

**West Newbury Finance Committee
Minutes of the meeting
Monday, January 30, 2017**

Chairman Codair called the Finance Committee meeting to order at 7:35 p.m. in the second floor hearing room of the 1910 Building with Ms. Grammer, Mr. DeLena, Mr. Phillips, and Mr. Winch in attendance. Mr. Gould was also present.

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

G.A.R. Memorial Library—FY2018 Budget Request

Representative—Ms. Susan Babb, Library Director

Board of Trustees present— Ms. Amy Custance, Ms. Virginia Selman, Mr. R. Bruce Hamilton, and Mr. Fred Chanania

To comply with conflict of interest rules (Mr. Chanania being her husband), Ms. Grammer recused herself from participation in this matter.

Chairman Codair asked whether a Cost of Living Adjustment (COLA) is included in the library's budget presentation. Ms. Babb replied in the negative. Ms. Babb proceeded to highlight changes in line items from previous budgets.

- Salaries and Wages—increase of \$5,419.00 from the FY2017 Budget
 - Ms. Babb is requesting a change in level for the Staff Librarian for Technical Services from a Level 4 to Level 5. She remarked that this employee handles library technology, which is becoming more complex, and it is important to offer competitive salaries.
 - An annual increase in 2 hours weekly for the Tween Librarian is covered under a 2 year Federal Grant. The Grant is in its second year of the Federal Fiscal Year. Ms. Babb stated the programs were well attended. The library plans to maintain the increased hours following the completion of the grant.
- Expenses
 - The Library technology plan will allow replacement of the 12 computers in an annual rotation. In FY2018, three of the older computers, purchased in 2008, will be replaced.
- Books and Periodicals—increase of \$4,000.00 from FY2017 Budget
 - The Library will be purchasing more eBooks through the Merrimack Valley Library Consortium (MVLC) in FY2018. Ms. Babb noted an increase in budget must coincide with increases in materials expenditures in order to maintain certification and receive state aid funds. Ms. Babb further stated materials expenditures must equal 19.5% of the total budget.

Department of Public Works—Mr. Gary Bill, DPW Director

Ms. Grammer rejoined the committee. Chairman Codair remarked the only change in the budget involved an increase in Salaries and Wages of \$53,500.00. Mr. Bill explained the increase covers the salary of a new experienced equipment operator. He continued by stating the department lost a key staff member in 2008. The position has remained vacant. Prior to 2008, the department consisted of four individuals. Currently, it is operating with three people. Chairman Codair inquired if the department tasks were delayed due to the shortage. Mr. Bill answered there have been some delays in some smaller jobs. He continued stating the importance of employing an experienced equipment operator for specific tasks, including snow removal in light of the difficulty in finding contractors to do this work. He also remarked the current staff has accrued 16 weeks of vacation, generally taken during the summer months, which are busy for his department.

Referring to new hires, Ms. Grammer asked about the status of the personnel committee. Mr. Bill indicated that it was largely inactive but sometimes plays a role, sometimes not. Mr. Gould stated Mr. Bertino had informed him there was some action underway to reestablish the committee. Chairman Codair asked Mr. Gould the approximate cost of adding the new employee inclusive of benefits. Mr. Gould estimated an amount ranging from \$75,000.00 to \$80,000.00.

FinCom members inquired into the frequency of negotiations with Union Representatives. Mr. Bill responded a Union Representative meets with the Board of Selectmen every three years. He explained the current contract is in its second year.

In addition to a new hire, Mr. Bill noted that his administrative assistant should receive a raise. He stated the Water department is requesting a salary increase for their Administrative Assistant. That Assistant also works 8 hours a week for the DPW. If approved, it will be necessary for the DPW to increase her salary as well.

In view of the complexity in tracking and evaluating solar cost offsets to Town electric bills, Mr. Bill also suggested creating a line item for electricity and passing it to the Finance Department. This would allow the town to track solar energy credits.

Status of West Newbury Town Structures

- **Pipestave Apartments**
 - To date, FinCom members have received some conflicting information regarding the Pipestave Apartments. Some of the information suggested the town had officially taken over the management of the apartments. However, Mr. Bill reported the DPW has only maintained the outside of the apartments. *It was agreed that follow up was needed, inasmuch at last Town Meeting the voters were told that the Town was taking this over and would establish a revolving fund for this.*
- **Annex Roof**
 - Following repair of the annex roof, bathrooms under the area experienced water damage. The contractor will reimburse the town \$5,000.00.
- **Public Safety Building**

- The building is in relatively good shape. Plans include incremental replacement of the HVAC, windows, and siding in the future.
- **Empty Recreational Building on the hill**
 - The building is secure but empty. Mr. Bill reported being next to the school presents difficulty in utilizing the space. The proximity to the school can raise security issues.
- **Garden Street Fire Station**
 - Mr. Bill stated the building's roof was replaced. However, the status of the building is in limbo.
- **Carr Post**
 - Mr. Bill reported Carr Post is now weather tight. There is a placeholder CPC Article addressing the outside of the building.
- **1910 Building**
 - Mr. Bill remarked the 1910 Town Office building requires some painting but, otherwise, is in good shape.
- **Action Cove Playground**
 - Phase I of the three-phase renovation project is complete. Mr. Bill stated a contractor report, issued after Phase I, suggested the structure is obsolete and it is advisable not to spend money on repair as opposed to replacement. *Ms. Grammer asked for a copy of the Contractor Report.*

Possible DPW Articles

Mr. Bill stated that he would be submitting an Article regarding the purchase of a tractor mower with an estimated cost of \$60,000.00.

He further noted that depending on continuation of clean water requirements established by the federal Environmental Protection Agency, DPW may need to engage in additional work to enhance protections from storm drain and runoff from the Town into the Merrimack. The Merrimack Valley Plan will be followed. Most towns in the area have contracted out the project.

Open Articles

Mr. Gould had forwarded a report identifying Open Articles with monies still unspent to the FinCom members.

Budgets and Articles to Date **Council on Aging (COA) Budget**

Mr. Gould reported that Ms. Woodbury has recently requested an additional \$2,000.00 to the COA budget. She explained she will taking maternity leave and the additional funds are necessary to cover the cost of a replacement for that period of time.

Finance Committee Budget

FinCom requested Mr. Gould to change the expenses line item from \$2,000.00 to \$1,000.00.

Pentucket Regional School Budget

Ms. Grammer requested an electronic copy of the school budget. *Mr. Gould will follow through with Mr. Lebreque, the school business manager.*

Cable Advisory Budget

Ms. Grammer queried what was happening with the Cable Advisory Committee, which receives significant funds as part of our cable fees. She suggested some of the funds be applied to improve the audio quality of the town meetings, where sound quality terrible. *Mr. Gould will look into the possibility of improving the quality of the meetings.*

Demolition Bylaw Request

FinCom will delay discussions until after a BOS decision.

Fire Department Repeater

Mr. Gould reported the purchase of the repeater is on hold pending the direction taken by the Water Department as regards construction of a new water tower, which could provide a new high point for such communications equipment.

Minutes

The Committee voted to approve the January 23, 2017 minutes with corrections, 5-0-0.

Future FinCom Meetings

Monday, February 6, 2017

- 7 pm Police Department
- 7:15 pm Town Clerk/Town Counsel
- 7:30 p.m. Pentucket Regional School
- 8 pm Fire Department

Monday, February 13, 2017

- BOS and Town Manager Status
- Water Department

Tuesday, February 21, 2017

- Whittier Vocational School

The meeting adjourned at 9:05 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Elisa Grammer
Secretary

Meeting Materials

Library Budget Form
DPW Budget Form
Draft Omnibus Budget
Ethics/Conflicts Annual Summary & Acknowledgement Sheet
01/23/2017 Meeting Minutes
Detail Fund Balance Sheet
All Expense Report (including open Articles)