

Town of Holliston
Finance Committee
Meeting Minutes
February 7, 2017

The meeting convened at 7:04pm in Room 105 at Holliston Town Hall. In attendance: Chairperson Ken Szajda, Vice Chairperson Michelle Zeamer, Clerk Vincent Murphy, Dan Alfred, Tim Maxwell and Suzanne Nersessian.

Ms. Zeamer made a motion to approve the expenditure of \$421.20 for services of recording the minutes of the Finance Committee by Nancy Farrell. The motion was seconded by Mr. Alfred and passed by a vote of 6-0.

Ms. Zeamer made a motion to approve a Reserve Fund Transfer in the amount of \$16,023.01 from account 01220 to 52410 for repairs to multiple fire vehicles. The motion was seconded by Ms. Nersessian and passed by a vote of 6-0.

Conservation Agent Ms. Sheri O'Brien and Mr. Christopher Bajdek Chair of the Conservation Commission presented a FY18 budget for the Conservation Commission that was voted on by the Conservation Commission and within guideline, with the total requested expenses for FY18 being \$50,391, a 0.99% increase from FY17.

Mr. Murphy noted that at the Board of Selectmen meeting on February 1, 2017 that Mr. Bajdek expressed concern that in the future there may not be enough revenue from the conservation fees to support 25% of Ms. O'Brien's salary and therefore her entire salary would have to be paid for from the General Fund. Mr. Murphy suggested that the Conservation Commission should consider increasing their fees to offset any decreases in submissions of applications. Ms. O'Brien expressed concern that the fees were already high in comparison to surrounding towns. Mr. Alfred stated that given that it is predominately builders and developers who pay these fees that they would not decide not to build because of the small increase in the fees. Ms. O'Brien stated that the Conservation Commission would be discussing their fee structure in the Spring and they would consider the suggestions made by the members of the Finance Committee. Mr. Maxwell asked if there were any unmet needs, Ms. O'Brien responded by stating that land stewardship does not always get done.

Mr. Szajda stated that the scheduled budget presentation by the Youth & Family Services department was being postponed due to ongoing discussions with both the Town Administrator and the Board of Selectmen about salary increases for the staff in the department.

Sargent Matthew Stone, of the Holliston Police Department, presented the FY18 budget for the Auxiliary Police department. Sgt. Stone credited his predecessor Lt. Craig Denman for his work in organizing the Auxiliary force. He stated that the force had saved the town approximately \$105,600 this past fiscal year because of the volunteering done by the officers of the Auxiliary Police Department. The total amount requested for FY18 is \$13,361, which is within the guideline of only a 1.0% increase in the FY18 budget request from the FY17 approved budget.

Mr. Maxwell asked Sgt. Stone if there were any concerns or anything that was not being done because of the budget limitations. Sgt. Stone replied that there were three (3) anticipated retirements and ideally there would be enough funds in the Professional Development line to cover the costs of the fees to train three new members of the auxiliary department however, the \$5,907 being requested would only cover the costs of training two officers. Mr. Szajda noted that if the three retirements do happen then Sgt. Stone should return first to the Board of Selectmen and, if they approve the increase, to the Finance Committee to request funds for the training costs for this one-time occurrence.

The Director of Veterans' Services, Mr. John Givner, USAF (ret.), presented the FY18 budget for Holliston Veterans' Services. The amount being requested was \$25,683, an increase of \$4,811 or 20.5%. Mr. Givner explained that the Veterans' Services is jointly paid for by three other towns, Ashland, Medway and Hopkinton and the allocation to each town is based on the 2010 US Census figures and not based on the number of veterans a town may have. In addition, the numbers being presented were tentative and as the Board of the Veterans Services Metrowest District still must approve the budget, however, the process is that each town's applicable committees and/or Boards must first review and approve its tentative budgeted amount.

Mr. Givner noted that the biggest driver for the increase was that the rent expense doubled from \$2,500 in FY17 to \$5,000 in FY18. This rent increase was because his office was relocated to the new 1750 Washington St. building. Also, driving the increase was a 5% place holder for salary increases for himself. Mr. Givner noted, however, that the Board of the Veterans Services Metrowest District would be the authority that would grant any raises. At the present moment Mr. Givner was not sure if there would be any increases but he needed to include an amount for a potential increase so that it would be in the approved budget.

The discussion included trends in numbers of veterans, and Ms. Nersessian asked Mr. Givner if he orders his supplies through a town-wide common purchasing program or some other way. Mr. Givner replied that he has been ordering his supplies himself. Ms. Nersessian suggested that the Town consider whether it might be more cost efficient to purchase supplies centrally.

Mr. Alfred made a motion to approve the minutes of January 17, 2017, seconded by Ms. Zeamer. The motion was passed by a vote of 5-0, with Ms. Nersessian abstaining.

Mr. Alfred made a motion to approve but not release the minutes for the Executive Session on January 31, 2017, seconded by Ms. Zeamer. The motion was passed by a vote of 5-0, with Ms. Nersessian abstaining.

Mr. Alfred made a motion to approve the minutes of January 31, 2017, seconded by Ms. Nersessian. The motion was passed by a vote of 6-0.

Mr. Alfred made a motion to adjourn, which was seconded by Ms. Zeamer. The motion was passed by a vote of 6-0 and the meeting was adjourned at 8:08pm.

Respectively Submitted,

Vincent J. Murphy, Jr.
Clerk