

FINANCE COMMITTEE
Minutes
Zoom Meeting 871 4448 6667

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2022 APR -5 AM 8:07
MILLBURY, MASS.

Date: March 21, 2022

Time: 6:30 p.m.

Present: Cooney, Pratt, Wells, Kuphal, O'Connell

Absent: Cooper

Meeting called to order at 6:31 p.m.

Motioned by Kuphal, seconded by Wells to accept the minutes of March 14, 2022 as written.
Kuphal, yes; Cooney, yes; Pratt, yes; Wells, yes; O'Connell, yes

Jayne Davolio, Town Clerk, Jennifer Barrett, Finance Director, Scott Despres, Board of Selectmen and Sean Hendricks, Town Manager were present at the meeting.

Motioned by O'Connell, seconded by Wells to open the Public Hearing for the FY2023 Budget at 6:32 p.m. Kuphal, yes; Cooney, yes; Pratt, yes; Wells, yes; O'Connell, yes

There was no public present at the Public Hearing.

Motioned by O'Connell, seconded by Wells to close the Public Hearing for the FY2023 Budget at 6:33 p.m. Kuphal, yes; Cooney, yes; Pratt, yes; Wells, yes; O'Connell, yes

Jen O'Connell: Chet Hanratty had called last week, but we didn't connect for tonight.
Jennifer Barrett: I did send out an updated budget. The only change was the Blackstone Valley RVTHS budget. This went down slightly.

Jen O'Connell: We will continue to go over the budgets tonight.

Building Inspector

Jen O'Connell: Is he still in a position where he needs more help?

Sean Hendricks: No. We have been working on increasing the efficiency of this department. I think we are in good shape right now.

Jen O'Connell: What is in the salary line?

Jennifer Barrett: Just the Building Inspector. The Assistant Inspector is in another line.

Jen O'Connell: Where is the Administrative salary?

Jennifer Barrett: It is in the Planning Department. She is shared by several departments.

Jen O'Connell: You moved the \$6,000 from Other Expenses?

Sean Hendricks: It is in a Warrant Article for Abandoned Properties.

Plumbing/Gas Inspector

Jen O'Connell: Why the increase? Is it due to additional inspections?

Jennifer Barrett: It is more of a change in methodology. This is a budget set up to be paid by inspection. We pay a flat rate for each inspection instead of an hourly rate.

Sean Hendricks: We should be good with this. This is based on previous years' inspections. We did go up a little to allow for additional inspections.

Russell Wells: Since this is in the salary account, do these people also have another position within the Town?

Sean Hendricks: Yes, they do.

Russell Wells: Shouldn't this change from a salary to an amount per inspection?

Jennifer Barrett: They all go through the payroll. They are issued W-2 forms at the end of the year.

Electrical Inspector

Jen O'Connell: Is this the same as the Plumbing/Gas Inspector?

Jennifer Barrett: Yes, it is.

Sean Hendricks: We bumped them up to market rate.

Emergency Management

Sean Hendricks: This is based on actual figures from previous years' budgets, prior to the pandemic.

Russell Wells: Who is this person and are they also employed in another position within the Town?

Sean Hendricks: That would be Steve Koshiba. He also works for the DPW and he is a Fire Engineer.

Jen O'Connell: How does this affect the pension?

Jennifer Barrett: If it goes into salaries, it goes towards the pension

Russell Wells: Stipends do not go towards the pension, but salaries do?

Jennifer Barrett: That is correct.

Sean Hendricks: He will be retiring in May, so the only position he will have with the Town will be for Emergency Management.

Animal Control

Sean Hendricks: In a couple of years, we anticipate this going up. Right now, it is staying at this figure. If we regionalize, the cost of Animal Control will go up about 4 times the amount that we are paying now. Our person will be retiring in another 3-5 years.

Russell Wells: What do we do with the animals now?

Sean Hendricks: There are facilities in Uxbridge and Auburn that we use. They don't charge us. We have to rely on other Towns to house our animals. We don't have a facility in town.

Tree Warden

Jen O'Connell: This is a department that I feel needs more money.

Sean Hendricks: Warren has indicated that he can handle it with the money in this budget.

Fuel

Jen O'Connell: I wanted to revisit this budget. I think we need to increase it, due to the current situation.

Sean Hendricks: We could estimate the gas at \$4.00 per gallon instead of our original number.

Jen O'Connell: I think it is worth it to bump it up.

Russell Wells: Do we pay state tax on the fuel?

Jennifer Barrett: There is a small state and use tax on gasoline and diesel. The paperwork to get some of it waived is astronomical.

Russell Wells: How often do we fill up? How long do we negotiate the price for?

Sean Hendricks: We negotiate the price for a full year. Sometimes it is for 2 years. We purchase it several times a year. If we have the money, we normally fill up near the end of the fiscal year.

We buy, probably, quarterly.

Russell Wells: Does this go out to bid?

Sean Hendricks: We are in a purchasing collaborative with a couple of other towns. This gives us better pricing. I will talk to Keith and have the changes made for the next meeting.

Board of Health

Sean Hendricks: The Other Expenses dropped because we took out the abandoned homes money.

Jen O'Connell: Why is there a jump in salaries?

Sean Hendricks: They want a raise.

Jen O'Connell: How often do they meet?

Sean Hendricks: They meet once a month. Before COVID, this office was pretty quiet. I think this request is based on the workload caused by COVID.

Jen O'Connell: This would put them above what the Board of Selectmen get, and most of the other boards that collect a salary. How does the rest of the Committee feel about this?

Russell Wells: Does the Board of Health do a bulk of the work or is it the staff?

Sean Hendricks: They meet once a month. They did step up during COVID with the clinics.

Kevin Kuphal: If anyone wants a raise, there should be some sort of justifiable link to the numbers.

Cooney, Wells, Kuphal, Pratt and O'Connell were in agreement to bring the number back to \$7,845.

Sean Hendricks: I will relay this to the Board and if they have any questions or concerns, I will have them come in.

Council on Aging

Jen O'Connell: Do we have a Director?

Sean Hendricks: We have an Acting Director. She has done this position since July. I will be posting the job. The person in the Acting Director position was the programming administrator. She will be encouraged to apply, but we would like to get someone with as much experience as we can. We all know that we will not get someone as experienced as Judy.

Jen O'Connell: How much do the "Friends" contribute to this budget?

Sean Hendricks: They take care of the transportation. They manage their own funds. The money for the Senior Center doesn't come completely from the Town. We do not know what the actual cost is to run the Senior Center because of this. We are looking into some Grant Assistance to do some of the maintenance.

Bill Pratt: We have several budgets that have outside revenue. Is there a possibility of seeing the outside funds to show the true figure on what it costs to run these budgets?

Sean Hendricks: For the inspector budgets, we could. There is a revenue detail that we can get to you. It is already reported to the Board of Selectmen.

Bill Pratt: It would make sense to show the revenues so the townspeople could see that we are not just spending the money and that there is revenue coming in. Also they would know what the net cost was.

Sean Hendricks: We can include this next year when we prepare the budget.

Retirement of Debt

Jennifer Barrett: We will be meeting with the Financial Advisor about the Shaw Building Project, along with the School Department, next Tuesday. There are a lot of sewer projects that will be coming off the books in the next couple of years.

Sean Hendricks: We may have to do some short term borrowing with the new Fire Station.

Worcester County Retirement Assessment

Jennifer Barrett: This is the Town's portion of the retiree payments.

Insurance

Jen O'Connell: What is driving the number up in liability insurance?

Jennifer Barrett: That would be the building properties.

Sean Hendricks: I am guessing that some of this is due to construction insurance.

Jennifer Barrett: I believe that the contractor is doing that. It is not what I have seen in the policies.

Employee Benefits

Jen O'Connell: It is dropping, but not as much as it should.

Jennifer Barrett: We didn't leave an excess in the lines.

Sean Hendricks: I try to budget tighter than previous administrators.

Cable-Public Access

Jen O'Connell: This budget pays for itself.

Sean Hendricks: It is not part of the budget itself. They are paid through a Warrant Article.

Jen O'Connell: What is the increase in supplies?

Kevin Krassopoulos: Everything is going up. We are having problems finding CD's.

Jen O'Connell: What upgrades are you looking at?

Kevin Krassopoulos: We are constantly upgrading. We normally use 90% of what we put into capital.

Sewer Department

Jen O'Connell: Their budget is pretty straight forward. The Upper Blackstone is a majority of their budget.

Agenda Items for 3/28/22

BVT

Vote on the 2023 budget

Review the Warrant

Sean Hendricks: Do you want the Warrant?

Jen O'Connell: If you have it, that would be good.

Sean Hendricks: I will get it to you in the next couple of days.

Motioned by Pratt, seconded by Cooney to adjourn at 7:55 p.m. Cooney, yes; Pratt, yes; Kuphal, yes; Wells, yes; O'Connell, yes

Russell Wells
Jennifer O'Connell
Michael Pratt
Nicole L. Cooney