

Joint Meeting of the Board of Selectmen and Finance Committee
Memorial Town Hall

4-25-17
Approved: July 5, 2017

Selectman Edmund Jaworski
Selectman Brian Moriarty
Ms. Marlene Michonski, Town Administrator

Finance Committee:

Mr. Sean Barry	Mr. Fran Gougeon
Mr. Paul Fisher	Mr. Shawn Robinson
	Mr. Darryl Williams

FY18 Budget

Selectman Moriarty opened the meeting at 6:35pm. He said the Board and the Finance Committee had worked independently and together on the budget. Departments were asked to submit level budgets. The televised portion would begin after a discussion with the Finance Committee. Mr. Williams asked Ms. Michonski to go through recent changes. Town Administrator expense, line 3 was increased 20k. A 2% COLA increase for employees is reflected. In response to a question from Mr. Williams, Ms. Michonski said she did not add hours to the Town Clerk or Fire Department. Mr. Robinson said we would talk about that now.

Selectman Moriarty said the school budgeted for a potential increase in the vocational education cost per student. Restructuring in special education may save @6k. Also some contracted things may be done in house generating savings.

Regarding the Town Clerk, Mr. Williams said it will benefit the town to have that office open another day. Ms. Szych will add Wednesday afternoon. Discussion focused on the Fire Department and Ambulance. It was noted that ambulance shouldn't be funded through taxation. When hourly costs are incurred it's because they're bringing revenue in. Mr. Williams said they requested 4k to increase hours for the deputy chief and \$1100 to have an intern for data entry, 8 hours/week for 12 weeks. Chief Gaughan said they have utilized eagle scouts previously. Mr. Barry noted that data entry is not an internship. Mr. Williams said yes for the deputy chief, but no for an intern. Selectman Moriarty said intern may not be the correct term

Ms. Szych gave figures for increasing 2 positions in the clerk's office. She said she should have an assistant working when she is working in order to make the most of her time. Selectman Moriarty said there is still the question of clerical support for the DPW Director. That request was for 10 hours/week @ \$18/hour. Selectman Moriarty asked if a highly paid manager is sitting at a computer doing clerical work. Mr. Gougeon noted if Mr. Genovese's office had that position then Wilma Davis could be moved over to support Mr. Geser more while we try to determine our needs for staffing. There was discussion regarding the idea of bringing in temporary people.

The recorded portion of the meeting began with Selectman Moriarty re-opening the meeting at 7:14pm. He said the Board will go over the budget and the warrant.

Public Forum-

Ms. Szych announced that absentee ballots for town election are now available and to please see her during normal business hours.

2018 Proposed Budget-

Finance Committee/Board of Selectmen addressed budget items for Annual Town Meeting, May 9th. Mr. Williams asked to go through changes and discuss COLA and salary adjustments. Selectman Moriarty said level funded budgets were requested from departments and committees.

Money was added to line 3 to be used for town hall administrative needs. The Board and Finance Committee will have consulting done to address this. Selectman Jaworski said Hatfield is a little big city with the same reporting requirements of Northampton. We also run a K-12 school system which only 1 other town in Western MA does.

The Town Clerk added 9476 for additional hours for the clerk and assistant clerk.

The Fire Department added 5400 for increased services and upgrading to paramedic service from intermediate service. More money will come to Hatfield rather than Northampton. Selectman Moriarty up fronting this money to increase the revenue stream is a cost of doing business.

School Department has a 129k increase. It is hard to level fund a school system as contracts must be met and we must stay competitive. Selectman Moriarty said some restructuring has lowered the original request from the school. The overall school budget has 865k of school choice money. Mr. Barry said it is a competitive environment.

The Library has a small increase which is necessary to retain a certain grant.

Mr. Williams said there are some adjustments to items for which the town has no control such as retirement and group health care. Selectman Jaworski thanked the Finance Committee and all the departments for the hours and work spent on the budget.

Water/Sewer was discussed. Mr. Williams said we don't have a true enterprise fund. Revamping the electrical system at the Omasta Well will be done with the 50k revenue from rate increases. Mr. Barry said we reduced expenses in water/sewer by pulling some items out and putting them under taxation. Water/sewer doesn't pay its expenses and also doesn't pay capital costs even with increases. Mr. Williams said we're on a path to rebuild our sewer plant.

Capital Items - We don't have free cash number yet but will by Annual Town Meeting. If we don't then projects will be on hold until we do. There is no money in taxation for any of the capital items. Ms. Michonski talked with Tom Scanlon; we will submit free cash tomorrow. Responding to a question from Mr. Smith regarding a guess at a free cash number, Ms. Michonski said if free cash is not certified then capital items will be tabled. Mr. Barry said capital planning items were prioritized without having the number.

There was brief discussion regarding reimbursement to CPC because of a 46k error that was paid at the end of a project which should have been covered by the town. Mr. Smith asked if they could waive it and Ms. Michonski said they came to the town and asked for it.

Chapter 90 is not town money. Horse Mountain is a grant through the Kestrel Land Fund with a contribution from community preservation of 69k for the acquisition.

The Board and Finance Committee discussed 10k for the Hamp County Courthouse rehab as we have part ownership, \$9500 for Smith Academy Park pavilion design, and a feasibility study to see what is best to fit the needs of the Council on Aging. Other items were the tv studio in Phase 3, 50k for front stairs at Memorial Town Hall, and town hall server, and infrastructure replacement.

Accounting software for the school department will enable input to directly interface with Town Hall systems. Selectman Moriarty said this will be beneficial and improve the staff's time.

Regarding ambulance/paramedic equipment, Mr. Gougeon said the Fire Chief gave a preview of what this will mean to the community; the up-front cost will have a decent payback. A cardiac compression unit to do chest compressions and transmit data to Baystate en route is a 60k item. We will have 4 EMT's on staff.

The water transmission line is a 740k debt exclusion, and is the most expensive part of the project. Selectman Moriarty said we have not been successful lately but we have been applying for grants. The Highway garage pole barn must be repaired as per the building inspector.

The Straits Road, 55k for the sewer extension is cost effective according to DPW and will generate additional revenue and will also pick up the Highway garage and transfer station, replacing a septic system there built in 1976.

Ms. Michonski said we have applied for a green communities reimbursable grant, of @70k for work at the Waste Water Treatment Plant, the water plant and the library.

Ms. Szych asked if a special election would be required for a debt exclusion as an election would cost 3k, which is not in her budget. Mr. Gougeon said the whole project was approved at Annual Town Meeting 2014. Ms. Szych was asked to look into that.

Selectman Moriarty explained deficit spending in snow & ice as something that happens every year. He said they always do a great job; we're the envy of all the cities. Mr. Williams called for questions on the budget.

Selectman Moriarty went through the draft town warrant articles saying that many are boilerplate. He said he would skip the ones just discussed under capital projects.

Referring to a question asked by resident, Mike Paszek about the donation of 1 acre of land abutting town hall, Ms. Michonski said the town has the deed. Additionally, there is a bylaw change sought regarding parking at the side of town hall. The wording, "upon both sides of the access road" is to be stricken. The intent is to allow parking on one side. She said town counsel needs to finish his review.

A proposed zoning bylaw article would add a section for a temporary marijuana moratorium. There is also a zoning change from rural residential to business for Helena Chemical.

There are 2 citizen's petitions; one to support greater transparency regarding political donations and the other is to increase the Board of Selectmen from 3 to 5 members.

The Finance Committee voted to approve the budget on motion by Mr. Gougeon seconded by Mr. Robinson.

Selectman Moriarty moved to approve a \$700.20 abatement as presented. Selectman Jaworski seconded. The motion was approved.

Selectman Moriarty moved to adjourn. Selectman Jaworski seconded. The motion was approved. The meeting ended at 8:15pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Ki J. Eno
Executive Assistant