**Finance Committee Meeting Minutes**

**Town Hall ~ April 10, 2018**

**Sturbridge, MA**

**Call to Order:**

The Finance Committee chair called the Finance Committee meeting to order at 7:00pm. The following committee members were present: Kathy Neal (KN), Michael Serio (MS), Joni Light (JL), James Waddick (JW), Mike Hager (MH), Jared Burns (JB), and Bruce Boyson (BB).

Absent: Karen Davis (KD), and Larry Morrison (LM).

Guests: Tom Ford (TF) and John Grasso (JG).

**Review of Fiscal Year 2019 Police Department Budget**

JL introduced the police department budget as one with no big increases and asked about the new crosswalk signs to be installed. TF stated that they are a capital expense this year. MH asked about the cross walk signs that were approved last year. TF said that the signs have been delivered and will be installed as soon as the weather permits. The signs are wireless equipped with solar panels and batteries; they will be activated for a number of seconds and then will turn off. The capital expense this year is for radar boards which will display the speed of vehicles. The radar boards will also collect data for road safety and the information will help to determine when to enforce speed on the roads.

There was discussion on a possible warrant article regarding false alarms, as well as the possibility of one of the two requested cruisers being a pickup truck in place of an SUV. The truck would be marked as a cruiser and would be primarily used to tow the larger emergency management vehicles.

JW asked if TF had any information on other towns having detectives. TF stated that more towns have them than do not. TF said that day to day operations are being impacted by the lack of a detective and gave many examples of the patrol officers’ time being spent on work that could be performed by a detective. JW, MS, JB, MH asked questions regarding data to determine department spending and show how a detective would free up patrol officers’ time on their shifts. TF agreed that it would be helpful to have an annual breakdown of arrests and average time spent but noted that it would change annually.

MH asked about the new court officer. TF stated that this would be a full time separate position. This was followed by a lengthy discussion about salaries and benefits of the desired positions.

JW asked if TF has any safety concerns. TF said that safety is an issue and that the department has been asking for increases in personnel for a long time. KN asked if the marijuana filing fee would go away. TF indicated no, that there would continue to be bylaw violations, open container violations and violations by minors requiring fines and filing fees in court. KN asked about progress on a school resource officer for all three schools. TF explained that he feels that Officer Dadalt has become so integrated at Burgess School that it would be detrimental to take her away. He shared his vision to have all five towns involved at the Tantasqua campus. There was discussion about back up with TF stating that whoever is closest and fastest responds to Tantasqua. The budget presentation ended with a discussion of the need for more dispatchers to be in compliance with state law.

**Review of Fiscal Year 2019 Fire Department and Safety Complex Budgets**

JL stated that some increases in the fire department budget are uncontrollable. JG stated that this is not a regulated industry; calls are increasing and the nature of calls requiring more equipment and supplies are increasing. JL asked for an explanation of the 36 month grant. JG stated that the grant would allow the town to hire four full time firefighters/paramedics which would provide two crews on duty at all times. MH asked how often two ambulance calls come in at once. JG stated that it happens on a regular basis but especially summer weekends, during flea market week, during the week and on weekends during wedding season, and within the town boundaries on the turnpike. JB asked about mutual support. JG stated that the calls from other towns are increasing much more than Sturbridge is responding to mutual aid. KN asked if there were any contractual issues with the grant to which JG stated that a grant position could not be replaced with another grant position. The grant covers training but does not cover benefits. JW asked what would be the net gain for the town at the end of the grant period. JG stated that the town would have to decide whether or not to continue funding the positions at the end of that time but that he is not looking at these as permanent positions.

JG stated that the town is putting aside money annually to reduce the burden on tax payers when an ambulance must be replaced but that the budget timetable had to be adjusted when an ambulance was totaled a few years ago.

JL introduced the Safety Complex budget with discussion with the need for a washer and dryer for uniforms rather than sending them out. JG explained that the installation is expensive because the electric supply must be run through concrete. KN noted the big jump in the budget for heating oil. JG explained that it is done centrally and the safety complex is bid with the schools a year in advance. JL asked if there were any issues that need to be addressed with the safety complex. JG said that there was a feasibility study conducted last year; the building is beginning to show signs of age and that things must be done. Discussion continued with specific issues that have arisen with the safety complex. KN asked if there were any warrant articles. JG said the alarm bylaw but no articles requiring funding.

There was discussion among the committee members about the remaining budgets. KN and JL expressed interest in hearing from the schools, particularly Tantasqua. BB indicated that he would contact the new senior center director and give her the option of coming before the committee.

The following line items were reviewed for Police Department. The motion was moved to recommend by JL.

**Line: Account: Police Department**

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 67 | 12102-52000 | Purchase of Services | $93,710.00 | JL; JB seconds. Motion accepted 7-0-0. |
| 68 | 12102-54000 | Supplies | $64,575.00 | JL; JB seconds. Motion accepted 7-0-0. |
| 69 | 12102-57000 | Other Charges | $6,619.00 | JL; JB seconds. Motion accepted 7-0-0. |
| 70 | 12102-58050 | Capital Outlay | $111,100.00 | JL; JB seconds. Motion accepted 7-0-0. |
|  |  | Total Expenses | $276,004.00 |  |

The following line items were reviewed for Fire Department. The motion was moved to recommend by JL.

**Line: Account: Fire Department**

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 72 | 12202-52000 | Purchase of Services | $98,103.00 | JL; JB seconds. Motion accepted 7-0-0. |
| 73 | 12202-54000 | Supplies | $77,000.00 | JL; JB seconds. Motion accepted 7-0-0. |
| 74 | 12202-57000 | Other Charges | $6,700.00 | JL; JB seconds. Motion accepted 7-0-0. |
|  |  | Total Expenses | $181,803.00 |  |

The following line items were reviewed for Safety Complex. The motion was moved to recommend by JL.

**Line: Account: Safety Complex**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 62 | 11972-52000 | Purchase of Services | $73,835.00 | JL; JB seconds. Motion accepted 7-0-0. |
| 63 | 11972-54000 | Supplies | $13,200.00 | JL; JB seconds. Motion accepted 7-0-0. |
|  |  | Total Expenses | $87,035.00 |  |
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|  |  | **Safety Complex Total** | $87,035.00 |  |

MH brought forward Line 40 which was held for further discussion between the town planner and town administrator at the March 29 meeting. At this time, the town is not prepared to move forward on codification of the rules, regulations and bylaws. The motion was moved to recommend by MH.

**Line: Account: Town Planner**

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 40 | 11752-52000 | Purchase of Services | $39,145.00 | MH: BB seconds. Motion accepted 7-0-0. |

**Approval of Meeting Minutes**

JW moved the motion to accept the minutes from April 3, 2018, as amended. JL seconds. Motion accepted 5-0-2 (JB and BB abstained).

BB moved the motion to accept the minutes from April 5, 2018, as amended. JW seconds. Motion accepted 6-0-1 (JB abstained).

**No New Business**

**Old Business**

There was discussion regarding the Title 5 inspections, an employee versus a consultant, the fee structure, and use of the revolving fund. The control of the file issue for the warrant articles was discussed in an effort to have all parties working from the same copy going forward.

**No Public Access**

MH moved the motion to adjourn. JW seconds; the motion carried 7-0-0 and the meeting is adjourned at 9:21pm.

/jme