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FINANCE COMMITTEE  
Minutes  
Zoom Number 825 1421 6885

2023 JAN 19 PM 2:52  
MILLBURY, MASS.

Date: January 14, 2023

Time: 8:00 a.m.

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

Absent: Cooney

Meeting called to order at 8:05 p.m.

Jennifer Barrett, Finance Director, and Sean Hendricks, Town Manager, were present at the meeting.

Sean Hendricks: I have 2 meetings next week that conflict with your meetings. I would like you to keep those meetings and Jennifer can be the voice. We work collaboratively. If there are any groups that you would like to meet with, let me know. Keith will not be available next week. I can have him come in either on the 23rd or the 30th.

Kevin Kuphal: I will not be available during the week of the 23rd.

Jen O'Connell: How long are we able to keep using zoom for our meetings?

Sean Hendricks: Right now the deadline is March 31, 2023. I will keep you posted on whatever information comes to me about this. Also, Jennifer and I will be making the budget document a living document that you can view from a link that will be sent to your email. This way we aren't sending you new documents every few days. We are already working on our second draft.

Kristen Livoti, ASA Waters Director and Chris Naff, ASA Waters Task Force were in to discuss their budget at 8:15 a.m.

Jen O'Connell: It is nice to see the revenue in this account.

Kristen Livoti: I gave you a summary on what our costs and revenues are. The average weddings have gone up, so revenues have gone up. It used to cost between \$800-\$1000 per wedding, now it is up to \$4,250. A lot of this is because we have the tent and can accommodate more people. The capacity for weddings can now be up to 200 people.

Chris Naff: 2026 is the deadline for the tent. The Historical Commission has given us an extension on this. We need to build something that adds to the historical value of the Mansion in order to continue to have an outdoor space.

Kristen Livoti: We have done some research on a greenhouse. We will continue to look into other options. I have increased the fee schedule. I had to increase the rental of the tent to non-Millbury residents. The number of events may be decreasing, but the income is increasing because of the fees. We have 9 weddings booked so far for this year.

Jen O'Connell: Do you anticipate that number going up?

Kristen Livoti: We may have some last minute bookings. We do get some cancellations, which we try to reschedule them. If an event is canceled, we do not give back the deposit.

Russell Wells: Who is your competition for weddings?

Kristen Livoti: There is a lot of competition out there. There are country clubs, hotels, etc. We do lose some clients because they want a "one-stop" wedding. I cannot coordinate an entire wedding. I do help out to a point, but I cannot organize the entire event.

Jen O'Connell: No additional staff is needed, so that is good. Do you have enough for the utilities?

Kristen Livoti: I put in an additional 10%.

Jen O'Connell: It doesn't look like it increased that much.

Jennifer Barrett: The copier lease is in there and that cost went down.

Jen O'Connell: What about capital?

Kristen Livoti: We still have a lot of projects through fiscal 2027.

Chris Naff: The Town has helped with some of the projects with Free Cash and ARPA funds. We found that there was a crack in the ceiling in the dining hall and after further investigation found that there is an issue with the foundation. The plans are being done. This could be a large cost. It is not an immediate issue, but it needs to be corrected. We are waiting on the cost.

Kristen Livoti: We will be shutting down for 2 weeks at the end of February to restore the plaster ceilings in the parlor. (last week of February through first week of March)

Chris Naff: The revolving account has the funds to address this.

Jen O'Connell: What is the balance in the revolving fund?

Jennifer Barrett: There is a little over \$100,000.

Kristen Livoti: I do update the calendar, so that people are informed of what is going on and when we need to have the Mansion closed.

Meeting concluded with Kristen Livoti and Chris Naff at 8:42 a.m.

Brian Lewos, Police Chief, was in to discuss his budget at 8:48 a.m.

Jen O'Connell: There is an increase in your budget.

Brian Lewos: Investigations and arrests have increased. Criminal complaints are up. We have been dealing with a lot of shoplifting, larceny and alarm calls. We have had a few calls at the Mall concerning a group from New York shoplifting and robbery.

Kevin Kuphal: Besides the Mall, what is driving the increase?

Brian Lewos: We have had motor vehicle stops, drug stops, domestic violence. I have to take a patrolman off the road to deal with LTC's. All of the Towns around us are dealing with the same thing. Our Town is unique because of the Mall.

Sean Hendricks: We need to add an additional officer because of all of these calls. Dispatch needs help too.

Brian Lewos: We are at 23 officers right now.

William Pratt: Will the additional staff be noticeable by the people in Town? Will they make a difference?

Brian Lewos: I am hoping that the service we give will be noticed. Right now we cannot have a supervisor in every shift. When I do not have one, I have to assign an IFC which is additional money.

William Pratt: We are showing an 8% increase. People in Town are financially stressed and the Town is asking them for more money. People want to see the services go up not down.

Sean Hendricks: In the 8% increase is a 5% increase for Debt Service, which was approved by the residents in Town. We are not, by expanding our numbers, lowering the level of services.

Jen O'Connell: I am not opposed to the pay that the officers get. It is not a job that I want to do. I am looking at the time off that they are allowed.

Jennifer Barrett: We budget to cover all of these exceptions. We are not necessarily paying out all of them. We do have to pay someone to come in to cover these shifts.

Brian Lewos: I only allow people time off if it doesn't leave us short.

Russell Wells: What year are we at with the contract?

Sean Hendricks: We are in the last year. We will start negotiations in February.

Brian Lewos: We have, on average, 5-6 officers per shift.

Russell Wells: What percentage of your calls are at the Mall?

Brian Lewos: About 10%.

Jen O'Connell: Is there an equation used to determine how many officers you need based on population?

Brian Lewos: It is 1.2 per 1000 people.

Jen O'Connell: At one point, the ideal number of officers was 28. Has that number changed?

Brian Lewos: With 28 officers and a supervisor on each shift, it would be great. I am also looking for a ½ additional dispatcher. This is in the request. This would bring us to 4 ½ dispatchers. I haven't been able to fill the Dispatcher Supervisor position yet.

Jen O'Connell: Is the salary sufficient? It doesn't look much higher than the dispatcher's salary.

Brian Lewos: I have someone who is qualified, but I would have to fill that position first.

Jen O'Connell: The details went up.

Brian Lewos: The rate is set by the State Police.

Jennifer Barrett: The DPW and Tree Warden have contributed to the details going up.

Meeting with Chief Lewos concluded at 9:30 a.m

Discussion was held concerning the Shoppes at Blackstone Valley and the details involved at the Shoppes at Blackstone Valley.

Jennifer Barrett: The Town gets 10% of the cost of the details at the Mall.

William Pratt: I have noticed that Professional Development, across the board, has cost us a small fortune. Is there a way we can split it up over the years? The return on investment doesn't compare to the cost.

Sean Hendricks: There are a lot of meetings for the department heads that have to be attended. There are classes that they cannot skip. These are specific classes that they need to do their jobs effectively.

William Pratt: Things are different than they were when I was on the Committee in the 90's. I am looking at it from a taxpayer's point of view. I am looking at what is needed and what is wanted. I am looking out for the individuals that are already having problems with the increase in taxes. Does anyone see the benefits from the training?

Jen O'Connell: We have the discussion here. Our meetings are public so we can bring these issues to them. We are on TV explaining all of it.

Sean Hendricks: The budget, last year, went through without a catch. The department heads are really good about saving money for the Town.

Steve Koshiba, Fire Chief, and Robert Silver, Deputy Chief were in to discuss their budget at 9:55 a.m.

William Pratt: Things we are doing are better today than they were years ago. No one would know that if they weren't here to see it. We need to market what we have been doing, so that people will know.

Russell Wells: How long have you been on the Fire Department?

Steve Koshiba: I have been on the Fire Department for 43 years and have been Chief for the past 8 months.

Russell Wells: What is going to happen with the old building?

Jennifer Barrett: That will be discussed in the summer. If we do not keep it, it has to go out to bid to sell it.

Jen O'Connell: Your budget is basically flat.

Steve Koshiba: Right now we have 44 firefighters. We have had a lot of retirements.

Charles Cooper: When you took over as Chief, 8 months ago, was your position backfilled?

Steve Koshiba: We have picked up a few people. We have advertised to try to get more.

Robert Silver: We've started an Explorers Group to recruit kids to become firefighters in the future. It was started about 13 years ago and was originally only open to children of firefighters. Now it is open to everyone.

Jen O'Connell: I thought there was a certain population that determined if you needed a full time department.

Jennifer Barrett: It is a recommendation, not a requirement.

Robert Silver: We average a call a day. It may not be every day, but we might get a few in one day and nothing on another day. It is not always a fire that we respond to. It might be a gas leak or a carbon monoxide call.

Jen O'Connell: What percentage of calls is up at the Mall?

Steve Koshiba: I would say 4-5%. There were a few glitches with the alarm system when I started, but it has improved since then.

Sean Hendricks: They handle fire inspections also.

Steve Koshiba: We have 8 inspectors.

Robert Silver: They have gone through the training for this.

Steve Koshiba: We go to oil spills, basement floodings, etc. We test fire alarm systems and sprinkler systems annually. We also do flow tests. It is very time consuming.

Russell Wells: What is the difference between Professional Services and Professional Development?

Jennifer Barrett: The Professional Services are there if they have to call someone in to do a service for them. Professional Development is classes for the department.

Jen O'Connell: What do you have for capital?

Steve Koshiba: I put together a few things that we need. The gear is only good for 10 years. We need to replace some now. I put in 10 sets, which are only the coats and pants. The Lions Club bought our boots 5 years ago. They also bought us hoods, which have about 7 years left on them. Next year I will probably put in the boots. I put in for new pagers for each of the firefighters. We use the pagers instead of cell phones because the pagers do not lose service, whereas cell phones rarely work if you are in a basement or if you hit a dead spot. We have a ladies auxiliary that comes out when we have a fire. They bring us water and food or whatever we need while battling a fire. The parking lot at Station 3 was paved and the station was painted. We need to replace the 2 overhead doors and 3 entry doors.

Jen O'Connell: What is the benefit of the smaller stations instead of just the centrally located one?

Steve Koshiba: The response time is compromised without the smaller stations.

William Pratt: Doesn't Station 3 also respond to the Mass Pike?

Steve Koshiba: It depends on whether it is westbound or eastbound. Station 1 would also respond along with the Rescue Truck, if needed.

Steve Koshiba: Station 5 needs to be paved. The flower shop next door has been paved and JT's is going to be paved. We are in the middle. We were approached by the contractor that did the flower shop and is going to do JT's to see if we were interested. They quoted a price of \$14,000.

Sean Hendricks: We pay a flat rate per ton with Lynch. We would check to make sure that we were getting the right rate.

Steve Koshiba: Station 2 needs to be paved. This was originally done in the 70's. It would cost between \$25,000-\$30,000. We need to start looking at replacing fire engines. Engine 5 is approaching its 20 year mark. Engine 2 is at its 19 year mark.

Sean Hendricks: We would be lucky to see a new truck in two years, if we start the process now. It is hard to get a quote from the company when we are looking this far out.

Jen O'Connell: What are we looking at for estimated cost?

Steve Koshiba: We paid about \$500,000 for the last truck. Engine 2 just passed the pump test. It cost \$20,000 to replace the pump. I just don't want to take the chance of responding to a call and have the pump not work. The company comes to us. We don't have to send the truck out to have the repair.

Jennifer Barrett: We cannot order the trucks without the authorization, but it will not hit our finances for 2-3 years.

Jen O'Connell: Someone is going to get up on the Town Meeting floor and ask why we spent \$300,000 of Free Cash on tennis courts when we need 2 fire trucks. I know that is going to happen. That is why I didn't agree to spend this large sum at a fall Town Meeting.

Russell Wells: We talked about a Capital Committee. Are we still looking at this?

Sean Hendricks: We are working on a list for the capital expenditures. The committee will probably be put together in 2024. This takes time to evolve. They will look at a 5-year plan

Steve Koshiba: Professional development is up because some of the people that go to training can come back to train our other guys. Some things they cannot do in-house. We would need to have someone trained to teach the rest of our staff.

Charles Cooper: There is a line in the budget for gym membership. Is there a gym in the new building?

Steve Koshiba: Yes, there is.

Charles Cooper: Will this be able to be taken out once the new station is open?

Steve Koshiba: I believe it will. They can use our facility.

Steve Koshiba and Robert Silver concluded their presentation at 10:55 a.m.

The Town Manager went over some of the Town Budgets

Moderator

Sean Hendricks: Jim gets the business done in an orderly and timely fashion.

Board of Selectmen

Jen O'Connell: There is no increase for the Board of Selectmen.

Sean Hendricks: The Professional Development is their membership to the MMA.

Town Manager

Jen O'Connell: You have your salary and Karyn's salary on this line item?

Sean Hendricks: Yes, I do. I also wanted to let you know that the Board of Selectmen voted to give me a 5% increase instead of the 3%.

Charles Cooper: Why are these two salaries not broken out?

Jennifer Barrett: We only separate salary from hourly.

Russell Wells: How is the Assistant working out?

Sean Hendricks: It's working out great. We have made some progress in the HR department. A lot of what I haven't been able to get to have been completed. Employee Wellness is addressed. We have also been keeping our eye on succession plans.

Jen O'Connell: What is the Town Manager Recognition?

Jennifer Barrett: We just moved it from other departments. It could be a plaque for a retirement or flags for Memorial Day.

Sean Hendricks: We are still working on getting a more accurate figure for Professional Development. I haven't gone to the conferences. This line is for myself, the Deputy and anyone who needs it. I am very frugal on spending the Town's money.

Finance Committee

Jen O'Connell: Does anyone wish to go to the Annual Conference?

Russell Wells: I would like to go.

Jen O'Connell: I think we should make sure we have enough in the account for at least 2 people to go.

Jennifer Barrett: This is a one day meeting.

Jen O'Connell: Why don't we put in for 3 people?

Jennifer Barrett: I will change the line to \$500 for now. I can always change it again once we know how many will go.

Jen O'Connell: Is there enough in the Salary Account to give Sandie a raise?

Jennifer Barrett: She doesn't use the whole amount, so there is enough in there for that.

#### Reserve Fund

Jen O'Connell: Why are we increasing the amount to \$110,000?

Jennifer Barrett: This brings the Reserve Fund to 1% of the Town Government Budget, or .5% of the Budget including benefits/insurance. This is in accordance to our Reserve Policy.

Sean Hendricks: We set the policy in 2017 and we felt that we should reflect this in next year's budget. This can be adjusted accordingly.

Jennifer Barrett: Last year we spent all of it. We had more requests than we had money in the Reserve Fund. We needed to transfer from other accounts to accommodate the shortfalls.

#### Finance Department

Jen O'Connell: This is only up 1%.

Jennifer Barrett: I did bump up the Assistant to \$60,000.

Sean Hendricks: We need to get the Assistant certified in procurement. There is a cost to go to this once a year. There are consequences if we do not follow the procurement laws.

William Pratt: I was looking at the maintenance contracts (hardware and software). If you have to be on top of them year after year, how do you keep them honest?

Sean Hendricks: I will be putting those out to bid this year. That is what usually keeps them honest. They do not want to lose you.

Russell Wells: What are the Finance Director's Special Projects?

Jennifer Barrett: I have an intern that helps out in the office. This person does the filing and copying and helps with the jobs that my assistant and myself have not had the time to do. It is an 8 hour a week position.

#### Town Audit

Jen O'Connell: Are we still using the same company?

Sean Hendricks: It is the same one as this year.

Jennifer Barrett: They just finalized FY22 in January. We are still waiting on the single audits with the Federal Funds. Those should be done in another week. They came in August and finished up in November.



Sean Hendricks: The procurement laws do not prevent us from keeping the same contracts, but our Charter prevents us from keeping the same audit company for more than 6 years. There are a limited number of companies out there that handle this.

Jen O'Connell: That will wrap it up for today. We will meet with the Senior Center on Tuesday and finish up with the rest of the Town Hall budgets. On Wednesday, we will meet with the Library and work on the other budgets.

Sean Hendricks: I just have one request. I would like to be here when you discuss the MOB. I will not be at your meetings next week and I have the information that you requested on this budget.

Jen O'Connell: We can hold off on that budget until you are here.

Motioned by Wells, seconded by Cooper to adjourn at 11:40 a.m. Unanimous.

  
Russell Wells  
  
Jen O'Connell