

## HOLLISTON FINANCE COMMITTEE

### MEETING MINUTES

February 4, 2014

The Committee convened in Room 105 at the Town Hall at 6:40 pm. Present from the Committee were Chairman Ken Szajda, Vice-Chair Michelle Zeamer, Clerk Charles Kaslow, Dan Alfred and Beth Liberty. Brandan Shea and Bill Dowd was absent.

#### 1. Administrative

Review of the Action Items list recommended closure of items #22 & # 29. Charles Kaslow will update and provide to committee for review.

#### 2. Assessor's Department Budget Review.

- a. Submitted budget consistent with Finance Committee recommendations.
- b. Discussed the revolving account in so far as service of identifying abutters for purposes of notification for Planning Board and Zoning Board of Appeals.
- c. Charles Kaslow inquired whether the budget limitations may be limiting ability to recognize full revenues due town. Discussion revealed that present level of funding supported inspecting 400 properties / yr such that over 9 year DOR cycle only 3,600 or approximately 72% of total inspected on average.

#### 3. Library Budget Review.

- a. Submitted budget consistent with Finance Committee recommendations.
- b. Current level of funding will require state waiver of budget level.
- c. If waiver not funded risk to decertification of library.
- d. Discussion of various gifts and grants to support new initiatives
- e. Dan Alfred inquired what level of funding would be required to meet state guidelines and avoid need for waiver.
- f. Near term replacement of roof discussed for general budget planning (capital).
- g. Ken Szajda questioned increase in communications costs as new phone system was expected to result in savings. Phone costs are down but not only factor in communications.

#### 4. Debt Budget Review.

- a. Short & long term debt portfolio were discussed.
- b. Large abatements and interest funding in general were reviewed / discussed.
- c. Paul LeBeau noted that the numbers in the budget are gross and do not reflect any state funding such as that for school building debt.

5. Veteran's Budget Review.
  - a. Regional Veteran's Services group was formed with towns of Ashland, Hopkinton and Medway.
  - b. Currently staffed by full time director, part time agent and an intern
  - c. Veteran's agency (cost) is shared between the four member towns.
  - d. Beth Liberty inquired how many residents are served annually, Paul LeBeau advised that there were 6 cases with 3 currently open. Beth questioned the fact that the agent's pay exceeded that of the benefits paid directly, discussion in response noted that monetary payments were not the only service delivered by the agent to eligible resident veterans.
  - e. Short & long term debt portfolio were discussed.
  
6. Solid Waste Budget Review.
  - a. Paul LeBeau stated that the budget increased approximately 1.75%
  - b. Wheelabrator Milbury tipping fees projected to increase .5%
  - c. Reciprocal relationship with neighboring towns in regard to hazardous waste (day)
  - d. Currently the town handles approximately 4,060 tons trash / year
  - e. Revenue from recycling between \$40K-\$50K / year.
  - f. Town recycling rate 45-50%
  - g. Currently \$173 / ton for trash and \$78 / ton for recyclables.
  
7. Street Light Budget Review.
  - a. Paul LeBeau recommended that the budget be reduced to \$60K
  - b. Trending down over time.
  - c. NStar not timely in their repairs / replacements
  
8. Sealer Budget Review.
  - a. Stipended service covered by fees
  
9. Street Light Budget Review.
  - a. Contracted service purchased from Ashland (24 x 7 x 365)
  - b. Provides access to animal control staff and shelter
  - c. Paul LeBeau commented that they have worked well with the town of Holliston.
  
10. Motor Vehicle Fuels Budget Review.
  - a. Recommended level funding
  - b. Most recently pricing falling
  - c. Serves diesel & gas serving highway garage, school bus, senior center bus, police, fire and other town vehicles.
  - d. Consumption variable, during winter highway department major consumer for snow removal.
  - e. Budget reflects net cost not gross as some users reimburse account. (ie Bldg Dept, Police and highway)

- f. Highway department putting together costing / proposal for capital planning to replace the dispensing system and to replace the existing steel tank (within 2 years).

Charles Kaslow made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Mr. Alfred seconded. All in favor; none opposed; zero abstentions. Meeting ended at 8:37 p.m

Respectfully submitted by Charles Kaslow

Approved: \_\_June 17, 2014\_\_\_\_\_