

**West Newbury Finance Committee  
Minutes of the Meeting  
Monday, February 22, 2016**

Chairman Codair called the Finance Committee to order at 7:03 p.m. in the second floor hearing room of the 1910 Building with Mr. DeLena, Mr. Phillips, and Ms. Grammer, as well as new member McGrath present. Mr. Bertino was also present.

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

***Introduction of New FinCom Member***

Mr. John McGrath will be joining the committee through April 2016.

***Request from Chairman Codair***

Chairman Codair requested future FinCom correspondences be addressed to her at [kymcodair@gmail.com](mailto:kymcodair@gmail.com).

***Budget Review***

Chairman Codair welcomed representatives from the following departments:

- Council on Aging
- Board of Public Health
- Department of Public Works
- Conservation Commission

***Council on Aging***

***Representative—Ms. Theresa Woodbury, Director***

***Proposed Budget Change-Increase of \$6000.00 to expand the Hours for the Senior Center Director***

Chairman Codair invited Ms. Woodbury, Senior Center Director, to present the budget for the Council on Aging. Ms. Woodbury stated the only change in the budget for the Council on Aging was an increase in hours specifically her own. Monetarily this amounts to an annual increase of \$6000.00. Currently Ms. Woodbury believes her weekly employment of 32 hours a week is inadequate to effectively carry out her job. She reported the need to complete several projects off the clock from her home. Her proposed request increases the Director's weekly hours from 32 to 37.5 hours weekly.

Ms. Grammer inquired about the possibility out-sourcing work to volunteer staffers. Ms. Woodbury acknowledged the Council does have an active volunteer base. However, several items cannot be out-sourced. Ms. Woodbury is a SHINE (Serving the Health Needs of Everyone) certified councilor. In such a position she is able to assist Massachusetts residents with Medicare, their care-givers, and those approaching Medicare eligibility ([www.mass.gov](http://www.mass.gov)). Ms. Grammer asked if the town population age was increasing. Ms. Woodbury responded according to the latest census approximately 1000 residents were 62 or older ( $\approx 22\%$ ).

Chairman Codair inquired about the types of services she provided last year. Ms. Woodbury stated she assisted citizens to obtain:

- Meals on Wheels (available Monday-Thursday)
- Mass Health
- SNAP (formerly Food Stamps)
- Food Pantry (open Fridays)

With regards to the current request, Ms. Woodbury revisited past requests:

- Approximately 10 years ago, Ms. Woodbury's paid work schedule was brought up to 32.5 hours weekly.
- A new van was acquired last fiscal year.
  - Van rental from May through October was \$1000.00 per month. The purchase of a new van was more cost effective.

Ms. Woodbury further stated the Board of Selectmen has approved her increase in hours.

Mr. McGrath questioned if the Human Services provided were in line with the Mission Statement? Ms. Woodbury responded in the affirmative. She has guided individuals with questions regarding both Mass Health and the SNAP (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program). She also aided one or two families with members under the age of 65.

In order to clarify the requested budget increase, Mr. DeLena inquired if the Director was salaried or hourly. If so, what is her rate of pay? Ms. Woodbury reported she was an hourly employee and her rate is \$26.18 an hour. In addition to her role of Director of the Senior Center, there are additional roles she fills. These include:

- Ms. Woodbury is the only SHINE certified Director in the Merrimack Valley.
- She has extended her advice to the town of Rowley.
- She is the current President of the Merrimack Valley Council on Aging Directors.

Mr. McGrath inquired about other salaries or expenses within the Council on Aging. Ms. Woodbury responded there are two other employees:

- Meals on Wheels site Director-Ms. Vincent
  - Salary is mostly covered by a grant
- Van driver-Mr. Cross
  - Hourly salary of \$12.72 an hour. The driver is per diem.
  - No fixed weekly hours. The general use of the van is 15 hours a week.
    - In order to establish a schedule, residents are asked for a two day notice.

*Mr. Phillips requested the Director to generate a list of hours and rate of pay for Directors in surrounding communities.*

Chairman Codair inquired about training expenses. In order to maintain her SHINE certification, the Director must complete 25 CEU (Continuing Education Units) per year. Although some are free others are attained at a cost.

Mr. DeLena asked Ms. Woodbury about her length of employment. The Director became the youngest Senior Center Director in the Merrimack Valley in May of 2004.

*Ms. Woodbury agreed to forward the approved minutes of the Selectman's meeting approving her increase of hours.*

In response to Ms. Grammer's inquiry, Ms. Woodbury stated that the new van is working well. Ms. Woodbury also offered assurances that the van would be housed indoors and it would be washed to avert corrosion problems.

**Board of Public Health****Representatives – Mr. Robert Janes, Ms. Kimberly Cole. And Mr. Blake Seale****Proposed Budget Change – Increase of hours for Health Agent – Mr. Paul Sevigny & Assistant – Ms. Jane Krafton**

The Board requested a change in the proposed budget to increase the hours of both the Health Agent (35 to 40 hours weekly) and the Administrative Assistant 18 to 24 hours weekly).

Ms. Cole provided some background history. In approximately 2006 or 2007, fewer buildings were being constructed and the town budget was constricted. Under the circumstances, it was decided to close the Public Health Office on Fridays. Since that time, subject plans and large projects have increased in number. Although Ms. Krafton has received pay hikes, her wages remain 9% less than similar individuals in neighboring communities according to Mr. Janes. He further stated, she is indispensable to the town preparing both state agency and recycling reports.

Ms. Cole pointed out the Board of Selectmen are in favor of increasing Mr. Sevigny's hours due to a recent building boom which leads to an increase in septic issues. Mr. McGrath (as a former Selectman) recalls Mr. Sevigny received a substantial salary increase (20%) due to his professional caliber. Ms. Cole replied their request was asking for an increase in hours not an increase in salary. Mr. Seale supplemented the statement by providing the information Mr. Sevigny often works on Fridays without compensation.

Mr. McGrath asked about fees for services that are user-specific, not providing cross-town benefits such as perc tests for the individual's lot. It was stated that services not cross-town are collected and placed in a general fund. Mr. McGrath asked if it were possible to balance fees with costs in salaries. He used the example of the Building Inspection, whose fees largely cover the department costs. Mr. Janes remarked the two Departments were monitored under separate laws. Due the fact septic systems remain a significant part of Mr. Sevigny's job, Ms. Grammer continued by asking about the possibility of increasing fees. Mr. Seale stated he would not object to an increase. The current rate ranges from \$150.00 to \$200.00. *Chairman Codair asked about obtaining a list of fees for septic systems charged in other nearby towns. Mr. Seale agreed to follow-up.*

Chairman Codair questioned the Public Health Line in the Budget containing \$5500.00. Mr. Janes stated they were actively searching for a Public Health Nurse in order to conduct flu clinics and prepare reports to the state. The Administrative Assistant, Ms. Krafton, is currently preparing administrative reports.

Chairman Codair inquired into the status of waste removal costs. The Board reported Mello Hauling collects trash and transports to the Covanta Incinerator which is able to sell power back to Massachusetts Power Grid Companies. West Newbury was able to enter a consortium with other small towns in order to bargain for lower rates. In FY15 the projected tonnage was 1,600 but the actual weight was 1,300 tons.

At present, large complexes are responsible for providing their own waste removal. Individual homes are limited to two trash barrels of waste per week. Additionally, recycling is collected every other week from individual households. Mr. DeLena suggested the possibility of weekly (as opposed to every two-week) recycling. Mr. Seale responded the cost would be prohibitive.

Ms. Cole interjected the recycling center is open every Saturday from 8:00 to 12:00. The site is manned with cameras. Mr. Seale stated they have been able to collect a few fees from people illegally dumping at the site. There are also fees collected at the Annual Hazardous Waste Day.

Ms. Cole also spoke of the additional cost of testing on the old dump site found on the corner of Georgetown and Middle Streets. NEET (New England Environmental Technologies) has monitored the site for evidence of leaching over the past four years because the dump was not capped by today's standards. There has been no sign of leakage. *Ms. Cole will check to see if the current monitoring regime remains a necessity.*

***Department of Public Works  
Representative – Gary Bill, Director  
Review of Budget & Warrant Articles***

Chairman Codair reviewed the budget and requested an explanation for the variation of funds allotted to Snow & Ice Removal and Highways, Sidewalks, & Trees. Mr. Bill responded there had been a reshuffling of funds following the submission of the original request. Monies dedicated for snow removal were transferred to the Highway budget.

Chairman Codair asked Mr. Bill about the increased highway budget. He explained when he joined the DPW eighteen years ago the Highway budget was \$100,000 per year. Now, the budget is only \$115,000 annually. He expanded by stating new storm water regulations will soon be in place. The regulations require more tasks to be conducted by the DPW. Compliance involves sweeping and monitoring of outfalls. Previously, towns of populations under 5,000 individuals were exempt. They are now expected to comply.

Mr. Bill pointed out there is additional work for the DPW to accomplish. They encompass:

- Tree work
  - Hazardous trees near roadways
- Repair of damaged street signs
  - There has been an increase in both damaged (graffiti) and missing (stolen) signs.

Ms. Grammer queried if some expenditures, for example street lighting, may be covered by solar credits. Mr. Bertino replied some generated with light and water credits are deposited into a general fund thus the generators remain unidentified. The town is still sorting out accounting for solar net use credits among numerous meters and, said Mr. Bertino, is still determining items such as possible revenue from Solar Energy Credits (SREC) from National Grid.

Mr. McGrath directed questions regarding other projects such as paving to Mr. Bill. Mr. Bill answered paving is covered as a Special Article and is categorized under the Chapter 90 Program Mass DOT Highway section 34.

Chairman Codair posed a question regarding salary. Mr. Bertino cited the budget includes a 3% Cost of Living Adjustment (COLA) for employees. The adjustment is voted on by the selectmen every June. This applies to all non-union employees. In some cases within the DPW, it is necessary to negotiate with unions.

In closing the discussion of line items, Mr. Phillips inquired about the path of unused snow & ice removal funds. Mr. Bill explained they were returned to free cash.

## ***DPW Special Articles***

### **Road Maintenance**

The West Newbury DPW is responsible to maintain 46 miles of roads (150 streets). Mr. Bill reported the life expectancy of a pavement overlay is approximately 15 years. Utilizing funds from the Chapter 90 Program, the town is able to repave 3 miles of road per year. Chairman Codair remarked the DPW caps their paving projects at 3 miles each year. Mr. Bill affirmed since it is the amount covered by the program and thereby they pave areas in most need. He added his department performs a fair amount of preventative maintenance such as sealing cracks.

### **Library Improvement**

As an historical building, improvements must follow Community Preservation Committee (CPC) guidelines. Wood on the exterior trim, fascia, and corner boards will be replaced with plastic replicas.

### **Maintenance and Repair of the Page School**

#### **Request for \$100,000 non-line item**

Previously the rent from the Children's Castle (leased to a private pre-school) went to the Pentucket District Page Elementary School to cover West Newbury's obligation to pay the cost of Page School maintenance and repairs. Now the rent is directly deposited in West Newbury's general fund. In order to clarify, Chairman Codair stated the funds requested are not considered an expiring line item. Mr. Bill agreed. He confirmed the money would be used when necessary for repairs at Page School.

### **Purchase of a 1Ton Dump Truck**

The agency owns two 2005 vehicles – a 1 Ton dump truck and a pickup truck in need of replacement, largely due to corrosion. Both would be sold to mitigate the costs of buying new vehicles. The dump truck was on the assets list for replacement 5 years ago. This reflects on the quality of the maintenance on the vehicles.

Mr. McGrath summarized the fleet as it stands today:

- Ford Ranger
  - Driven by the custodian
- Two 250 pickup trucks
- Two 1 Ton Dump Trucks
- Three full-size DPW vehicles with plowing and sanding capabilities
  - Larger trucks are driven by contract drivers.

### ***Conservation Commission***

***Representatives – Ms. Judy Mizner***

***Proposed Budget Change – Increase in salary for Inspection Agent – Mr. Jay Smith***

The role of the Inspection Agent is to enforce the State Wetlands Protection Act. A mandatory review of plans for any new construction within 100 feet of a wetland is required in accordance with the Act. The Inspection Agent is a part-time hourly position (20 hours). Ms. Mizner proposed an increase in Mr. Smith's hourly salary. Other than cost of living, Mr. Smith has not been given an increase since 1999. His current level is a Grade 6. The request is **not** to change

the level but rather to bump up Mr. Smith's salary to the higher range of level 6. At this time it was acknowledged a change if level would involve a much larger venue. The increase would be more in line with the duties he carries out daily. With any given project, the agent must conduct an initial inspection of the site and perform ongoing subsequent inspections of the ongoing project. The resources are defined at the state level.

Ms. Grammer suggested a raise in fees may counter-balance the salary increase. Ms. Mizner offered an increase in fees may dissuade people from applying for a permit. This in turn would be detrimental to the environment. Additionally, fee rates are set by the state.

Mr. McGrath was interested in the status quo. *Would fees from Mr. Smith's current Special Projects offset the increase in salary? Ms. Mizner agreed to follow-up.*

Chairman Codair commented Mr. Smith received a raise in pay due to an increase in the number of his hours. *Ms. Grammer's final request was a comparison of pay scales from neighboring towns. Again Ms. Mizner will follow-up.*

### ***FinCom Business***

Mr. McGrath stated we should examine the remaining schedule to insure the committee complies with any legal dates. Ms. Grammer replied the review of all department budgets needs to be completed one week prior to the town meeting – April 25, 2016.

Mr. McGrath suggested it would be helpful to receive the agenda listing departments to be reviewed along with copies of the articles for each. *Ms. Grammer offered to extract individual department information from a PDF file forwarded by Mr. Bertino.*

Mr. McGrath remarked the Article Request form reducing the quorum from 4 to 3 may require a public hearing. *He will follow-up.*

### ***Minutes***

*The Committee voted to approve the minutes of the January 25, 2016 meeting, 3-0-2, Messrs. DeLena and McGrath not present, abstaining.*

### ***Upcoming Schedule***

The next meeting of the Finance Committee is scheduled for Monday, February 29, 2016 at 6:30 PM.

The Committee meeting adjourned at 9:57 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Carol Mahoney  
Recording Secretary