,000 which includes the state contribution of \$2500. Rather than a general mailing Mr. Newman suggested that the Cultural Council use "Maggie's list" to solicit funds for its work and Mrs. Walker suggested the use of e-mails and/or create their own targeted e-mail list to save much of the expense of using regular mail exclusively to solicit funds for its work. Mrs. Spaulding supported the general mailing stating that she felt that people receiving the mailed request were reminded of the work done by the Council and responded to the mailing. Mr. Newman again stated that the Council should seek another way to obtain funds. Mrs. Spaulding made a motion to allot this account \$1125, with Mr. Pshenishny 2nd but this motion did not pass with Mrs. Walker and Mr. Newman voting against it and Mr. Klein abstaining. Mr. Newman made a motion to level fund this account for {\$1000} Mrs. Walker 2nd and the motion passed with Mr. Klein continuing to abstain.

Mr. Klein reminded the Committee that the role of the Finance Committee does not include instructing the department heads on how to run their department.

The group then discussed the Debts and Interest. Mr. Klein noted that the loans on the 2013 *Town Hall* loan [80750.18] had been paid off; the loan on the 2013 *Highway Truck* [80750.17] had been paid off, the loan on 2014 *Highway Truck* [80750.19] of \$24,420 will have been paid on in 2019, the 2014 *Highway Loader* [80750.20] of \$17,797 which will also be paid off. This leaves the **Highway 2015 Truck** [80750.22] (\$46,384) now requesting {\$45,292}; the **Fire Truck** (\$ 72,600) now requesting {\$70,400}, and the **Town Grader** [80750.24] {\$45,500}. Mr. Newman made a motion to pass all these accounts with Mr. Pshenishny 2nd passed unanimously.

Berkshire County Retirement [90911.00] (\$144,689) now requesting {\$158,015} Mr. Klein 1st, Mrs. Spaulding 2nd passed unanimously.

Veterans 'Benefit Trust Chapter 115 [90918.00], (\$12,000) no current figures available.

Veterans' District [6025.00] (\$6,671) now requesting {\$6,795.81}, Mr. Newman 1st, Mr. Klein 2nd passed unanimously.

Berkshire Regional Planning [6012.00] ((\$1,173) now requesting {\$1202.33} Mrs. Spaulding 1st, Mr. Newman 2nd passed unanimously.

Community Health Program [70521.00], (\$1,000) level funded {\$1,000} Mrs. Spaulding 1st, Mr. Newman 2nd passed with Mrs. Walker opposed.

Visiting Nurse Association [70522.00] (\$200) level funded Mr. Newman 1st, Mrs. Spaulding 2nd passed with Mrs. Walker opposed.

Mental Health [70523.00] (\$ 600) level funded {\$600} Mr. Newman 1st, Mr. Klein 2nd passed with Mrs. Walker opposed.

Mrs. Walker stated that she did not approve of using tax monies to support charities.

Council on Aging Transportation [70541.00] (\$5,720) level funded {\$5720}. Mrs. Spaulding explained that this paid the Southern Berkshire Elderly Transportation Corp. so that seniors or disabled could be picked up at their homes and taken to Great Barrington once a week to shop, etc. Mr. Newman 1st, Mr. Pshenishny 2nd passed with Mrs. Spaulding recusing.

Constable Salary [60211.00] (\$475) level funded {\$475} Mr. Newman 1st, Mr. Pshenishny 2nd passed unanimously.

Constable's Expenses (\$95) now requesting {\$50} Mr. Newman 1st, Mr. Pshenishny 2nd passed unanimously.

Building Inspector's Expenses [60241.02] (\$2,177) now requesting {\$3,475} former building Inspector did not include in last year's budget traveling and training and the number of inspections that this new inspector is doing .Mr. Newman 1st, Mr. Pshenishny 2nd passed with Mrs. Spaulding recusing

Building Inspector's Salary [60241.04] ((\$ 20,789) Level funded (though this is a salary item) {\$20,789} Mr. Newman 1st, Mr. Pshenishny 2nd passed with Mrs. Spaulding recusing.

Building Inspector's Software Expenses [60241.15] (\$2,845) now requesting {\$2,990} Mr. Newman 1st, Mr. Pshenishny 2nd passed with Mrs. Spaulding recusing.

New Marlborough Rescue Expenses [60291.77], **Rescue Clerical** [60291.78] and **Rescue Stipend** [60291.80} on hold for Ms. Krejci to come in.

Tree Warden Salary [60294.00] (\$1250) salary item, put on hold

Tree Work [60294.01] (\$15,000) now requesting {\$20,000} committee will ask him to come in and discuss his tree work plans.

Berkshire County Communications [60299.00] (\$10,284) now requesting {\$10, 591.83} Mr. Pshenishny 1st, Mr. Newman 2nd passed unanimously.

911 Coordinator [60295.00] (\$100), Level funded {\$100} Mr. Pshenishny 1st, Mr. Newman 2nd passed unanimously.

There was brief discussion about the school payment assessment. This past summer there was a committee focusing on a change in the formula resulting in the individual school district towns' payments. But Ms. Shalaby stated that all the towns in the district have to vote on the proposed changes thus the current method of establishing this year's payments would not change. Mr. Newman stated that he did not know how the town's assessments were made and thought that it was solely based on numbers of pupils living in the town. Mr. Klein stated that the number of students from each town was only one of the factors of the assessment formula.

Looking at the proposed Finance Committee meetings, Thursday March 7th there is a SBRSD Finance Committee Meeting at 5:00PM with the New Marlborough Finance Committee meeting at 7:00PM. There will be a New Marlborough Finance Committee meeting on Thursday March 14th at 6:00PM and a joint meeting with the BOS on March 21st at 6:00PM.

The meeting adjourned at 8:10 Mr. Newman 1st, Mrs. Walker 2nd passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted.

Prudence Spaulding Secretary