**Finance Committee Meeting Minutes**

**Town Hall ~ January 7, 2020**

**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), Joni Light (JL), Jared Burns (JB), James Waddick (JW), and Kevin Smith (KS). Absent: Karen Davis (KD), Michael Hager (MH), and Bruce Boyson (BB).

Guests: Jeff Bridges (JBr), Town Administrator; Charlie Blanchard (CB), Planning Board Chair and Historical Commission; Mary Blanchard (MB), Board of Selectmen Chair; and Rebecca Mimeault (RM), Senior Center Study Committee.

**Review of Special Town Meeting Warrant Articles**

KN invited JBr to discuss the articles for the Special Town Meeting scheduled for January 27.

Article 44 – Senior Center Feasibility Study and Cost Estimate – JB moved the motion to recommend Article 44 as written; LM seconds. Motion accepted 6-0-0. JBr explained that there are three potential sites to meet the needs of the Senior Center: the current location with renovations; 70 Cedar Street; and 80 Route 15. He stated that the purpose of the study would be to vet the issues of each location and to determine a turnkey price, so the Town can make an informed decision regarding its Senior Center. He added that the Facilities Coordinator is working on a list of improvements that must be made to keep the current building operational. KS requested that JBr separate the costs for each location. Discussion followed as to what would happen to the Senior Center building if it were not the choice for the new center. Specific issues with the Route 15 site’s conservation restriction, the current Center’s lot configuration, and access to 70 Cedar Street were discussed. JBr stated the study would address the specific issues at each location.

Article 45 – Purchase of 501 Main Street for the Development of a Public Parking Lot – KS requested that the article be amended to read .53 acres instead of .33 acres. KS moved the motion to recommend Article 45 as amended; LM seconds. Motion accepted 5-1-0 (JW opposed). JBr explained that in 2009, the Planning Board and the Town determined the need for additional public parking for pedestrians and businesses in that area. He added 501 Main Street parcel is currently under purchase and sale agreement with the approval of the Board of Selectmen. JBr stated that the Town owns the land below this parcel and the acquisition of 501 Main Street would give access to the Riverlands Trail network. Concerns were raised over the property’s being completely razed and all materials removed, the cost to maintain and plow the lot, regulatory agency approvals, traffic impact, electric vehicle charging stations, and security.

Article 46 – Design of a Public Parking Lot at 501 Main Street – JB moved the motion to recommend Article 46 as written; LM seconds. Motion accepted 5-1-0 (JW opposed). KS stated that the amount requested seemed low.

Article 47 – Construction of an Affordable Single-Family Home on Cedar Street with Community Preservation Act Housing Funds – Discussion centered on other ways to increase affordable housing in Sturbridge to benefit more families. JBr explained that the Housing Partnership is updating the housing plan. The vote was put on hold until further information from the Housing Partnership could be obtained.

Article 48 – Center Office Building Storm Window Project – JW moved the motion to recommend Article 48 as written; JL seconds. Motion accepted 5-0-1 (KS abstained). KS asked if the windows had the Historical Commission’s blessing. JBr said that the windows were vetted through the Historical Commission. CB stated that new storm window styles had been approved by the Massachusetts Historical Commission and they must approve the windows for this project. He added that the windows will be functioning storm windows with screens.

Article 49 – Conveyance of the Town-Owned Land at 8 Brookfield Road – KS moved the motion to recommend Article 49 as written; LM seconds. Motion accepted 4-2-0 (JL and KN opposed). JBr explained that the article would give the Board of Selectmen the ability to lease the building, lease the land with the building, or lease the land without the building, or sell it. KN asked if the property is part of the “Gateway Zone”. CB stated that it was not. JW stated this article would facilitate marketing of the property.

Article 50 – Acquisition of the Property at 53 Holland Road – KS moved the motion to take no action on Article 50; JL seconds. Motion accepted 6-0-0. JBr stated that this article is a placeholder in anticipation of the appraisal of the property.

Article 51 – Replacement of a Roof Top Airconditioning Unit at the Public Safety Complex – KS asked when the Safety Complex would be renovated. JBr stated that the project order is Senior Center first, Department of Public Works second, and Safety Complex third; he expects the Safety Complex project to begin within nine years. JW stated that the request is too high, and he would rather repair the unit than replace it. JBr stated that he will get more information from the Facilities Coordinator.

Article 52 – An Article to Amend the Zoning Bylaw for Changes in Definitions – Questions arose concerning the wording and punctuation of the article. CB answered concerns regarding the accessory uses and noise related activities. KN stated that she would get more information from the Town Planner.

Article 53 – Amending Chapters 14 and 15 of the Zoning Bylaws – Questions were raised concerning the wording in the article. KS questioned whether the article should be voted on at the Annual Town Meeting rather than at a Special Town Meeting.

Article 54 – Proposed Amendments to Chapter Nineteen of the Zoning Bylaw – This article was held for more information.

JL leaves at 9:00.

Article 55 – Electronic Voting Committee – KS moved the motion to recommend the article as written; LM seconds. Motion accepted 5-0-0.

Article 56 – Additional Appropriation Fiske Hill Water Pump Station – KS moved the motion to recommend Article 56 as written; JW seconds. Motion accepted 5-0-0.

Article 57 – Unpaid Bill of a Previous Year – JW moved the motion to recommend Article 57 as written; KS seconds. Motion accepted 5-0-0.

Article 58 – Additional Funding for Chemicals and Testing-Sewer – JW moved the motion to recommend Article 58 as written; KS seconds. Motion accepted 5-0-0.

**Meeting Minutes**

LM moved the motion to amend the December 12, 2019, meeting minutes; KS seconds. Motion accepted 3-0-2 (JW and JB abstained). KS moved the motion to accept the December 12, 2019, meeting minutes as amended; LM seconds. Motion accepted 3-0-2 (JW and JB abstained).

JW moved the motion to accept the December 3, 2019, meeting minutes as written; LM seconds. Motion accepted 4-0-1 (JB abstained).

JW moved the motion to accept the October 30, 2019, meeting minutes as written; KS seconds. Motion accepted 4-0-1 (LM abstained).

JW moved the motion to accept the October 1, 2019, meeting minutes with a typographical error corrected; JB seconds. Motion accepted 5-0-0.

**No Old Business**

**No New Business**

**No Public Access**

KS moved the motion to adjourn; JW seconds. Motion accepted 5-0-0 and meeting adjourned at 9:11 pm.

/jme