

# Finance Committee Meeting

## March 16<sup>th</sup> 2017

The minutes for March 7<sup>th</sup> were distributed at 6:35PM. In attendance were Mr. Mark Carson, Mr. Thomas Stalker, Mr. John Pshenishny, Mrs. Marilyn Fracasso, Mr. Robert Miller and Mrs. Prudence Spaulding. Guests were Mr. Peter Schuyten, Ms. Mari Enoch, Ms. Tara White, Mrs. Michele Shalaby, Mrs. Sandy Walker, Mrs. Marsha Pshenishny, and Mr. Richard Long (who came about 9PM).

The minutes for March 7<sup>th</sup> were accepted as read, Mr. Miller 1<sup>st</sup>, Mr. Pshenishny 2<sup>nd</sup> passed unanimously. The minutes for February 23<sup>rd</sup> were accepted as read, Mr. Pshenishny 1<sup>st</sup>, Mr. Carson 2<sup>nd</sup> passed with Mr. Stalker voting "No" and Mrs. Spaulding recusing.

Mr. Carson reported that since we had questions about the Board of Health Expenses [70510.01] and had requested that one of the members come to this meeting, he had heard from Mr. Scott Mac Farlane, who though unable to come to the meeting, would be available to be reached by phone at 7:00PM.

Mrs. Fracasso who works as the Town Treasurer gave us a current update upon the outstanding debts incurred by the purchase or purchases for the town as well as the school's roof and boilers. She is also in the process of preparing the different debt items so that the Committee will understand exactly how long each loan would run and the amount of interest being paid on each loan. She will get these to the Committee at the next meeting.

The committee then began to review the available budgets:-

**Audit** [10134.44] no money is requested since the money in this account is had been carried forward. Mr. Pshenishny stated that he thought that each member of the Committee should be provided with a copy of the final audit, and all agreed.

The budget for **Umpachne Falls** [50650.00] was discussed. The amount requested revealed a sizable increase. Mrs. White was able to tell us that one of the banks along the river had been destroyed by the weather and needed repair. It was considered dangerous at this time. However, in order to do that the Conservation committee had to issue permits etc. there was some other money available since this would require considerable funds. Because this situation

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did not appear clear to the committee the request was returned for further clarification and hopefully will be returned to the Committee at the next meeting. Because some of the funds for the necessary repairs would be used from a fund that was "carried over" Mr. Stalker asked why the funds had been "carried over" and what was the policy on this activity?

**Board of Appeals** [10176.00] (\$600) now requesting {\$300} Items covered would be postage, and publications. Mr. Miller 1<sup>st</sup>, Mr. Pshenishny 2<sup>nd</sup> passed unanimously.

**Highway Department Training Expenses** [20422.07] (\$2,300) level funded {\$2,300} Mr. Stalker stated that he wondered if the Highway Department used the free training programs offered locally by MIA in Lee and Lenox, and questioned whether expenses for staff to get CDL licenses were paid by the town. He wanted a more detailed report upon how the money would be spent in the coming fiscal year. Mr. Carson 1<sup>st</sup> made a motion to accept the request for \$2,300 with Mrs. Fracasso 2<sup>nd</sup> passed unanimously.

**Highway Department Electricity** [20422.15] (\$4,500) level funded {\$4,500} the Committee reviewed the last three years expenditures and lowered the amount to \$4,000 Mrs. Spaulding 1<sup>st</sup>, Mr. Pshenishny 2<sup>nd</sup> passed unanimously.

**Highway Department Propane** [20422.18] ( \$16,000) level funded {\$16,000} with the reviewing of the past three years expenditures and the fact that as of January the budget had only spent 20.59% of the allotted amount the budget was cut to \$8,000. Mr. Carson 1<sup>st</sup>, Mrs. Fracasso 2<sup>nd</sup> passed with Mr. Miller Recusing.

**Highway Department Diesel** [20422.19] (\$ 59,000) level funded {\$59,000} again reviewing the expenditures for the past three years (last year was \$25,677.43!) and as of January 1<sup>st</sup>, 2017 the budget had only been depleted by 24.69% and had never spent over \$53,000. The committee reduced this budget to \$45,000 Mrs. Fracasso 1<sup>st</sup>, Mr. Carson 2<sup>nd</sup> passed unanimously.

**Highway Uniforms and Gear** [20422.78] (\$3,500) level funded {\$3,500} the committee used the bill that was attached from last year's request since there was no supporting documentation included with this budget request. The expended amounts for 2014 were \$2,446.40; 2015 \$2,622.62 and for 2016 \$ 2,741.81. The committee lowered the amount allotted to this account to \$3,000. Mr. Carson 1<sup>st</sup>, Mrs. Fracasso 2<sup>nd</sup> passed with Mr. Stalker stating "No" since there were no current supporting documents.

**Winter Roads** [20423.02] ((\$266,334.00) now requesting {\$270,000}. The Committee tried to compare the itemization of this request with the itemization for the past year. The employees overtime would depend upon the increase in the hourly pay, and there was an item of "miscellaneous repairs and supplies" that needed breaking down. Despite the inconsistencies in the itemization, Mrs. Spaulding reminded the committee that the total budget needed to

remain the same for if there was a storm that the state declared an emergency if the budget was lowered we would not have the opportunity to pay for the excess expenses under their regulation the following year. Mr. Stalker questioned exactly how this worked, and if this had ever happened. Mrs. Spaulding remembered that the town had used this provision, however could not identify the exact years that this had taken place. Mr. Carson 1<sup>st</sup>, Mr. Miller 2<sup>nd</sup> passed with Mr. Stalker saying "No".

**Town Garage Maintenance** [20425.00] (\$13,000) now requesting {\$17,162} .The itemization included an item "Miscellaneous supplies to maintain garage for \$13,000". With an added page for the rental of a standard flammable storage unit the price being \$1,079 required by a meeting from OSHA. During the February 14<sup>th</sup> Finance Committee Meeting the highway superintendent reported that the cost of the units would be \$2,100 and the cost to repair the needed "eyes" for the doors would be \$2,062.The addition of these items together with the \$13,000 would bring the total up to about \$17,000! Mr. Carson 1<sup>st</sup>, Mr. Pshenishny 2<sup>nd</sup> passed with Mr. Stalker saying "No".

**Highway Machinery Expenses** [20428.00] (\$76,046) now requesting {\$86,046} Mr. Stalker noted that this item was not itemized. Mrs. Spaulding stated that since one could not anticipate the need for repairs this budget would not be itemized. Machinery Expenses for 2016 were \$79,778.80 the committee reduced the budget to \$80,000 Mr. Carson 1<sup>st</sup>, Mr. Miller 2<sup>nd</sup> passed with Mr. Stalker stating "No".

**Roads and Bridges** [20422.05] this account generated a lot of discussion. Mr. Stalker stated that there had been a cost overrun on the Clayton-Mill River culvert but this had never appeared in this account. How had this been paid and from what account? In the itemization there was an item for \$15,000 for tree work. Mr. Pshenishny inquired why this tree work was not listed in the Tree management account. Now the town has received a grant to repair Clayton Mill River Road should the tree removal necessary for the repair of the road be included in the grant? Mr. Miller 1<sup>st</sup>, Mr. Carson 2<sup>nd</sup> this item did not pass and was returned to the Highway Department for clarification.

**District Department Veterans Service** [6025.00] (\$6,273.00) now requesting {\$6,558} with supporting documentation this is not a negotiable item. Mrs. Spaulding 1<sup>st</sup>, Mr. Pshenishny 2<sup>nd</sup> passed unanimously.

**Police Office Rental** [60210.67] (\$6,000) level funded {\$6,000} Mrs. Spaulding stated that she didn't understand why if we were paying to insure the building we should have to pay rent as well. Mrs. Shalaby stated that she understood that this "rent" was money that the Fire Company was collecting with the intention of renovating the building. Mrs. Spaulding asked if this was a formal agreement, to which Mrs. Shalaby stated no. Mrs. Spaulding didn't think that

this money was being unwisely used by the Fire Company; however she did feel that a more formal agreement as to the use of the money would be appropriate. Mr. Carson 1<sup>st</sup>, Mrs. Spaulding 2<sup>nd</sup> passed with Mr. Stalker saying "No".

**Police Expenses** [60210.99] (\$22,700) now requesting {\$21,000}. The Police Expenses included items that would pertain to an additional part time officer. However at the Board of Selectmen's meeting it was decided that no new services would be offered this year. Thus the Expenses would have to be corrected. This budget was put on HOLD for the Police Chief to correct.

**Fire Protection** [60220.00] (\$58,900) level funded {\$58,900} though this account came with documentation it was unclear what the items were, for instance there were two items of "air Packs". The Fire Protection account had expended \$77,166.69 last year which the Fire Chief stated at a spring meeting was needed to replace certain items. The itemization did not explain how this year's allotted funds would be spent. Thus members of the Committee were not comfortable with the itemization. With Mr. Pshenishny abstaining ( because he serves as a fireman in another town), Mr. Carson 1<sup>st</sup>, Mrs. Spaulding 2<sup>nd</sup> and Mr. Miller supporting that vote, Mrs. Fracasso and Mr. Stalker voted "No" the motion was passed 3/5.

**Fire Department Clerical** [60220.88] (\$1,700) level funded {\$1,700} not itemized though thought to be a type of stipend. It must be paid by the hour since the expended amounts for the past three years differ and are not \$1,700. Mr. Carson 1<sup>st</sup>, Mrs. Fracasso 2<sup>nd</sup> passed with Mr. Stalker saying "No".

**Animal Control Officer Expenses** [60293.78] (\$4,833.00) this account had been approved at the last meeting, but was being transferred into the Medical Insurance Account, Mr. Miller 1<sup>st</sup>, Mr. Pshenishny 2<sup>nd</sup> passed unanimously.

**Berkshire County Communications** [60299.00] (\$9693.11) now requesting {\$9983.90} this account pays for the 911 service. Mr. Stalker requested a copy of the bill. Mr. Carson 1<sup>st</sup>, Mr. Pshenishny 2<sup>nd</sup> passed unanimously.

**Board of Health Expenses** [70510.01] (\$2,500) now requesting {\$3,300} upon reviewing the documentation it was decided that this account was or should be a revolving account and that the Board of Health were in the process of establishing it as such. The budget item would be passed and at a later date this item would be revisited and probably made into a revolving account. Mrs. Fracasso 1<sup>st</sup>, Mr. Miller 2<sup>nd</sup> passed with Mr. Stalking saying "No".

**Community Health Program** [70521.00] (\$1,000) level funded, {\$1,000} Mr. Stalker noted that this account had not been expended the past two years. Mrs. Spaulding stated that probably the CHP had not sent a "bill" letter. Mr. Stalker inquired if anyone used this service and did we

have any record of their use. Mrs. Spaulding stated that she personally knew of four of the town's residents using this service; however there would be no record of their used due to the privacy laws. Mrs. Spaulding 1<sup>st</sup>, Mr. Pshenishny 2<sup>nd</sup> passed unanimously.

**Visiting Nurse Program** [70522.00] (\$2,520) now requesting {\$2,580} this came with a cover letter. This service provides monthly visits to the town hall to help people with blood pressure checks and health advice. They also provide the flue clinic once a year. Mrs. Spaulding 1<sup>st</sup>, Mr. Pshenishny 2<sup>nd</sup> passed unanimously.

**Berkshire Regional Group Purchasing** [ 70524.00] (\$600) level funded {\$6,00} Mrs. Fracasso 1<sup>st</sup>, Mrs. Spaulding 2<sup>nd</sup> passed unanimously.

Mr. Pshenishny spoke about the various accounts that might be considered revolving accounts and other issues that the committee needed to review. He suggested that these be explored after Town Meeting and Finance Committee meetings would be scheduled to do this. Mrs. Fracasso suggested that those making out budget requests be informed about exactly how the itemization should be listed thus making the whole process more efficient. The members of the committee agreed.

The next meeting of the Finance Committee will be held on Thursday march 23<sup>rd</sup> at 6:30PM.

A motion to adjourn at 9:30PM was offered by Mr. Pshenishny 1<sup>st</sup>, and Mr. Carson 2<sup>nd</sup> passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Prudence Spaulding ,Secretary.

