

Finance Committee Minutes

February 23rd 2017

The minutes for February 14th 2017 were distributed at 6:30PM. In attendance were Mr. Mark Carson, Mr. Edgar Zukauskas, Mr. Thomas Stalker, Mr. John Pshenishny, Mrs. Marilyn Fracasso and Mrs. Prudence Spaulding. Guests were Police Chief Graham Frank, Ms. Tara White and Mrs. Marsha Pshenishny.

The meeting began at 6:40PM with the minutes being accepted as read, Mr. Pshenishny 1st, Mr. Zukauskas 2nd and passed with Mr. Stalker recusing since he was not at this meeting.

Chief Frank had brought his proposed budget in for discussion. Prior to the beginning of the discussion Mrs. Spaulding stated that while everyone on the Committee appreciated the work that his department did, the financial constraints this year were proving daunting. Increases in many budgets would not be able to be accommodated, and there were some that simply could not be cut or level funded. Chief Frank stated he knew of this situation and had tried in every way to keep his budget as low as he could. He explained that while the state police could and did offer coverage, on several occasions when immediate attention was needed they had taken up to an hour to be able to be present.

Police Salaries[60210.00] .the amount was expended in 20216 was \$90,698.54, the amount he was requesting this year was \$122,976.00. The chief's salary would be \$62,000, coverage and overtime was expected to be \$5,600, full time officer would cost \$38,160 with coverage, and there would be Special Town Details costing \$16,184+ \$1,032. Chief Frank is hoping that the second officer will be able to attend the 26 week academy training program paying the cost for this program himself. After three years' service to the town the cost of the program \$3,000 will be rebated to him. Chief Frank is hopeful that with this coverage most nights will be covered. One of the Committee asked if there was any record of the amount of money collected in the fines, however this money goes into the general fund and it might be helpful to know how much it was on a yearly basis.

Police Expenses [60210.95] Last year the expenses amounted to \$23,880. Expected expenses included Office (\$750); Equipment (\$1,500); Subscriptions and dues (\$1,500); Electronic maintenance (\$1,000); Full time academy equipment (\$2,00) IMC Tri tect software support (\$1,500); Fuel {30,000 miles plus} (\$10,650); Regular vehicle maintenance (\$700); Training (\$2,000) and Uniforms (\$1,200) with a total of \$22,050. The amount assigned last year for Rent }{[60211.97] {\$6000} Salaries and Expenses and was \$123,388, and the estimate for this year was \$149,976.

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During the presentation there were several items discussed. First Mr. Carson suggested some of the mileage signs that might help the speeders from speeding! He was also concerned about the police having a CO detector while they were parked with the vehicle running. The purchase of studded snow tires might be beneficial during the winter months with wheels attached so that they could be easily changed. Chief Frank stated that he is applying for grant applications to help in the purchase of some needed items.

Some discussion about the need for police presence at Umpachene Falls was discussed. The falls had been given to the town for the express use of the town's citizens and therefore is not a public park and thus does not qualify for any help that public parks can receive. Chief Frank did tell the Committee that York Lake was not going to have the usual park services as they have had in the past. He also added that when he did get to Umpachene the folks there were almost always people from out of town and out of state.

Chief Frank left at 8:00PM and the committee decided to put this budget on hold, and proceeded to review other budgets.

Capital Expense Election Machine {\$8,000} Mrs. Chretien, the Town Clerk, is requesting the purchase of a voting machine. Said to be more accurate, more efficient and less time consuming Mrs. Chretien states that it is felt that the state will soon mandate that all communities have voting machines. She added to her request two letters one from the Great Barrington Town Clerk and one from the Otis Town Clerk supporting her request. Because this was a new capital expense and quite costly, this budget was put on hold.

Conservation Commission Expenses [10123.00] (\$2,000) level funded {\$2,000}, Expended in 2014 \$1,359.54; in 2015 \$2,050; and 2016 \$1,777.88 the committee felt this was a reasonable request Mr. Carson 1st, Mr. Zukauskas 2nd passed unanimously.

Assessor's Salaries [10141.00] (\$6,000) now requesting {\$6,500} put on hold.

Assessor's General Expenses [10141.01] (\$1900) now requesting {\$2300} Mr. Carson 1st, Mr. Zukauskas 2nd passed with Mr. Pshenishny recusing.

Assessor Clerk Salary [10141.02] this was a salary item and thus put on hold.

Assessor's Property Card On-line [10141.35] (\$1,500) now requesting {\$1,600}. This is a contractual item, Mr. Carson 1st, Mr. Zukauskas 2nd passed with Mr. Pshenishny recusing.

Assessor's Computer Contingency [10141.44] (\$ 2,804) now requesting {\$4,804} this account paid for 2014 \$4,031.33; 2015 \$4,341.00 and 2016 \$4,341; it was reduced last year because there were some funds carried over from previous years and were used so that the account could be cut to

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accommodate the 2017 total town budget. Mr. Carson 1st, Mrs. Fracasso 2nd passed with Mr. Pshenishny recusing.

Assessors Tax Map Update [10141.55] (\$2,900) level funded {\$2,900} Mrs. Spaulding 1st, Mr. Zukauskas 2nd passed with Mr. Pshenishny recusing.

Assessor's Consultant [10141.77] this account was put on hold because the committee wanted to know the expected expenses that would justify the increase in the demand.

Assessor's Revaluation [10142.00](\$13,000) now requesting {\$16,500} this account suffered a cut last year because of some carried over funds, but now the contract is \$16,500. Mrs. Spaulding 1st, Mr. Zukauskas 2nd passed with Mr. Pshenishny recusing.

Assessor's Cyclical Re-inspection [10142.05] no funds requested as the project is complete.

Constable Expenses [602211.01] (\$95) level funded {\$95} Mr. Carson 1st, Mrs. Fracasso 2nd Passed unanimously

Constable salary [60211.00] (\$475) level funded {\$475} Mr. Carson 1st, Mrs. Fracasso 2nd passed unanimously.

The following were payments on loans:-

2013 Highway Truck Loan [80750.17] (\$39,795) now requesting {\$38,757} Mr. Zukauskas 1st, Mr. Carson 2nd passed with Mrs. Fracasso recusing.

Town Hall Renovation Loan [80750.18] (\$13,715) now requesting {\$13,358} Mr. Zukauskas 1st, Mr. Carson 2nd passed with Mrs. Fracasso recusing.

2014 Highway Truck Loan [80750.19] (\$ 25,260) now requesting {\$24,840} Mr. Zukauskas 1st, Mr. Carson 2nd passed with Mrs. Fracasso recusing.

Loader Loan [80750.20] (\$18,408) now requesting {\$18,102} Mr. Zukauskas 1st, Mr. Carson 2nd passed with Mrs. Fracasso recusing.

2015 Highway Truck Loan [80750.22] (\$48,168) now requesting {\$47,276} Mr. Zukauskas 1st, Mr. Carson 2nd passed with Mrs. Fracasso recusing.

Fire Truck Loan [80750.23] (\$77,000) now requesting {\$74,800} Mr. Zukauskas 1st, Mr. Carson 2nd passed with Mrs. Fracasso recusing.

Banking Services [80753.00] (\$200) level funded {\$200}, when questioned Mrs. Fracasso stated that this account was used, Mrs. Spaulding 1st, Mr. Pshenishny 2nd passed with Mrs. Fracasso recusing.

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Interest [80752.00] (\$2,000) level funded {\$2,000} this account had been used in the past before the quarterly real estate tax bills were issued and money needed to be borrowed to cover the costs of the school budget. However this is not so necessary now. Last year this account had been used to pay a IRS interest penalty which had been a result of a previous treasurer's error. Mr. Stalker stated that he did not think this was an appropriate action. However Mr. Zukauskas stated that when the penalty rose daily he did not consider taking the time to come before the Committee to get the money from the Reserve Fund when the amount needed would raise daily a wise action. Because it is hoped that this situation will not rise again the budget was lowered to {\$500} with Mr. Stalker 1st, and Mrs. Spaulding 2nd passed with Mrs. Fracasso recusing.

Because the committee is trying to reduce budgets where ever possible the records of the last three years expenditure have been very helpful, the records of expenditures for the period from July 1st, 2016 to January 1st 2017 have been helpful also. Mr. Stalker would like to receive monthly expenditures, however the committee members felt that this would cause a burden for the staff to prepare and information about single items when needed could be requested. Mr. Carson stated that as the chairman requests of this nature should be channeled through him.

The school budget was discussed since in The Record an article stated that New Marlborough's share of the budget would rise 7.7%. Mr. Carson stated that he had said at a School Finance Committee Meeting that the budget could not be supported and that the school needed to review its demands. The number of tax payers that are experiencing difficulty trying to pay their real estate taxes is rising at an alarming rate and while our Finance Committee is struggling to reduce the different budgets the school's budget keeps on increasing although they have lost about 50 students this year. Mr. Carson will go back to the school and hopefully get them to understand the seriousness of this situation.

A motion to adjourn at 9:05 was offered, Mrs. Spaulding 1st, Mr. Pshenishny 2nd, the next meeting is scheduled for Thursday March 2nd at 6:30 PM

Respectfully Submitted, Prudence Spaulding, Secretary

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