

# Finance Committee Minutes

## March 1<sup>st</sup> 2018

The meeting was called to order at 6:05PM. Present were Mrs. Fracasso (acting chair), Mr. Robert Miller, Mr. John Pshenishny, Mrs. Sandra Walker, Mr. Steve Klein, Mrs. Prudence Spaulding, with guests Mrs. Marsha Pshenishny, Ms. Mari Enoch, Mr. Myles Pierce, Tree Warden, and Ms. Tara White.

Minutes for February 22<sup>nd</sup> were accepted as read, with Mrs. Walker asking if she understood that should the Police Salary budget be accepted the officer going to the academy would receive his salary of \$17 per hour for 40 hours per week while he attended the academy, but would be unable to work during that time as a policeman. To which Mrs. Fracasso stated that was correct. Minutes were accepted, Mr. Miller 1<sup>st</sup>, Mr. Pshenishny 2<sup>nd</sup> passed unanimously.

The following budgets were reviewed; other budgets that included salaries were put on hold since Mrs. Fracasso, the acting chair, was an employee of the town. These budgets will be reviewed at the next meeting when Mr. Carson, the chair, will return.

Mr. Myles Pierce, the Tree Warden, came to explain his request for a raise for the Tree Warden Stipend [60294.00] from (\$1,000) to {\$1,500}. He stated that he was new to the job and had experienced calls at all hours of the day and evening from people who thought that their trees were dangerous. Mr. Klein asked what his job entailed. Mr. Peirce stated that he checked the roads for trees that might prove dangerous, he responds to National Grid, he evaluates the trees and cooperates with John Fields to remove some of these trees. He said that he has experienced about 60 calls and checks trees as he drives about on personal errands. He also alerts home owners when trees will be removed near their homes. Ms. Walker asked about whether Mr. Fields had bid on the work to which she was told "Yes". There was a question as to how much land the town owned on either side of the roads, and thus was responsible for trees on that land. Mr. Pierce stated that Mr. Loring had said it was about 10' from the side of the road. Mr. Pierce asked if the Tree Warden's budget had been passed, and was told that it had and he stated that the sum of \$15,000 would only pay for about four days' work. Mr. Miller reminded the Committee that the quantity of work needed was extensive, and the town's budget was limited. Mr. Peirce left and the discussion centered about the stipend. Ms. Walker stated that she was concerned about "stipends". Mrs. Spaulding stated that there were stipends assigned for folks to attend meetings maybe for two hours a month or less and their stipends were not reduced if did they did not attend these meetings and this stipend was in fact

a payment for skill and a lot of his free time. Mr. Klein made a motion to assign \$1,250 to this account, with Mr. Miller 2<sup>nd</sup>, passed with Mrs. Walker abstaining.

**Assessor's Consultant** [10141.77] (0) now requesting {\$5,000}. When asked why last year's budget did not request any money, and it was noted that there was a balance carried forward, then why would there be a request for \$5,000 for FY19? Ms. Enoch came forward to explain that balances that were carried forward were those which related to items the bills for which had not been received in the current year. These balances would be placed in Free Cash at the close of that year. Mr. Klein made a motion to assign \$2,500 to this account, with Mrs. Spaulding 2<sup>nd</sup> passed with Mr. Pshenishny recusing.

**Tax Title Collector** [10148.00] (\$500) now requesting {\$1300} when asked about the account it was noted that the town was anticipating the taking of 11 properties and expenses for these actions would amount to about \$1300. Mrs. Spaulding 1<sup>st</sup>, Mrs. Walker 2<sup>nd</sup> passed unanimously.

**Town Clerk's Expenses** [10161.01] (\$2,200) level funded {\$2,200}, Mrs. Walker stated that she had looked into this budget. Mr. Klein stated that in business the attendance of conferences etc. was usually included in the salary contracts of the employee. The town clerk is an elected position with no formal contract. However Mrs. Spaulding stated that she had discussed the town's support of conference and educational meeting's attendance with Mr. Nathaniel Yohalem one of the selectmen and asked whether this was covered in the personnel policy's manual. To which he stated that it was not. Mrs. Spaulding suggested that once the budgetary process was completed that this should be discussed with the select board with the hopes of including it in the personnel policy manual. A motion to accept this budget by Mr. Miller 1<sup>st</sup>, Mr. Klein 2<sup>nd</sup> passed with Ms. Walker abstaining.

**Town Records Preservation** [100161.02] (\$4,000) now requesting {\$5,000}. This account had been put on hold so that Ms. Walker could do some research. Mr. Pshenishny questioned whether the records had to be done every year? Ms. White replied that by doing some records yearly the town would not fall behind. Mr. Klein referred to the attached informational paper in which the state specifically requires records prior to 1870 not be destroyed. The method of preservation was discussed briefly with Mrs. Walker suggesting that perhaps a program should be initiated and the necessary funds be taken from the free cash to effect the preservation of the identified records. The budget was passed for the amount \$4,000, Mr. Miller 1<sup>st</sup>, Mrs. Walker 2<sup>nd</sup> passed unanimously.

**Election Expenses** [10162.00] (\$2,225) now requesting {\$12,925} this request included the purchase of a voting machine the total cost for the machine and its programming which would be \$10,700. A motion was made to reserve the request for the purchase of the voting machine

until later and level fund the budget for {\$2,225} with Mrs. Spaulding 1<sup>st</sup>, and Mr. Klein 2<sup>nd</sup> passed unanimously.

**Animal Inspector's Expenses** [60293.77] (\$1060) now requesting {\$800} Mr. Klein 1<sup>st</sup>, Mr. Miller 2<sup>nd</sup> passed with Mrs. Spaulding recusing.

**Board of Health Expenses** [10150.01] (\$2,500) level funded {\$2,500}, his itemization attached revealed that he had spent only \$1,358 last year, and with this expense budget he was requesting about \$600 for contract services. This is the last year of the grant which provided him with these services so that people could make payments on line. His money is tracked in a revolving account. Mr. Klein made motion to assign \$1,500 to this account with Mrs. Spaulding 2<sup>nd</sup> passed unanimously.

**Transfer Station Expenses** [70519.03] (\$ 69,000) now requesting {\$73,000}, careful scrutiny of the itemization provided some questions about the inclusion of money for printing and postage. Mr. Klein made a motion to assign this account {\$72,000} with Mrs. Walker 2<sup>nd</sup> passed unanimously.

**Two Hall Account** [10192.70] (\$34,500) level funded {\$34,500} Ms. White was able to tell the group that this account had expended \$35,350 last year. Mrs. Walker 1<sup>st</sup>, Mr. Miller 2<sup>nd</sup> passed unanimously.

Mrs. Walker reviewed her questions on the school budget and asked Ms. White if the Egremont School closed would the school budget reflect a decrease. Ms. White stated that this would not be affected immediately. She also added that the teacher salary negotiations have not been finalized so the figure that the school has included in their budget is not firm and may increase or decrease.

The next meeting will be held on March 8<sup>th</sup> at 4:00 PM so that the members of the Finance Committee will be able to attend the public hearing of the school budget at 6:00PM.

A motion to adjourn at 7:35 was made by Mr. Klein seconded by everybody!

Respectfully submitted,

Prudence Spaulding, Secretary.