

Finance Committee Minutes

March 23rd 2017

The meeting was called to order at 6:45PM when the minutes for March 16th were circulated. In attendance were Mr. John Pshenishny (who acted as the chairman), Mr. Robert Miller, Mrs. Marilyn Fracasso, and Mrs. Prudence Spaulding. Guests were Ms. Mari Enoch, Ms. Michele Shalaby, Mr. Nathaniel Yohalem, and Mr. Freddie Friedman.

The minutes were accepted as read, Mrs. Fracasso 1st, Mr. Miller 2nd passed unanimously.

Because, although there was a quorum, the specific members of the committee who had either jobs in the town or were married to someone working for the town and could not vote on some of the budgets like the salaries or stipends, Mrs. Fracasso went through the budgets and selected those budgets that were not related to anyone working or having a spouse working for the town.

Mr. Friedman brought a corrected budget for the Transfer Expenses [70519.03] with an increase of \$8,000. In order to accept this budget the Committee would have to rescind the budget of level funding already approved. He stated that if he did not get the increase he was sure that his budget would run over next year! This would require the presence of Mr. Mark Carson who, as the Chairman, had signed the original budget. Mr. Carson due to illness was not present. This request was put on HOLD.

The following budgets were then reviewed:-

Accounting Officer Expenses [10135.03] (\$4,515.00) now requesting {\$4,663.00}, this budget had been returned to the accountant for explanation about the increase. The increase now was supported by the bill from the computer programmer company. Mrs. Spaulding 1st, Mr. Pshenishny 2nd passed unanimously.

Town Hall Account [10192.70] (\$39,000) with last year's amount including \$8,000 salary for the custodian now requesting {\$34,500}. The town is trying to get salaried or items of stipend out of the general expense accounts. Thus the present request was minus \$8,000 but added some funds to cover other needed things. Because some of the items were hard to predict (such as the breakdown of the furnace last week), the Committee understood this. Mr. Miller 1st, Mrs. Fracasso 2nd passed unanimously.

Street Lights [20424.02] (\$ 5,000) now requesting {\$4848} at present the bill was \$404 per month for this service. Mr. Miller 1st, Mrs. Fracasso 2nd passed unanimously. The SBRSD presented four budget items;-

SBRSD Operating and Transportation [30000.01] (\$2,604,780) now requesting {\$2,833,330} put on HOLD so that more members of the Finance Committee could be present.

SBRSD Capital [30001.00] (\$86,862) now requesting {\$91,312} put on HOLD so that more members of the Finance Committee could be present.

SBRSD Boiler/Roof Bond Payment [no account Number] (\$19,544) now requesting {\$98,161} put on HOLD so that more Finance Committee members could be present.

SBRSD Vocation-Technical Education [30002.00] with new figures put on HOLD for the same reason as above.

Roads and Bridges[20422.05] budget had been put on hold because of the \$15,000 item tree work. The budget for Roads and Bridges had been \$205,000 last year and had been cut. Mrs. Spaulding referred back to the minutes where Mr. Loring stated that he would like to have it reinstated to \$205,000. Mr. Pshenishny was mystified as to why the tree work was not under the supervision of the Tree Warden. Mrs. Shalaby stated that this type of tree work was related only to the work on the roads. Mrs. Spaulding 1st, Mr. Miller 2nd passed unanimously.

Umpachene Falls Park [50650.00] (\$ 2,500) now requesting {\$4,300}. At the last Finance Committee meeting Ms. White stated that this account had been lowered temporarily last year by \$1,000 and the wild and destructive weather over the past twelve months had caused some serious erosion which would prove dangerous to the parks' visitors. This increase would allow some corrections of this severe damage. Mrs. Spaulding 1st, Mr. Miller 2nd passed unanimously.

Tree Work [60294.01] (\$15,000) now requesting {\$25,000} (this item came with a copy of the approved bid proposal). Some discussion took place about this request. Mrs. Spaulding referred back to the minutes of February 25th 2016 when Mr. Ruane, the tree Warden, had brought in Mr. John Fields who runs a company that deals with trees and their cutting and has worked for the Town before. Mr. Fields had reported that the cutting of trees along the road side often lengthened the life of the black-top otherwise hidden from the sun and that he suggested a five year (or more) program be instituted when so many miles of road would be identified and surveyed and the trees along that part of the road would be cut. He suggested a \$50,000 a year for the program. The Committee had felt that the towns' finances could not support such a figure. However Mrs. Spaulding stated that a few days ago Ms. White had told her that there was a program sponsored by the state that with matching funds the state would

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provide a forester to help decide the needed cuttings etc. Mrs. Spaulding did not know the details; however she stated that Ms. White would help locate this program. Mrs. Spaulding suggested that this item might be added to the various items that the Committee would review after Town Meeting. Mr. Miller made a motion to approve \$25,000 with Mrs. Fracasso 2nd Mrs. Spaulding voted "yes", but Mr. Pshenishny objected as he wanted a more complete bid for the project. The vote passed with $\frac{3}{4}$ affirmative votes.

Workmen's Compensation [90912.00] \$(11,200) now requesting {\$18,655}. Because the town has filed a large claim the Workmen's Compensation people suggested this figure. Mr. Miller 1st, Mrs. Fracasso 2nd passed unanimously.

Insurance Expense [90914.11] (\$78,000) level funded {\$78,000}. This insurance covers firemen and policemen since they cannot be covered by Workmen's Compensation. The insurance also covers the town's vehicles and buildings. Ms. Enoch stated that MIA usually inspects the various buildings every three years but has not as yet done so with our buildings. Earlier in the summer at a meeting between some of the members of the Finance Committee and the MIA representative it was suggested that the insurance on the town hall be raised. Ms. Enoch took this into account. And thus although last year's bill was \$7,112 less she added to this to cover the increased costs of replacing the buildings as well as the increase coverage of the Town Hall and perhaps the vehicles. Mrs. Spaulding 1st, Mr. Pshenishny 2nd passed unanimously.

Group Health Insurance [90914.70] (\$181,831.00) now requesting {\$196,221.00}; added support for this figure was attached. This Insurance covers ten employees under the family plan and one employee under the single plan, with the town paying \$193,221.00 and the employees paying \$64,407.00. Mr. Miller asked how many hours per week did the employee have to work to obtain the insurance and the answer was 20 hours per week. Mrs. Fracasso 1st, Mrs. Spaulding 2nd passed unanimously.

Medicare [90917.00] (\$13,100) now requesting {\$12,800} put on HOLD.

Veterans' Benefits [90918.00] (\$8,000) now requesting {\$10,000} a copy of an e-mail from Laurie J Hills, the Southern Berkshire District Director of the Veterans Services supported this request. Mrs. Spaulding 1st, Mrs. Fracasso 2nd passed unanimously.

Insurance Reimbursement [90920.00] (\$6,000) now requesting {\$5,000}. The New Marlborough's Personnel Policy (Section V-G) states that employees who qualify for health insurance from the Town but do not take it are entitled to an annual stipend of \$1,000 per year payable on June 30th. For FY 2018, five employees will qualify to receive \$1,000 should their status remain the same and they work until June 30th 2018. The 2018 request of \$5,000 shows a

decrease from FY 2017 as one employee took advantage of Health Insurance during FY 2017 and no longer qualifies for the stipend. Mrs. Spaulding 1st, Mr. Miller 2nd passed unanimously.

The Committee then discussed the next meeting and the members have decided to meet earlier than usual on next Thursday March 30th at 5:00PM when they will try to finish reviewing all the budgets.

The meeting adjourned (Mrs. Spaulding 1st, Mr. Miller 2nd passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Prudence Spaulding Secretary.

Mrs. Spaulding
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