

FINANCE COMMITTEE MINUTES

JANUARY 24, 2013

The meeting was called to order at 7:37 PM in Room 014 of Town Hall. The following members were present: Ken Szajda, Michelle Zeamer, Michelle Johnson and Dan Alfred. Kathleen White and Charlie Kaslow were absent from the meeting.

The budget review process for FY 14 began with Liz Greendale presenting the Town Clerk's budget. She handed out copies of the budget, as there was a slight change from what was emailed to FinComm previously. The changes in the FY14 budget from the FY13 budget are as follows: 1% increase in salaries; certification added to FY14 (\$1000); communications down in FY14; professional development is up because Mrs. Greendale went to school last year on a scholarship but she is including the cost of the academy classes for FY14 (if she receives a scholarship again, it will not be needed); and office supplies are down, with the money being added to professional services. Michelle Zeamer asked about the part time clerical position and Mrs. Greendale said that her intent was for it to be a permanent, part time position of 18 hrs. a week. She added that this person had been able to send out letters to businesses to recertify (this had not been done in 3 years) and this has brought in about \$1500 this January. In the first 6 months of FY13, there was only about \$400 in revenue from business certifications. Dan Alfred asked if this was catch up and was told "yes". He commented how quick the turnaround time for receiving dog licenses was. Liz Greendale said that this part time position is helping in catching up and sustaining. Ken Szajda said he wants to know if the revenue offsets the expense of the part time person. He sees two phases, the funds required to catch up and he wants to know when the backlog piles will get caught up. When that happens, this position will need to be reassessed. Liz said that the business certifications should be caught up in about six months and the dog licenses are ongoing, because a new phase begins with those dogs not licensed by the end of April. Mrs. Greendale said this position also frees her from time working the counter to research by-laws, etc. Dan Alfred asked about increasing the present \$25.00 fine for an unlicensed dog, but Liz said that it is a by-law and that would have to be changed via town meeting. Ken Szajda said that he wants to check with the Town Accountant on the revenue brought in from dog licenses. Ken also asked Mrs. Greendale what would her budget look like if the guideline had to be lowered and she said the second page of each budget was a level funded version. Basically, she would cut communications and supplies and materials. If communications were cut by \$500, it would not be a realistic cut because the run rate is about \$2000.

Liz Greendale then presented the Elections budget. This was supposed to be based on 1 town election, but now there will be a special election as well. There will be 2 special elections, but one should fall in FY13 and one in FY14. Her budget for FY14 presently includes the 2 special elections; she can reduce it by \$4769 to \$9184.

Melissa Kaspern, Park Commissioner and Kristen Hedrick, Recreation Director, presented the Parks & Recreation budget. It has been voted on and approved by the Park Commissioners. The budget is made up of staffing, with 1 position being shared and the cost being split between Highway, Schools and Parks. There is also a revolving fund which pays for the programming and lifeguard salaries. There is a revenue and expense tracking of the programs, which shows a net positive result, with slight growth. The budget has a 1% salary

increase for salaries and \$450.00 for the lifeguard line. There are presently no lifeguards at Pleasure Point and reduced lifeguard hours at Stoddard Park. This is something that needs to be discussed during deliberations.

The Finance Committee budget of \$1500.00 for FY14 is level funded from FY13. It was discussed that Faith would not be able to attend meetings for the spring. This gives the FinComm several options: have Faith transcribe the tapes of the meetings; or have whoever transcribes the tapes of the Selectmen's meetings also do the FinComm's. Ken Szajda said that the FinComm could also consider formal clerical support by borrowing a part time employee from another department for 1 or 2 hours a week to copy and get packets, etc. ready for meetings. This would be an increase to the budget and not something Ken was recommending at this time. Michelle Johnson was concerned with the many revisions etc. and the compensation involved and Ken Szajda commented that it seems to be on target with FY13. He said that over the last several years, the FinComm has been able to reduce their bottom line through the use of technology.

The Reserve Fund was discussed next. Ken Szajda said that FinComm is recommending level funding for FY 14 -- \$212,675. He said that while looking at the history of the Reserve Fund, there was a big jump because of snow and ice and an upsurge in legal action, due to issues with Casella, etc. The legal aspect has subsided somewhat. Snow and Ice is the only line that can run a deficit. You don't want to overfund it because it ties the money up; so FinComm tries to fund it at the minimum spent. Ken Szajda said that he doesn't think that they are running far off from reality. Michelle Zeamer questioned why Public Buildings seems to have a Reserve Fund transfer every year -- they are small amounts but consistent. Paul LeBeau said there were a couple of years that money was needed at the Golf Course. Ken Szajda said the Zoning Board of Appeals, in 2007 and 2008, had peaks in Reserve Fund transfers because of litigation. So did the Board of Health in those years.

Tom Smith, Highway Superintendent, explained his department's need for a Reserve Fund transfer request in the amount of \$21,277. He said that he lost a 2005 truck recently. The frame broke while the truck was plowing and it is damaged beyond repair. The insurance adjuster deemed it a total loss and Tom Smith received a check for \$10,992. Dan Alfred asked how long the dept. had the truck and was told 7 years. It was due to be replaced in 2015. Tom said that he had never seen anything like this happen before. Dan then asked Tom if this would change his idea of how long to keep trucks before replacing them in the future. Tom said that he has the "sister" truck (also a 2005) and it is fine. Tom Smith said that the cost of a new cab and chassis is \$27,093 and \$5100 for a new plow to fit the truck. He has a dump body for it. Ken Szajda asked if the old plow has any value for parts and Tom said he would keep it. Ken Szajda then asked Tom how many trucks between this one and 2015 were slated for replacement and he said about 1 or 2 per year. This truck is out every day and is a front line piece of equipment. Ken Szajda asked the time frame for the delivery of this new truck and Tom said that it is on the lot now; it would be about a 2 week turn around. Tom Smith would like to buy back the truck from the insurance company for \$1100. He could use the parts on the one identical truck that he has and on two other trucks that are between 2004-2007. The tires alone are worth the \$1100, plus the engine and transmission. Michelle Zeamer asked what happens if they bump the replacement schedule up a year, but Ken said that it would make more sense to skip the year 2015, the year it was slated for replacement. Ken Szajda asked Tom if he had shopped around for the best prices and he said that he had spent several days doing just that and the best deal he could find was off the state bid list. Michelle Zeamer, seconded by Dan Alfred, made a MOTION to approve a transfer in the amount of \$21,277.00 from the Reserve Fund to the Highway Dept., org. #01420, vehicle replacement, obj. #58602. Passed 4-0-0.

Michelle Zeamer, seconded by Michelle Johnson, made a MOTION to approve payment of a bill submitted by Faith Antonioli, totaling 2.75 hours for the week ending January 12, 2013. Passed 4-0-0.

Ken Szajda reminded liaisons to get in touch with their department heads before budget presentations. Dan Alfred said that he wasn't sure who all the department heads are and was told they are on the town's web site or he could get in touch with Paul LeBeau.

At 8:54 Pm, Michelle Zeamer, seconded by Dan Alfred, made a MOTION to adjourn the meeting. Passed 4-0-0.

Respectfully submitted,

Date Approved: April 18, 2013

Faith Antonioli, Secretary