**Finance Committee Meeting Minutes**

**Town Hall ~ April 15, 2021**

**Sturbridge, MA**

**Call to Order**

The Finance Committee Chair called the Finance Committee meeting to order at 6:30 pm. The following committee members were present: Kevin Smith (KS), James Waddick (JW), Joni Light (JL), and Michael Hager (MH), and Joe Freitas (JF). Kathy Neal (KN) arrived at 6:31 and Bruce Boyson (BB) arrived 7:49. Absent: Larry Morrison (LM), and Karen Davis (KD).

Guests: Jeff Bridges (JB), Town Administrator; and Barbara Barry (BBa), Finance Director.

This meeting was held remotely pursuant to Governor Baker’s March 12, 2020, Order Suspending Certain Provisions of the Open Meeting Law, and the Governor’s March 15, 2020, order imposing strict limitations on the number of people that may gather in one place. The meeting was held via the GoToMeeting application, recorded, and posted on the Town website.

KS established that a quorum was present, read the introduction to the virtual meeting, and introduced new Finance Committee member, Joe Freitas.

**No Reserve Fund Transfers**

**Review of Fiscal Year 2022 Town Budgets**

The motion was moved to reconsider Line 18 by MH; JW seconds. Motion accepted 5-0-1.

Roll call vote:

MH, yes JL, yes KN, yes KS, yes JW, yes JF, Abstained

The motion was moved to recommend Lines 6, 17, 18, 19, 21, 22, 23, 53, 54, 55, 56, and 65 by MH; JW seconds. Motion accepted 5-0-1.

Roll call vote:

MH, yes JL, yes KN, yes KS, yes JW, yes JF, Abstained

The following line was reviewed for Town Accountant. The motion was moved to recommend line 6 for a total of $103,632.00 by MH.

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Line** | **Account** | **Town Accountant** |  |  |
|  |  | Department Head Salaries | $86,724.00 |  |
|  |  | Salaries/ Wages | $16,758.00 |  |
|  |  | Longevity | $150.00 |  |
| 6 | 11351 | Personnel Costs | $103,632.00 | MH: JW seconds. Motion accepted 5-0-1. |

The following lines were reviewed for Elections & Registration. The motion was moved to recommend line 17 for a total of $9,570.00 and line 18 for a total of $12,717.00 by MH.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Line** | **Account** | **Elections & Registration** |  |  |  |
|  |  | Board Salaries | $350.00 |  |  |
|  |  | Salaries/ Wages | $9,220.00 |  |  |
| 17 | 11621 | Personnel Costs | $9,570.00 | MH; KN seconds. Motion accepted 5-0-1. |  |
| **Line** | **Account** | **Elections & Registration** |  |  |  |
|  | 11622-52000 | Purchase of Services | $10,375.00 |  |  |
|  | 11622-54000 | Supplies | $2,342.00 |  |  |
| 18 |  | Total Expenses | $12,717.00 | MH; KN seconds. Motion accepted 5-0-1. |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  | **Elections & Registration Total** | $22,287.00 |  |  |

The following line was reviewed for Conservation Commission. The motion was moved to recommend line 19 for a total of $102,806.00 by MH.

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Line** | **Account** | **Conservation Commission** |  |  |
|  |  | Department Head Salaries | $73,341.00 |  |
|  |  | Salaries/ Wages | $29,465.00 |  |
| 19 | 11711 | Personnel Costs | $102,806.00 | MH; KN seconds. Motion accepted 5-0-1. |

The following lines were reviewed for Town Planner. The motion was moved to recommend line 21 for a total of $140,613.00 and line 22 for a total of $48,149.00 by MH.

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Line** | **Account** | **Town Planner** |  |  |
|  |  | Department Head Salaries | $101,211.00 |  |
|  |  | Salaries/ Wages | $38,952.00 |  |
|  |  | Longevity | $450.00 |  |
| 21 | 11751 | Personnel Costs | $140,613.00 | MH; KN seconds. Motion accepted 5-0-1. |
|  |  |  |  |  |
|  | 11752-52000 | Purchase of Services | $40,340.00 |  |
|  | 11752-54000 | Supplies | $3,750.00 |  |
|  | 11752-56000 | Intergovernmental | $2,789.00 |  |
|  | 11752-57000 | Other Charges | $1,270.00 |  |
| 22 |  | Total Expenses | $48,149.00 | MH; KN seconds. Motion accepted 5-0-1. |
|  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  | **Planning Department Total** | $188,762.00 |  |

JB explained the annual maintenance fee for codification includes website hosting by Code Publishers and updating as bylaws are amended.

The following line was reviewed for Zoning Board of Appeals. The motion was moved to recommend line 23 for a total of $590.00 by MH.

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Line** | **Account** | **Zoning Board of Appeals** |  |  |
|  | 11762-52000 | Purchase of Services | $500.00 |  |
|  | 11762-54000 | Supplies | $0.00 |  |
|  | 11762-57000 | Other Charges | $90.00 |  |
| 23 |  | Total Expenses | $590.00 | MH; KN seconds. Motion accepted 5-0-1. |
|  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  | **Zoning Board of Appeals Total** | $590.00 |  |

The following lines were reviewed for Landfill/Recycling Center. The motion was moved to recommend line 53 for a total of $128,240.00 and line 54 for a total of $179,535.00 by MH.

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Line** | **Account** | **Landfill/Recycling Center** |  |  |
|  |  | Salaries/ Wages | $126,340.00 |  |
|  |  | Overtime | $1,500.00 |  |
|  |  | Longevity | $400.00 |  |
| 53 | 14301 | Personnel Costs | $128,240.00 | MH; KN seconds. Motion accepted 5-0-1. |
|  |  |  |  |  |
|  | 14302-52000 | Purchase of Services | $174,535.00 |  |
|  | 14302-54000 | Supplies | $5,000.00 |  |
| 54 |  | Total Expenses | $179,535.00 | MH; KN seconds. Motion accepted 5-0-1. |
|  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  | **Landfill/Recycling Center Total** | $307,775.00 |  |

The following lines were reviewed for Board of Health. The motion was moved to recommend line 55 for a total of $104,029.00 and line 56 for a total of $8,600.00 by MH.

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Line** | **Account** | **Board of Health** |  |  |
|  |  | Department Head Salaries | $77,771.00 |  |
|  |  | Salaries/ Wages | $26,258.00 |  |
| 55 | 15101 | Personnel Costs | $104,029.00 | MH; KN seconds. Motion accepted 5-0-1. |
|  |  |  |  |  |
|  | 15102-52000 | Purchase of Services | $4,450.00 |  |
|  | 15102-54000 | Supplies | $2,350.00 |  |
|  | 15102-57000 | Other Charges | $1,800.00 |  |
| 56 |  | Total Expenses | $8,600.00 | MH; KN seconds. Motion accepted 5-0-1. |
|  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  | **Board of Health Total** | $112,629.00 |  |

The following line was reviewed for Recreation. The motion was moved to recommend line 65 for a total of $94,223.00 by MH.

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Line** | **Account** | **Recreation** |  |  |
|  |  | Department Head Salaries | $61,109.00 |  |
|  |  | Salaries/ Wages | $33,114.00 |  |
|  |  | Longevity | $0.00 |  |
| 65 | 16301 | Personnel Costs | $94,223.00 | MH; KN seconds. Motion accepted 5-0-1. |

**Review of Annual Town Meeting Warrant Articles**

JB stated that most articles are routine this year. KS stated that the Board of Selectmen (BOS) is still reviewing articles and he hopes the BOS will finish next week.

Article 1 – Town Reports – JW moved the motion to recommend Article 1 as written; JL seconds. Motion accepted 6-0-0.

Roll call vote:

JF, yes MH, yes JL, yes KN, yes KS, yes JW, yes

Article 2 – Community Preservation Committee Report – it was decided to hold this article until the report has been submitted.

Article 3 – Community Preservation Administration Funds – JL moved the motion to recommend Article 3 as written; KN seconds. Motion accepted 6-0-0.

Roll call vote:

JF, yes MH, yes JL, yes KN, yes KS, yes JW, yes

Article 4 – Community Preservation Debt Service – JW moved the motion to recommend Article 4 as written; KN seconds. Motion accepted 6-0-0.

Roll call vote:

JF, yes MH, yes JL, yes KN, yes KS, yes JW, yes

Article 5 – Community Preservation Community-Wide Historic Preservation Plan – it was decided to hold this article for more information from either the Community Preservation Committee or the Historical Commission.

KS noted that KN left the meeting at 7:29 pm.

Article 6 – Community Preservation Draper-Mills Monument Restoration – JW moved the motion to recommend Article 6 as written; JL seconds. Motion accepted 5-0-0.

Roll call vote:

JF, yes MH, yes JL, yes KS, yes JW, yes

JB explained that Bob Briere approached the Community Preservation Committee (CPC) to request funds to repair a unique monument that had been damaged in a wind storm. He added that he checked with the Town’s insurance provider and the monument is not covered. JB showed pictures of the monument with the hole in it. He explained that the monument will require specialized work to repair and read the proposal. He stated that the repairs to this monument are in addition to Article 7, which is the annual repair and restoration of stones in the old cemeteries. There was discussion regarding whether the general public could be taught to clean and make repairs to the historical stones in the Town’s cemeteries. JL stated that it is highly specialized work and an impressive group of craftsmen do this work. JB said preserving the stones is of historical and cultural value to Sturbridge. More questions followed regarding the overall plan and the approach each year for stone restoration. JB explained that the stones are evaluated in the spring and the most in need of repair are repaired; he added that the consultants are experts and provide good value for what they do.

Article 7 – Community Preservation Gravestone Restoration – JL moved the motion to recommend Article 7 as written; JW seconds. Motion accepted 4-0-1.

Roll call vote:

JF, yes MH, Abstained JL, yes KS, yes JW, yes

MH stated that he had forwarded grant announcements for gravestone restoration to JB. Questions arose regarding how long it would take to restore all the stones. JB said he has walked the cemeteries and it will probably take a long time. BBa said that the article allows the consultants to repair the stones most in need in either Old Burial Ground or North Cemetery.

Article 8 – Community Preservation Recreational Trails Master Plan – JW moved the motion to recommend Article 8 as written; MH seconds. JW withdrew the motion; MH withdrew the second. BBa explained that this article was on the Town Meeting Warrant last year but was pulled prior to Town Meeting due to the inability to get the work done because of the Covid shutdown. Questions arose regarding exactly what the Recreational Trails Master Plan is and what will be updated with the funds. It was decided to hold the vote until more information is available.

KS noted that BB joined the meeting at 7:49 and KN rejoined the meeting at 8:00 pm.

Article 9 – Community Preservation Streeter Beach Entry Road Feasibility Study and Design – MH moved the motion to recommend Article 9 as written; JF seconds. Motion accepted 5-2-0.

Roll call vote:

BB, yes JF, yes MH, yes JL, no KN, no KS, yes

JW, yes

JB explained that the Board of Selectmen wants to lease Streeter Beach from the Army Corps of Engineers. He said that the Army Corp is in favor of leasing the beach to the Town as long as the access to the site is without question. He explained that Streeter Road was not abandoned properly and the Town has no right to use it to access the beach parking lot. He stated that he has been in negotiations with G&F and the property owner on the other side of the old road to construct a thirty-foot-wide driveway and to surrender the old right of way to G&F. He explained the State ran the beach prior to its closing and that there were problems with people parking at the G&F warehouse and interfering with operations there. He added that G&F prefers that the access be moved and is working with the Town to pay for the ground to provide access to the beach. JB stated that the road will not be paved as it will be for summertime use only. JB explained that the Board of Selectmen wants the beach reopened for kids and families to have the opportunity for recreation such as swimming, picnicking, and kayaking. JF stated that this is a great opportunity to open the beach.

Article 10 – Community Preservation Trail Construction – KS noted that the detail is missing on the project. It was decided to hold Article 10 until the CPC can answer questions at the next meeting.

Article 11 – Town Budget – a hold was placed on Article 11.

Article 12 – Road Construction, Repairs and Maintenance – JW moved the motion to recommend Article 12 as written; MH seconds. Motion accepted 7-0-0.

Roll call vote:

BB, yes JF, yes MH, yes JL, yes KN, yes KS, yes

JW, yes

JB explained that $400,000.00 is the normal amount requested for Article 12, but the article was zeroed out in the Covid budget last year due to lost revenues. He added that this is the first step towards restoration. He said that the Chapter 90 funds will be used to keep the road program going, adding that Chapter 90 is the State money for local roads and improvements. JB stated that the Department of Public Works director evaluates which roads need to be paved and updates his plan every five years.

Article 13 – Public Access Department – KN moved the motion to recommend Article 13 as written; MH seconds. Motion accepted 7-0-0.

Roll call vote:

BB, yes JF, yes MH, yes JL, yes KN, yes KS, yes

JW, yes

JB stated that the plan is to renovate the public access equipment to digital equipment and to have the ability to broadcast from anywhere.

Article 14 – Sturbridge Tourist Association – a hold was placed on Article 14.

Article 15 – Betterment Committee – MH moved the motion to recommend Article 15 as written; JW seconds. Motion accepted 7-0-0.

Roll call vote:

BB, yes JF, yes MH, yes JL, yes KN, yes KS, yes

JW, yes

Ks questioned if Polly Currier was the correct “requested by” for the Flower Barrels as that is usually a Town department, not a person. BBA said she will figure it out. JB stated that the police department wants an electric bike for trail patrols. JB said that there will be upgraded signage throughout Town for Wayfinding.

Article 16 – Capital Improvement Plan – KN moved the motion to recommend Article 16 as written; JL seconds. Motion accepted 7-0-0.

Roll call vote:

BB, yes JF, yes MH, ye JL, yes KN, yes KS, yes

JW, yes

JB stated that the lightning rods are to be installed on the municipal buildings; KS said that surge suppression for the electrical systems should be included. JB stated that the six rifles are the beginning of a multi-year replacement program for 17 very old and very unreliable rifles on loan from the Federal government. He added that the rest will be replaced over the next few years.

Article 17 – Ambulance Stabilization Fund – MH moved the motion to recommend Article 17 as written; KN seconds. Motion accepted 7-0-0.

Roll call vote:

BB, yes JF, yes MH, yes JL, yes KN, yes KS, yes

JW, yes

JB explained that the pre-Covid amount was $60,000.00. The question was raised to forgo funding this article this year. BBa said it is financially prudent to set aside money for large expenses and she hopes that it will be the full $60,000.00 next year. It was agreed to add information on when the ambulances were purchased and when they will need to be replaced in the Summary Box.

Article 18 – OPEB Trust Fund – JL moved the motion to recommend Article18 as written; KN seconds. Motion accepted 7-0-0.

Roll call vote:

BB, yes JF, yes MH, yes JL, yes KN, yes KS, yes

JW, yes

It was noted that the Town’s liability is twenty-two million dollars and the fund is significantly underfunded.

**No Meeting Minutes**

**New Business**

JB stated that he is experimenting with hybrid meetings and asked how many Finance Committee members would be able to be present at next week’s meeting. It was decided to let him know how many people would attend in person by Tuesday.

**Old Business**

JB said that it will cost $45,000.00 - $50,000.00 to implement the new pay plan for non-union employees.

**No Public Access**

BB moved the motion to adjourn; MH seconds. Motion accepted 7-0-0 and meeting adjourned at 9:11 pm.

Roll call vote:

BB, yes JF, yes MH, yes JL, yes KN, yes KS, yes

JW, yes

/jme