

FINANCE COMMITTEE MINUTES

OCTOBER 2, 2012

The meeting was called to order at 7:34 PM in Selectmen's Meeting Room of Town Hall. The following members were present: Ken Szajda, Kathleen White, Michelle Zeamer, Michelle Johnson and Charles Kaslow. Anita Ballesteros and Daniel Alfred were absent from the meeting.

Michelle Johnson, seconded by Kathleen White, made a MOTION to approve payment of a bill submitted by Faith Antonioli for a meeting and minutes ending the week of September 29, 2012. Passed 5-0-0.

Tom Smith, Highway Superintendent, presented the capital requests for the Highway Dept. He said he had two items he is looking to replace. The first is a 1995 backhoe, which he is trying to replace for the third time. This backhoe has a list of repairs that will cost about \$32,000 above general maintenance costs. The life expectancy of this piece of equipment is about 15 years. He wants to replace it with a mini excavator, which will cost around \$60,000 instead of a backhoe, which would cost around \$95,000. The advantages to having the mini excavator is that it is more precise to dig with and it is not driven on the roads, it is brought to the site. Ken Szajda asked Tom if he already has the equipment to transport it and he said that he has a trailer. He said he is looking at Caterpillar's and John Deere's; they are very similar. Tom said that he would prefer a John Deere because he has other Deere equipment. The second piece of equipment he would like to replace is a 1996 Ford L8000 truck. This is a frontline piece of equipment with a sander and a plow. Ford has stopped making this model so Tom said that he can no longer get parts for the truck. He added that $\frac{3}{4}$ of its life is over – it is on a 15 yr. replacement schedule. It is using up a big part of the Highway budget to keep this truck going. Using state bid quotes, it will cost \$110,000 for a new truck with plow. When asked how much he has spent in additional maintenance on this truck this year, Tom said about \$15,000. The same truck (but a 1997) is up for replacement next year. Charlie Kaslow then asked Tom what the cost of planned maintenance is on a new truck and Tom replied that usually it's under warranty for the first 3 years and \$5,000-\$8,000 per year after that. Ken Szajda asked Tom if the vehicles have any trade in value and Tom said that possibly, but sometimes the money can be better in salvaging. Tom said that he could possibly get about \$5000. Another possibility is to auction them off.

Liz Greendale, the Town Clerk, explained her request for \$7348 to keep her part time clerk through the fiscal year. This position is presently funded through the end of the calendar year. Liz Greendale talked about how much work that needs to be done in her office to be in compliance with state requirements: organize the town by-laws (some were never sent to the Attorney General and some were approved but never put into the books); create an index of all the accepted State Statutes; and administer and track the State Ethics training for all town employees (about 100), elected and appointed town officials. It is only in recent years that there has not been a part time person in the office. She also pointed out the revenues being lost by not pursuing the over 411 unlicensed dogs and the expired business certificates.

Veterinarians must send the names of dog owners to the Town Clerk's office when they have immunized a dog for rabies. The 411 dogs, if licensed, would bring in \$6150, plus \$100.00 fines if not paid. But there is no manpower to send letters to all and then pursue it. Businesses are supposed to purchase a business certificate (\$20.00) every 4 years. There is about \$3000 sitting on the table from this. Ken

Szajda asked the Town Clerk if the 18 hrs. a week that the part time clerk works would enable her to capture the \$10,000 left on the table and she said that she thinks it would. Liz Greendale said she was able to save money in the elections budget this year because she had to budget for 26 employees, but she was able to get many volunteers in those slots; this was a savings of \$1,070. Ken then asked Liz if she would get through the stack of unlicensed dogs if she had the money to keep the part time person and she said she was unsure for this year because the licensing process starts again in January, with the licenses due by the end of April. Ideally she would have May and June to follow up with the owners of the unlicensed dogs. Then she would send out letters to them and if there was no response, she would turn the names over to Animal Control.

Mary Bousquet, the Town Treasurer, had a couple of requests to present at Fall Town Meeting concerning the Debt budget. She reported that short term interest is reduced by \$5823.00 and the principal short term has increased \$2500.00. This principal increase is due to a change in the schedule for the \$850,000 fire ladder truck. It was suggested it be set up to mirror the Water Dept. meter project. Mary Bousquet is requesting \$49,700 for general interest for the abatement to Verizon with 8% interest back to 2009. The money for the abatement has been held. For the Treasurer's budget, Mary Bouquet is looking for \$2000 for the last 6 months of the year for a new program that is being offered by Unibank in conjunction with New England Money. This program is to capture checks generated by taxpayers who pay town bills on line through their own banks. It will match the checks to the Unibank files and put them into a lockbox file that will allow them to be downloaded into MUNIS. It will give the town quicker access to the funds. This will also make it easier to research checks that aren't clear as to the bill they are intended. The program will cost \$60.00 a month and \$.10 per item (if less than 10,000 a month) going forward. This will eliminate checks – all will be electronic. Ken Szajda asked how much time is spent per week manually handling the checks from the bank and Mary said that it is considerable, as she receives checks 2 or 3 days per week. It will save on toner, paper and labor. A person spends about 15-20 hrs. per week just putting the bills in order. Michelle Zeamer asked if there would still be work for the person who does this now and Mary Bouquet said "yes".

Kevin Conley spoke on Art. 13, which is a request from the Board of Selectmen to revise and update the town's website. He said that there has been a committee looking into this. He referred to the town's website as a "virtual front door". He said that the Board of Selectmen were looking for \$1500 to start this up; they really don't know what the cost would be but they know that Medway paid \$7000 to redo their town website and used a company called "Virtual Town & Schools". Kevin Conley said that Holliston was looking into that company as well as "Civic Plus" which might be a little more expensive. Chuck Corman maintains the website now. The Board is looking to pay a web design company to design the website, as well as do updates. Kevin said that he believed that the monthly fees include supports, but wasn't sure what kind of support. Ken Szajda asked Kevin that if FinComm gave the okay, could they have a quote before Town Meeting, but Kevin didn't think so. Michelle Johnson asked if the Committee had asked different town departments what they would like to have on the website and Mary Bouquet and Liz Greendale both said "no". Ken suggested that the committee take it back to the Board of Selectmen and perhaps have a company come in and present more information but Charlie Kaslow thought that it was too premature and that the committee needs to meet with the vendor. Kevin Conley said that one of the vendors is not from this part of the country. FinComm was in agreement that the plan is not solid

enough to warrant a blank check of \$15,000. Michelle Zeamer asked if it was possible for Holliston High School or Keefe Tech students to do the website; there could be issues with them keeping up with it. Kevin Conley was asked why the Selectmen seem to be limited to 2 companies. He said that they are the most prominent in municipal; websites. Michelle Johnson told Kevin that they need to be sure that the quotes are very detailed as to what is included.

Art. 11 for Fall Town Meeting is a request for \$10,000 to follow the Valor Act, a program which allows veterans to work off taxes. They can earn up to \$1000 per year.

Art. 8 may include two requests from the Community Preservation Committee.. Both of these requests, if proposed, will fall under the new expansion chapter of the Community Preservation Act, which allows playground areas to qualify for Community Preservation Act funds, with the Preservation Committee funding 85% and the town funding 15%. Neither of these has been voted on by the Community Preservation Committee.

At 9:50 PM, Kathleen White, seconded by Michelle Johnson, made a MOTION to adjourn the meeting. Passed 5-0-0.

Respectfully submitted,

Date Approved: October 16, 2012

Faith Antonioli, Secretary