**Finance Committee Meeting Minutes**

**Town Hall ~ April 18, 2019**

**Sturbridge, MA**

**Call to Order:**

The Finance Committee Chair called the Finance Committee meeting to order at 7:00 pm. The following committee members were present: Kathy Neal (KN), Larry Morrison (LM), Michael Hager (MH), Kevin Smith (KS), James Waddick (JW), Joni Light (JL), and Karen Davis (KD). Absent: Jared Burns (JB) and Bruce Boyson (BB).

Guests: Jeff Bridges (JBr), Town Administrator.

**Review of Fiscal Year 2020 Town Budgets**

The following item was reviewed for Nursery School. Supplies was adjusted to $350.00. The motion was moved to recommend line 64 for a total of $2,350.00 by KS.

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Line** | **Account** | **Nursery School** |  |  |
| 64 | 11982-52000 | Purchase of Services | $2,000.00 |  |
|  |  | Supplies | $350.00 |  |
|  |  | Total Expenses | $2,350.00 |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  | **Nursery School Total** | $2,350.00 | KS; KD seconds. Motion accepted 7-0-0. |

KN stated that the Nursery School supplies are for the fire alarm panel. The work will be done by students from Tantasqua High School; the $350.00 is for the supplies for the job.

**Review of Annual Town Meeting Warrant Articles**

Article 1 – Town Reports – KS moved the motion to accept Article 1 as written; JL seconds. Motion accepted 7-0-0.

The Committee agreed to wait to review the Community Preservation Committee (CPC) Articles until the CPC could provide more information.

Article 11 – Town Budget – KS moved the motion to accept Article 11 as written; KD seconds. Motion accepted 7-0-0. The wording for the summary box will be changed to include the total dollar amount as reflected in the line item budget.

Article 12 – Road Construction, Repairs and Maintenance – KS moved the motion to accept Article 12 as written; KD seconds. Motion accepted 7-0-0. KS noted that the amount is the same as last year.

Article 13 – Public Access Department – KS moved the motion to accept Article 13 as amended, striking the words, “Estimated budget for FY20 is.” JL seconds. Motion accepted 7-0-0. There was discussion about the word “Department” and whether there is a department head in the merit pool. JBr said that it is a non-union, non-department head position and JL added that it is not a position in the merit pool. LM asked if it is a department or a service and KS replied that it is a service.

KS moved the motion to reconsider the vote on Article 13; JW seconds. Motion accepted 7-0-0.

KS moved the motion to accept Article 13 as amended, striking the words, “Estimated budget for FY20 is,” and adding “or take any action relative thereto” after the body of the article; KD seconds. Motion accepted 7-0-0.

Article 14 – Sturbridge Tourist Association – hold until next week.

Article 15 – Betterment Committee – MH moved the motion to accept Article 15 as written; KD seconds. MH withdrew the motion; KD seconds. Motion fails. JBr said that the formatting should be corrected to match the format of Article 16. KD raised concerns regarding the expense of the police drone and the lack of protocols in place to protect individual’s privacy. The committee decided to hold the vote until Police Chief Ford can provide more information.

Article 16 – no vote taken.

Article 17 – Ambulance Stabilization Fund – MH moved the motion to accept Article 17 as written; KS seconds. Motion accepted 7-0-0. JL will add information to the text box concerning when the Town is scheduled to purchase a new ambulance.

Article 18 – Fire Vehicle Stabilization Fund – KS moved the motion to accept Article 18 as written; KD seconds. Motion accepted 7-0-0. JBr said he would find out what the next truck scheduled to be purchased is.

Article 19 – OPEB Trust Fund – MH moved the motion to accept Article 19 as written; KD seconds. Motion accepted 7-0-0. KS stated that the Town has an eighteen million-dollar obligation, and this shows a good faith effort to get there. LM stated that Standard and Poor’s complimented the Town on this very point; it is a question of the bond rating being at a higher rate over 15-20 years rather than a one-year contribution. JBr explained that OPEB is a big deal and funding is a plus. He said that free cash is up, this reduces a long-term liability and spends down free cash.

Article 20 – Tax Rate Relief – KS moved the motion to accept Article 20 as written; MH seconds. Motion accepted 7-0-0. JBr stated that this amount was reduced from $500,000.00 because the sum total of the Warrant Articles is so high.

Article 21 – Capital Stabilization Fund – MH moved the motion to accept Article 21 as written; KS seconds. Motion accepted 7-0-0.

Article 22 – Revaluation/Interim Adjustments – KS moved the motion to accept Article 22 as written; JL seconds. Motion accepted 7-0-0.

Article 23 – Revolving Funds-Spending Limits FY20 – JL moved the motion to accept Article 23 with the first word corrected to “To”; KD seconds. Motion accepted 7-0-0.

Article 24 – General Code-Codification Services – KS moved the motion to accept Article 24 as written; KD seconds. Motion accepted 5-1-1 (JL opposed, MH abstained). MH stated that this service allows for version control over the Town’s documents; there will be an annual maintenance fee. JBr explained that the service provides the user with continuous access to the most recently adopted legislature adopted by the Town. He said it is up and online within a week and there is no conflict with what people find online.

Article 25 – Personnel Classification Plan – MH moved the motion to accept Article 25 as written; KS seconds. Motion accepted 6-1-0 (JL opposed). JBr said he received a text from Barbara Barry stating this will include department heads. He explained that there is a shrinkage in the municipal marketplace’s employee pool; the Town will have to pay more to hire new employees. This study will identify issues of underpaid employees and resolve those issues. He said that not everyone will believe that it is fair, but he hopes to get to equity – similar pay for similar work. LM asked what would happen if the recommendations have a dramatic effect on the budget. JBr stated that the plan would have to be implemented in a multi-year manageable way with the affected employees.

Article 28 – Sewer Project Debt – KS moved the motion to accept Article 28 as written; KD seconds. Motion accepted 7-0-0.

Article 31 – Decommission Well #2 – KS moved the motion to accept Article 31 as written; KD seconds. Motion accepted 7-0-0.

Article 32 – Upgrade of Fiske Hill Pump Station – KS moved the motion to accept Article 32 as written; KD seconds. Motion accepted 7-0-0. “Portable” will be changed to “potable” in the text box.

Article 34 – Poll Time Change – JL moved the motion to accept Article 34 as written; MH seconds. Motion accepted 7-0-0. KN stated that this is for the benefit of commuters who must vote before going to work.

Article 35 – Establish Commission on Disability – MH moved the motion to accept Article 35 as written; JL seconds. Motion accepted 7-0-0. JL suggested that the summary box have more information added.

Article 45 – Local Excise on Retail Sales of Marijuana – KS moved the motion to accept Article 45 as written; KD seconds. Motion accepted 7-0-0.

**No Meeting Minutes to Approve**

**No New Business**

**No Old Business**

**No Public Access**

KS moved the motion to adjourn. KD seconds. Motion accepted 7-0-0 and meeting adjourned at 9:26 pm.

/jme