

**Finance Committee Meeting Minutes**  
**Town Hall ~ March 23, 2017**  
**Sturbridge, MA**

**Call to Order:**

The chair called the meeting to order at 7:00pm. The following committee members were present: Kathleen Neal (KN), James Waddick (JW), Suzanne Smiley (SS), Joni Light (JL), Jared Burns (JB), Michael Serio (MS), Laurence Morrison (LM), and Mike Hager (MH).

Absent Bruce Boyson (BB)

Guest: Jean Bubon (JeB), Melissa Beauchemin (MB), Tom Chamberland (TC), Brandon Goodwin (BG), Jamie Terry (JT), Linda Cocalis (LC)

**Budget Review – ZBA & Town Planner – Jean Bubon**

JeB began with her line item review of the Town Planner budget by explaining the increase in the wages line item due to an impending retirement of her long-term assistant. It includes vacation accruals. Advertising is for zoning by-law notices required to be published. There was a detailed discussion on the ESRI/GIS costs. SS asked if there would be a cost savings for multiple computers to have ESRI software access amongst town departments, to which JBo stated that the savings would not be significant; the software that should be better managed at the Town Planner level. SS continued by asking if there were changes to the historic buildings in town that required action from the town. JeB indicated that such changes would not affect the GIS maps yet the by-laws remain in force to accommodate historical structures and town processes. She further explained that her department is being more proactive, particularly now that the Historical Commission is functional, regarding historical buildings, by ensuring they are recorded appropriately. MH asked if additional mapping layers can be added to the software for other departments. JeB explained that they can be done at a cost, and that she prioritizes which layers and upgrades to the maps should be added. DPW and Conservation have each requested overlay for their use on an annual basis.

JW joined the meeting at 7:15pm.

LM asked about the population projections and how it may require action from the town, and asked whether she had assessed the usefulness of such long-range plans for the town. JeB explained that the CMRPC conducts an analysis based upon available land, historic and conservation assessments which is based upon more recent population data. That said, while there were many goals put into place in the Master Plan of 2011, many goals have not been met and some plans, such as the Open Space Plan, are due to expire. These goals and plans will be updated as requested by the Board of Selectman (BOS). LM asked if working with the CMRPC was necessary to fill in any gaps with respect to Sturbridge. JeB suggested that it would, however the town may not have to commission work on a Sturbridge specific plan.

JL asked about the department requested codification funding which was not funded in FY18. JBo explained how it is a contracted service to a general publisher who would go through all zoning laws ensuring the legal terms and language are accurately stated and compliant, as well as ensuring a consistent numbering format within the records. There is an annual maintenance charge after the initial charges. This may be something to consider in subsequent budgets.

The ZBA budget is level funded. JeB explained that the conference line item includes training for the board members who are entitled to participate in certification training.

KN asked about the funding requests through the Betterment Budget. JeB explained the Wayfinding improvements request is an annual request to fulfil recommendations consistent with the Commercial Tourist District Revitalization Plan. JL asked for a full disclosure on amount spent as some funding has been approved through the Sturbridge Tourist Association (STA). JBo confirmed that there is approximately \$57K in this account, having received funds for more than \$40K from the STA in past years. Not all has been expended. MS asked if the funds have been put into a special revolving account to which she replied no, but the funds have been earmarked for this project. Streetscape projects also include the landscaping plans for the corner of Route 20 and Route 148, and on Route 20 by the new hotel at New Boston Road.

### **Budget Review – Senior Center & Council on Aging – Melissa Beauchemin**

The additional line item to the Senior Center building budget is for the replacement of the automatic doors for \$2,960.00. As MB noted, the doors are near the restrooms and they are quite difficult to open for doors that get a lot of use. Having the automatic feature will prove to be more safe and easy to use. JL asked if the reception desk was completed, and if the recliners were purchased. MB said the reception desk is complete, but the recliners have not yet been purchased. However, they will be soon and before end of fiscal year 2017. JL then asked about the increase in Charter service, and whether it was due to additional entertainment packages. MB said it was merely a recent rate increase and everyone should be experiencing similar increases. KN asked about the Betterment Budget requests. MB explained that they usually get flowers each year for the property. A volunteer used to do the work but is no longer available. This year's request is slightly higher so that it can be contracted out. KN noticed that there is also a request for the automatic doors in the Betterment Budget. It will likely be removed from Betterment Budget, but KN and MB will both confirm. KN confirmed that the Capital Budget has approved the window replacements for the building. JL asked about previous requests for curtains that have been put on hold due to the window situation. MB said she already purchased curtains that are insulated and fire-retardant. JW asked if the windows were put on hold as the BOS had concerns at the joint budget meeting about plans of the building, and whether the cost was appropriate should the building be demolished or sold. KN and MS both noted that it was a non-issue and the window replacements were being done.

MS joined the meeting at 7:55pm.

MB explained the increase in conference funds for the Council on Aging which is due to the bi-annual conference being held in Danvers, MA this year. The Medical transportation has increased due to the numbers of drivers needed. They volunteer their time but they do receive a stipend. KN asked how residents would know about this medical transport service. MD said it is communicated via their Newsletters which go out to approximately 1,700 residents. The Council on Aging services are available to those aged 60 and above. MH asked about the salary and wage line item, and to clarify what it entails. MB explained her staff; 1 15-hour position; 1 20-hour administrative position; 1 25-hour coordinator position. The new position from FY17 is currently vacant and she will be seeking to fill it. This has been difficult due to the restrictions to conduct confidential work as the grade level does not include such clearance. MS asked if the grade level was making it more difficult or the 15-hour stipulation. MB confirmed that the schedule is making it a bit more challenging and there was a fair bit of discussion around the level, etc. MS offered some steps on how to present it to the Personnel Committee if she wanted to have it reviewed further.

- Update: Confirmed on March 24 that the automatic doors will be removed from the operating budget as it will be funded through the Betterment Budget.

**Budget Review – Board of Health & Landfill/Recycling Center – Jamie Terry, Linda Cocalis**

JL asked about the decrease in leachate from last year at the Recycling Center. LC explained that it equates largely to the amount of precipitation which was lower last year. LC verified the staff is at 1 full time equipment operator, and 5-part time employees, with 1 part time HazMat employee. JW asked about the decrease in the Machine Maintenance line item. JT confirmed that it was not used last year with funds being turned back, so a decrease was justified. JT discussed the need for a new ramp which is included in this year's budget.

JW asked about the consulting engineer funding. LC explained that this is the cost for an overall review of the landfill which must be completed by a licensed engineer. This funding was not used in FY17. LM asked to confirm if the BOS called for the review of the Landfill. JT explained that a review was requested by the Town Administrator for cost of curbside pickup. LC reiterated that any review of the filling and capping, and associated costs of such, for the Landfill, must be completed by an engineer. The review for curbside pick-up does not require engineer expertise. LM asked if there was a specified timeframe in which to complete the review. LC explained it was more complicated as other factors must be considered with respect to the closing of the Landfill and/or the Transfer Station, and there is a shortage of capacity to put on this task. In short, no firm timeframe to complete the curbside review has been put in place. There was continued discussion around the Trucking and Disposal process, and costs and revenues around HazMat disposals, plastics, etc.

MH asked about the salaries and if the department was fully utilized. LC and JT both confirmed there were not vacancies.

Moving onto the Board of Health budget, MH again asked about the resource needs as previously discussed at the joint BOS/FinCom meeting earlier in March. LC explained her wishes for a full-time inspector, and how the current part time inspector (JT) is scheduled for a three-day week but is putting in more hours due to demand. MS asked if the job was posted, and if JT was a candidate for the full-time position. LC said she was not a candidate as she has other commitments. She further explained how the FDA requires one full time inspector for every 125 establishments. Sturbridge has 131 food establishments, and does not include the number of hotels that require inspection. There was significant discussion around the inspector role and inspections, and staffing needs before moving onto Community Health. JW asked about the legal fees approved at last town meeting for the Landfill dispute, and if additional funding would be requested this year. LC said they have not used up all the funds yet. However, she noted that there may be a need for additional legal fees depending on current developments. She further indicated that the department is tracking all costs closely now that some Sturbridge residents have had soil tests confirming contamination. JW reminded everyone that Casella has been paying for the costs associated with this contamination to the affected Charlton residents.

**Budget Review – Trails Committee & Tree Warden – Tom Chamberland, Brandon Goodwin**

TC went through the line items for Trails and explained the registration costs are for "every other year" trails conference for two members. Additional mileage represents their travel costs. He also confirmed that his request for hand tools was denied in his operating budget. He confirmed these tools are locked up in DPW sheds and the DPW has the key. Ideally the plan is to have a cache of tools to accommodate up to 50 volunteers. KN asked if he approached the STA for funding of the tools as he did for the trails booklets. He did not but TC did say the books were being distributed to hotels and campgrounds, as well as a set at the Town Hall. TC further explained about his equipment requests from the Betterment Budget. The driveway grader will be useful for smaller trail projects. The DPW currently assists with wider trails. The Traffic system is a vehicle and pedestrian counter, which will give the committee an idea as to how many people go into the trail systems, and how many vehicles are in the area. LM asked if this "counter" could be used in public safety instances such

as if a person were to get lost in the trail system. TC believed that because these counters run on a time lag the data would not be readily available for a crisis, and it only counts bodies that walk past it; it's not a camera. JB asked if they could be used for maintenance purposes to determine certain trails or lots that would require more upkeep. BG indicated that it will help in maintaining parking areas and use for potential growth needs. The other request to be funded out of Betterment is an additional AWD utility vehicle which will also be locked up in the equipment sheds. BG noted that the Plimpton Property will hold an Earth Day event on April 22 that is open to the public.

TC moved to the Tree Warden budget which is level funded from FY17. Again, Betterment funds are used for annual tree maintenance and beautification of the various mini parks around town. LM asked if Sturbridge was still considered Tree City USA status, and TC confirmed that it has been for the past 28 years.

### **Review of Meeting Minutes**

JW moved the motion to accept the December 12, 2016 Meeting Minutes as amended; MS seconds. Motion passes 6-0-1 (LM abstained)

JL moved the motion to accept the March 2, 2017 Meeting Minutes as amended; MS seconds. Motion passes 7-0-0

### **New Business**

JL commented about a resident inquiry she received regarding the lack of posting or information about the upcoming town elections in April. Apparently, there are no notes on the town website. The committee felt it would be forthcoming, and JL said she would ask the Town Administrator.

### **No Public Access**

JB moved the motion to adjourn at 9:53pm; JW seconds. Meeting adjourned.

/jml