

**West Newbury Finance Committee
Minutes of the Meeting
Monday, March 12, 2018**

Finance Committee Meeting

Acting Chairman Beaudoin called the Finance Committee meeting to order at 5:58 p.m. in the second floor hearing room of the 1910 Building with Ms. Grammer, Mr. Kelly, Mr. Durey, Mr. Roberts, and Mr. Ellis in attendance.

There being no public comment, the Committee considered its agenda.

Transfers: none

Special Purpose School Stabilization Fund

Selectman Anderson approached the Finance Committee to present an informational only saving schedule regarding the school stabilization fund. Mr. Anderson's goal is to minimize any spikes in the tax rate while building the school. Borrowing funds will allow an annual override of \$290,000.00 for the thirty-year duration of the loan. He added as the debt falls off over time, the taxes would raise in increments.

The state is responsible for 53% of the cost. Mr. Grammer stated the contributions from the state might vary from town to town. She added there are some strict parameters for what the state will actually pay for. Ms. Grammer remarked it is possible the true state contribution could fall to close to 48%.

Mr. Durey questioned if \$315,000.00 is approved for the school stabilization fund, will there be any funds available for the general stabilization fund. Mr. Anderson suggested not reducing the amount of money for the school stabilization fund. He continued it is necessary to first work the omnibus as best the Board of Selectmen (BOS) and FinCom can. Once a finalized omnibus is determined, general stabilization fund contributions would be discussed. Dr. Beaudoin inquired if it is possible to fund the general stabilization in the fall. Mr. Anderson remarked consulting the Department of Local Services (DLS) regarding the general stabilization fund is advisable.

Department of Public Works — Snow and Ice Deficit

FinCom voted to approve the "to be determined" Snow and Ice Deficit, 5, 1, 0, Roberts opposed.

Water Department Budget — Representatives: Manager/Superintendent Michael Gootée and

Water Commissioner Robert Janes

Mr. Durey, an abutter to Brake Hill, recused himself from the discussion.

Special Article Request

To see if the Town will vote to appropriate, in anticipation of Water Department revenue, the sum of \$790,403.00 of which \$186,126.00 for Salaries and Wages which include \$1,700.00 for Water Commissioner stipends, \$41,931.00 for Insurances, \$393,590.00 for Expenses, \$103,747.00 for Debt Service, \$15,000.00 for Indirect Cost.

Ms. Grammer inquired what the interest rate of the debt is and through what manner was it obtained. Mr. Gootée replied Mr. Gould of the Finance Department obtained the fixed rate of 3.5%. The annual debt for the new water tank is \$103,747.00.

Mr. Gootée reviewed the Water Department FY19 line item budget. The insurance expense increased when an employee, previously not covered under Town Insurance, requested coverage. At the suggestion of the Finance Director, the retirement expense increased \$2,496.00. Mr. Gootée added Materials/Supplies/Outside Contractors Expense increased \$10,000.00. The increase was due to the need of more outside contractor services.

Special Article Request

To see if the Town will vote to transfer the sum of \$110,000.00 from the Water Enterprise Fund Free Cash Account and 40,000.00 from the Water Stabilization Fund Account to install underground electric service and Comcast internet from Hilltop Circle to the new Brake Hill Water Tank.

Mr. Gootée commented the initial plan was to power the area using solar energy. Based on the recommendation of the engineering firm Tata and Howard. The firm designed a trunk line through the center of the tank. This allows electricity to supply power to future fire department radio repeaters, interior lighting, and surveillance cameras to the site. Equally important is the provision of communication through the existing Supervisory Control and Data Acquisition (SCADA).

Mr. Gootée added the site is heavily wooded and solar panels could be susceptible to falling trees, snowfall, and vandalism. Mr. Gootée also stated he has spoken with Mr. Rick Parker of the Energy Advisory Committee. Mr. Gootée remarked SCADA is a security system, which contains snubbers. A snubber is a device used to suppress ("snub") phenomenon such as voltage, pH and chlorine fluctuations. Additionally, monitoring chemical showers alert authorities when used. Mr. Gootée stated both Northeast Tower Associates of Salisbury (wireless specialists) and Fire Chief Dwyer are in agreement regarding the use of electricity over solar energy.

Mr. Gootée stated the Water Department would delay work on the Pipestave tank until next year.

Wellfield #1

Ms. Grammer queried into the status of new wells. Mr. Gootée stated the current wellfield is a bedrock well. Construction has begun to obtain water from both a six and eight-inch bedrock well. Under the direction of a Massachusetts Department of Environment Protection (DEP) process engineer, water from each is mixed producing approximately 160,000 gallons of water a day. The amount provides approximately 64% of town water. At this time of year, it would provide most of the water needs for the town. However, it will be necessary to purchase water from Newburyport over the summer season. The cost of this project is offset by saving \$100,000.00 per year for the purchase of water from Newburyport.

DEP recommends mixing of the water. Typically, deeper wells contain containments such as radon. Some shallow wells may contain excessive amounts of manganese. Mr. Kelly stated excess manganese are be treated with softeners.

Other Possible Well Sites

Mr. Gootée stated negotiations regarding the Dole Place Well Site are currently stagnant. West Newbury Boards of Selectmen (BOS) offered a purchase price to the owners of the property. Owners rejected the offer. The owners also want to retain mineral rights for the property.

Mr. Gootée added the water quality is high and a well has a potential of producing close to 900,000 gallons of water per day.

Mr. Gootée stated the Dunn Property is also a potential well site.

Other Water Issues

Ms. Grammer questioned, with the changes in the global climate and recent reports of contamination of the Merrimack River are there concerns regarding wells or potential wells. Mr. Gootée answered there are two dams in place between the Wellfield and the Merrimack River. In addition, surface water does not affect the well.

The DEP imposes a water ban every year from May 1 to September 30. Mr. Gootée stated, during the ban, unaccounted water loss increases approximately 4%. He added the Police Department does maintain a log every summer. The police record any evidence of improper water usage.

Mr. Roberts inquired the cost of a new water hookup. Mr. Gootée answered the cost is \$3,000.00.

Ms. Grammer asked why there is a Water Enterprise Fund. Mr. Gootée answered the department brings in its own revenue.

Meeting Minutes

FinCom members voted to approve amended minutes of February 26, 2018, 6, 0, 0.

FinCom members voted to approve amended minutes of March 5, 2018, 5, 0, 1, Ellis abstaining.

Water Department Budget

FinCom members voted to approve the Water Department Budget, 5, 0, 1, Durey abstaining.

Police Department Budget Review — Chief Arthur Reed

FinCom members appreciate Chief Reed's efforts to modernize the Police Department and bring in an adequate numbers of full time officers. Mr. Roberts remarked officer safety and police accreditation is important. However, in the last two years, with the addition of two officers, overtime continues to increase.

Chief Reed stated overtime has been historically underfunded, which mitigates the need to hire more part time employees. Chief Reed remarked he hired five reservists this past fall. One has left for a full time job opportunity and two others are on the short list for jobs in Amesbury and Newburyport. All of the area police department are experiencing similar issues in finding certified part time employees.

Mr. Ellis stated it seems recruits receive training and then leave the department. He inquired is there is anything in place to deter people from leaving. Chief Reed stated, after field training, new recruits

sign a 24 month contract in which they are required to work at least two shifts a month. If individuals leave prior to the contracted period, they are responsible for reimbursing the town.

Ms. Grammer questioned if police were paid time and a half for training. Chief Reed replied if the added time for training was additional to a 40-hour week. Chief Reed stated the recent negotiation between the BOS and the police union covered topics such as shift differential, Personal Time Off (PTO), and education.

Mr. Roberts inquired if the chief has considered non-career track reservists. This policy was common in the 1990s when town residents were committed to protecting the town. Chief Reed stated the days of non-career officers are gone. Most reservists, who have undergone training, are looking for full time employment. One exception on the West Newbury reservist list is a full-time firefighter (former police officer) who is comfortable with being a part-time employee.

Regarding the budget, Chief Reed stated he could not control the union. However, he does need a working capital. Chief Reed requested the increase in overtime, in order to prevent returning to FinCom later in the year, asking for transfers. His hope is not to spend the requested amount, but rather turn back some of the overtime funds available.

Mr. Durey asked if a time-contract has been court tested. It is possible the town would spend \$5,000.00 in legal fees in order to retrieve \$2,000.00 in training costs. However, it would set a precedence.

Mr. Durey remarked expenses have increased approximately \$14,000.00 from FY18 to FY19. He asked for a further breakdown. Chief Reed cited some expenses; they include advertising increases of \$150.00, \$200.00 for mileage, \$1,000.00 for range fees, \$495.00 for education, \$1,000.00 for vests (contract required) for full-time police and \$1,000.00 for vests for reservists.

Mr. Durey stated, with the addition of two new vehicles, the vehicle maintenance would decrease. Chief Reed stated the maintenance does include tires, brakes and alternators.

Dr. Beaudoin, personally, suggested removing one of the cruisers from the budget and creating an article. He asked if it were possible if the chief could revise the budget, decreasing it by 3%. Mr. Durey stated this was an individual suggestion and not that of the Finance Committee.

Permanent Finance Committee Chairman

FinCom voted to appoint Mr. Roberts as a permanent chair of the Finance Committee, 6, 0, 0.

Special Article Request

To see if the town will vote to raise and appropriate and/or transfer from available funds the sum of \$140,000.00 add to the special fund established in accordance with the provisions of MGL c. 44 §53I for celebration of West Newbury's Bicentennial in 2019.

Bicentennial Committee — Dr. Stephen Swallow and Ms. Kathleen (KC) Swallow

Ms. Swallow presented FinCom with a more detailed Proposal than the original draft. She stated the BOS requested the Bicentennial Committee to prepare of a gala celebration. The committee proceeded to do so. They are, however, willing to scale back or receive suggestions.

Events include town sponsored and pay as you go events. The committee also plans to solicit sponsors and plan fund raising events.

The bicentennial is on February 23, 2019. The committees plan two major parties. An informal celebration held at Pentucket High School and a formal Black Tie Gala at Groveland Fairways. Also on the agenda, is a bus ride to Fenway Park for a game on September 7th.

Dr. Swallow stated the Bicentennial Committee is composed of several enthusiastic and talented individuals. The committee has met once monthly in order to develop a wish list of events and seek outside advice. One of the members is an events planner, who developed a worst-case scenario spreadsheet. Depending on feedback, the committee would downsize some events and add others.

The committee has spoken with State Representative Lenny Mirra. He plans to seek \$25,000.00 from the states Ways and Means Committee for the celebration.

Ms. Judy Gregg, a committee member, stated the desire to offer free events to the townspeople as a way of giving back. Mr. Kelly suggested the possibility of contacting food truck vendors for the field day celebration.. Mr. Durey pointed out the success of the Newbury Christmas tree bonfire celebration, where food vendors are invited.

Mr. Kelly inquired about the \$8,210.00 cost of the barn dance. Ms. Swallow stated, at this period, the committee does not have a venue. The old town hall was a suggested site. However, the building most likely holds approximately 125 comfortably. Other possible sites were suggested, such as the Pipestave Community Center and the Department of Public Works (DPW).

Ms. Swallow reviewed some of the general operations expenses.

Ms. Grammer asked about advertising the events. Ms. Swallow stated there would be invitational fliers prepared. The committee is requesting RSVP to specific events. Face Book hosts descriptions of the events. Additionally, dispersion of save the date cards will occur in August/September.

Special Article Request – Brown Spring Farm

To see if the town will vote to transfer from Community Preservation Act funds, Open Space and Recreation Reserve Account, the amount of \$200,000.00 to purchase a perpetual Conservation Restriction for conservation, open space, and farmland purposes on land known as "Brown Spring Farm", which is comprised of 10 acres, more or less, located at 866 Main Street, West Newbury, Assessors Map R28, Lot 150 and shown as "Lot A: on the plan of land entitled "Plan of Land in West Newbury, Mass. Owned by Margaret M. Cooney" dated August 12, 1971 and recorded at Plan Book 120 Plan 34 at the Southern Essex Registry of Deeds. Said Conservation Restriction is to be conveyed to the town of West Newbury acting by and through its amended, and to Essex Greenbelt

Association, Inc.; said purchase to be subject to approval of the Conservation Restriction by all involved parties, and to any conditions imposed by the Community Preservation Committee as part of their approval; and the Town is to be authorized to enter into any agreements, execute any documents, and take any other action necessary or convenient to effectuate the purchase authorized hereunder, or take any other action relative thereto.

Ms. Vanessa Johnson Hall is the Greenbelt contact representative. Ms. Johnson Hall explained the project involves three parties: the Town, Essex County Greenbelt Association, Inc., and a private buyer. The buyer agrees to maintain 10 acres as a working farm, while maintaining open space for the community. Purchase price for the Conservation Restriction is \$330,000.00. If the town agrees to provide \$200,000.00 from the Community Preservation Act funds, Greenbelt will raise the remaining \$150,000.00 in funds.

Ms. Jean Nelson, CPC administrative assistant reported the CPC voted 7,0 to support the purchase. She will forward the Article with numbers to FinCom by the end of the week.

Mr. Ellis inquired if the farm is unsuccessful, can the new owners use the property for other purposes. Ms. Johnson Hall stated they must demonstrate a good faith effort to lease the property for farming purposes. She added the house itself has been vacant since 1995. Most likely, it would be necessary to demolish and rebuild the house. Construction of the original farmhouse and stand was in the 1890s.

Mr. Durey asked if the new owners wanted to expand the farm stand and increase the parking, is it permissible. Ms. Johnson Hall stated Conservation Restrictions are written in a certain language in which some changes are not allowed. Size restrictions maintaining the original character are included.

Ms. Grammer asked for an estimated time. Ms. Johnson Hall stated a proposal to support would be developed by the fall. Ms. Johnson Hall continued when three parties are involved approval by the state is necessary. She stated no funds would be expended until an agreement is reached.

Mr. Roberts stated it is necessary for a steward to monitor the property. Greenbelt monitors properties with Conservation Restrictions.

FinCom voted to approve the purchase of the Conservation Restriction, 5, 1, 0, Beaudoin opposed.

Mr. Roberts asked Ms. Nelson about the Page School generator. She suggested consulting with Mr. Bill and/or Mr. McCarron.

The meeting adjourned at 9:07 p.m.

Upcoming Meetings

Monday, March 19, 2018: 6:00 pm

- Community Preservation Committee

Respectfully submitted,

Elisa Grammer
Secretary Emerita

Meeting materials:

Draft minutes February 26, 2018

Water Department – Special Articles

Special Article - Purchase of a Conservative Restriction at Brown Spring Farm

Special Article – Bicentennial Celebration