

Finance Committee Minutes

February 21st 2019

The meeting was called to order at 6:08PM. Present were Mr. Steve Klein, Mrs. Sandra Walker, Mr. John Pshenishny, Mrs. Marilyn Fracasso, Mr. Douglas Newman, and Mrs. Prudence Spaulding. Mrs. Marsha Pshenishny was a guest.

The minutes for November 20th were accepted as amended, Mr. Pshenishny 1st, Mr. Newman 2nd passed unanimously. The minutes for February 4th were accepted as read, Mrs. Fracasso 1st, Mr. Klein 2nd passed unanimously.

Process

Mr. Klein presented on a screen the budgets listed on an Excel program which would provide a paperless process for the committee to both review the new proposed budgets for FY2020 but also be able to review the budget request individually and then evaluate them in relation to those of FY2017, FY 2018 and FY 2019, identifying the proposed increases with the Finance Committee recommendations. But gathering all the different financial requests (including important details and supporting information) will allow the committee to track the financial totals in a viewable form.

Mr. Klein stated that, although the various department heads had been asked to submit their budgets by February 14th, only between 50 % and 60% had been received. Some budgets (i.e. the Highway budget) might take more time to compile. And he added that there was not the amount of supportive documentation that he had hoped would be included in the requests. He noted that the Library budget had indeed provided excellent documentation. Because there were only 50-60% of the budgets available the group would not start evaluating them at this meeting. Once the budget requests have been approved an electronic signature would be applied to the individual requests. But this would take place near the end of the total process so that if some budgets needed to be changed it could be done easily. Subtotals and final totals will appear on the Excel sheet providing information about the financial requests as they are entered and later approved.

Mrs. Spaulding will keep written records and will have the official printed copy of all submissions and approvals/recommendations.

Salaries

Prudence Spaulding
February 23rd 2019

The Board of Selectmen has asked the Finance Committee to use a 2% COLA increase when computing the salaries. Some budgets submissions have already requested more than 2% increases. When this occurs, documentation supporting the added increase is required. This might include a survey of neighboring towns and what they pay for a similar position or perhaps the job descriptions may have changed. .

Mr. Klein suggested that all salaries be put on hold and reviewed in executive session at a particular Finance Committee meeting. Those members of the Finance Committee who may have a "conflict of interest" should plan not to attend this part of the Finance Committee meeting. Some discussion resulted about this topic. Further discussion will take place. Mrs. Walker did state that the results of an Executive session needed to be made public after the issues had been resolved.

Mr. Newman questioned if we had to spend up to the 2 ½% increase allowed under state law without a town override, to which Mr. Klein replied that we had not done spent up to the 2 ½ % allowed increase last year. Mr. Newman also suggested that there be some reward for department that developed new methods of conserving funds. Mr. Pshenishny remarked that the members of this committee were working for the tax payer.

It is hoped by the next meeting enough budget submissions will be available and the Committee can begin to review them. Members were asked to attend the SBRSD's Finance Committee meeting on Monday February 25th at 4:30PM, and the SBRSD's Public Hearing of their budget on Thursday March 7th at 5:00 with the New Marlborough Finance Committee being held on March 7th at 7:00om.

A joint meeting with the BOS will be held on March 14th at 6:00PM, at that time Mr. Chuck Loring Highway Superintendent and Fire Chief, Mr. Graham Frank Police Chief and Mr. Freddy Friedman Transfer station chief will be asked to attend so that their budgets can be answered.

The next meeting of the Finance Committee will be February 28th at 6:00pm.

A motion to adjourn at 7:00PM was made by Mrs. Fracasso, Mr. Klein 2nd passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Prudence Spaulding, Secretary.

