

Finance Committee convened the meeting on April 29, 2020 at 6:04PM. Present on the conference line were members Steve Klein, Robert Miller, John Pshenishny, Sandra Fusco-Walker, and Michele Shalaby. Selectmen Nat Yohalem and Richard Long also joined the call along with Mari Enoch, Town Administrator and Marsha Pshenishny.

The Committee discussed the Finance Committee's budget request of \$500.00. Ms. Walker made a motion to approve the budget request of \$500.00, Mr. Miller seconded and the motion was approved unanimously.

Selectman Long then recommended the Finance Committee approve a sum to cover costs of hiring someone to do prepare the minutes of each meeting. After discussion, it was determined the going rate is \$50.00 per meeting and the Finance Committee could reasonably predict it will have at least 15 meetings in the next budget year. Mr. Klein motioned to approved a budget of \$750.00 to cover the cost of clerical, Mr. Miller seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

The Committee then moved onto budget discussions reviewing three scenarios for next years' budget and how they could affect revenue. Ms. Enoch and Mr. Klein presented the details and discussion ensued around being conservative in spending as the worst-case scenario reflected a need to cut the proposed submissions in order to ensure there would be enough excess capacity next year, when it is expected the effects of the ongoing pandemic will most likely alter revenue and expenses. Mr. Klein stated COVID-19 related expenses have not been added to the budget yet. Those new expenses could be something like covering costs to remodel work spaces for employees to ensure safe distancing and other unanticipated changes. Mr. Klein offered the Committee could establish a COVID account in the 2021 budget.

Ms. Shalaby stated that perhaps the Committee could increase the amount of the Reserve Fund to be prepared in the case some budgets that might be cut would need funds at the end of the year and Mr. Klein offered that the Committee could also add an amount to the Reserve Fund to use for COVID-19. He continued that we are expecting to be reimbursed for up to 75% of COVID expenses by the state which means the Town would probably be responsible to cover costs totaling 25%.

Ms. Shalaby suggested half of the funds squeezed out of the proposed budget be added to Reserve Fund just in case the Town needs those funds next year.

Mr. Klein recommended funding the Stabilization Fund at \$125,000.00 this year which is significantly below what we have in the past meaning there would be less to spend on one-time projects. A priority list of road projects would probably allow for one of them, but there would be a slowdown on road renovation and reconstruction next year. Mr. Klein stated he thinks every town in the Commonwealth is taking the same steps right now.

Mr. Miller commented that the proposed numbers from Ms. Enoch and Mr. Klein make sense and are reasonable. Mr. Miller recommended approving the proposed cuts to the budget. Ms. Walker also agreed this is a reasonable approach.

Mr. Klein asked for a resolution to accept the cuts outlined in the 2021 worksheets and submit them back to the departments for review and comment. The Committee agreed unanimously.

Mr. Long then presented an update regarding the Human Resource consultant's report. He stated the Board of Selectman have just started reviewing and no recommendations have been made yet, however the HR study's purpose is to review equity and competitiveness with other

towns for jobs, descriptions and grading of jobs in Berkshire County for similar positions and work. Mr. Long stated he would send a summary of the process and how the numbers were arrived at to the Committee for review.

Mr. Klein stated once the Finance Committee has the numbers and expected costs of salaries, etc., the only other item to consider is the capital side of the budget. A police cruiser and road vehicles are on the list this year. Mr. Klein stated we will have to sort out what the Town can do.

Mr. Klein continued the Committee is on target to finalize the budget for the warrant if we can accomplish compensation and capital budget in the next two weeks.

Mr. Yohalem then stated the Board of Selectman would hold a meeting on Monday, May 4, 2020 and another meeting on Thursday, May 7 in which Graham Frank, Chief of Police and Chuck Loring, Highway Superintendent would be on the calls to discuss their budget requests including capital equipment requests. Mr. Klein stated the Finance Committee would be addressing those items that evening.

With nothing further to address, a Motion to Adjourn was made by Mrs. Walker, seconded by Mr. Pshenishny and passed unanimously.

Meeting was adjourned at 6:57PM.

Respectfully submitted by,

Sandra J. Fusco-Walker