

**West Newbury Finance Committee  
Minutes of the Meeting  
Monday, March 5, 2018**

**Finance Committee Meeting**

Acting Chairman Beaudoin called the Finance Committee meeting to order at 6:01 p.m. in the second floor hearing room of the 1910 Building with Ms. Grammer, Mr. Kelly, Mr. Durey, Mr. Roberts, and ex officio member Finance Director Gould in attendance.

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

Transfers: none

**Budget Increase rate**

Dr. Beaudoin stated Selectman Anderson expressed concern about the tax rate increase. In prior years, the budget increases fell in the 2% range. However, this year the overall budget increase is 4%. Mr. Kelly remarked there has been a 1% increase in both the school and the police. There is an overall concern regarding the continually increasing police budget.

**Public Safety — Police Department Budget**

FinCom members discussed the addition of two officers over the last few years. Ms. Grammer commented the addition of a second midnight officer was for the safety of the first officer. Mr. Gould stated this is the first year the cruisers show as a separate line item. Previously, Article Requests were the typical method of obtaining police vehicles. Mr. Roberts commented on the noticeable increase in overtime.

Mr. Durey questioned if there is any feedback regarding Pentucket funding of the School Resource Officer (SRO). Ms. Grammer stated the Pentucket School System continues to support the SRO. Mr. Gould added with the elimination of the SRO position, the town is responsible to pay \$18,000.00 in unemployment. FinCom noted the police budget has increased 30% since 2016. It is important to consider downsizing areas within the budget. *FinCom will discuss the budget with the Board of Selectmen when they meet later this evening.*

**Capital Improvement Process**

Ms. Grammer stated there has been no appropriation for the Capital Improvement Committee (CIC) Stabilization. She suggested the Department of Local Services (DLS) might have some answers. Mr. Durey, having been in communication with the DLS, stated the DLS is interested in discussing stabilization.

**Employee Wage and Salary Schedule**

Ms. Grammer remarked there are several omissions and errors in the current schedule.

**Solar Energy Savings**

Ms. Grammer stated she would like to see the amount of electricity provided by solar energy and hence the savings incurred. *Mr. Gould will confer with Mr. Bill of the Department of Public Works (DPW) regarding solar energy and obtaining a line item figure for town electricity costs.*

### **Planning Board**

Dr. Beaudoin stated the Planning Board budget has increased greater than 2.5%. He reported he consulted with local towns concerning their planning budgets. Merrimac has no planner and has a Planning Board budget of \$8,300.00. While Groveland does employ a town planner, it has a budget of \$43,000.00 annually. Ms. Grammer stated some towns utilize the services of consultants for planning purposes. The developers are responsible for payment of the consultants.

Previously, FinCom had requested further documentation regarding the needs of additional administrative support. Mr. Durey reported he has not heard back from the Planning Board.

### **Community Center Committee (CCC)**

Dr. Beaudoin informed members of the removal of the line item for the CCC on the omnibus budget. The CCC has not provided the requested Needs Assessment for the Community Center. Mr. Durey remarked, due to the initial miscommunication, an opportunity to revise the initial CCC Article Request should be permitted. Ms. Grammer added there may be a constituency in favor of the center. Dr. Beaudoin stated the CCC has spent close to \$10,000.00 and has yet to provide any documentation justifying the cost. Ms. Grammer suggested discussing the matter with the Board of Selectmen.

### **Pentucket Regional School System**

Ms. Grammer stated West Newbury is contributing the least to operating budget but the most for capital expenses. Mr. Gould remarked the latter is due to the debt service for the Page School. He added “per student rates” are based on property taxes. Regional schools are typically underfunded. The state recommends reassessing operating agreements every five years. Ms. Grammer suggested revisiting the district agreements. Dr. Beaudoin stated West Newbury is currently in good shape and recommended delaying the revisit.

### **School Fixed Costs and Assets**

Mr. Gould noted Health and Pension costs are a statewide concern. He stated the Massachusetts Other Post-retirement Benefits (OPEB) has formed a committee to investigate some solutions.

### **Review of Current Articles**

#### Revolving Funds Article

To see if the Town will vote on the limit on the total amount that may be expended from each revolving fund established pursuant to Section XL of the Bylaws of the Town of West Newbury, to wit:

Section 5.1 Summer Recreation Revolving Fund — \$42,000.00

Section 5.2 GAR Library Fines and Penalties Revolving Fund — \$10,000.00

Section 5.3 Police Vehicle Revolving Fund — \$10,000.00

Mr. Gould stated this article is administrative. With the implementation of the Municipal Modernization Act, towns can set up parameters for revolving funds and therefore it will be unnecessary to vote on the funds on an annual basis.

*FinCom voted to approve the revolving fund article, 5, 0, 0.*

Rationale: Ms. Grammer

West Newbury Council on Aging Purchase of Chairs

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate and/or transfer from available funds the sum of \$2,500.00 to purchase 26 chairs for the Senior Center.

*FinCom voted to approve the purchase of chairs for the Senior Center, 5, 0, 0.*

Rationale: Ms. Grammer

**BOS Meeting in the first floor hearing room of the 1910 Building**

At 7:02 p.m., FinCom members transitioned to the first floor hearing room. Members met with the BOS and Pentucket Regional School Representatives, Superintendent - Dr. Jeffrey Mulqueen and Business Manager - Mr. Greg Labrecque. Also present were West Newbury School Committee Representatives, Mr. Andy Murphy and Ms. Chris Reading. The school budget was discussed. See BOS minutes for March 5, 2018.

The BOS suggested FinCom return later in the evening to discuss the omnibus. FinCom members returned to the second floor hearing room at 7:50 p.m.

DPW Request of \$100,000.00 to make Repairs and Improvements to the Page School, Children's Castle, and the Town Buildings

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate and/or transfer from available funds to sum of \$100,000.00 to make Repairs and Improvements to the Page School, Children's Castle, and Town Buildings.

Ms. Grammer suggested West Newbury consult with the DLS regarding the Capital Improvement Process. Mr. Durey added the new Town Manager might have some ideas on how to proceed.

The Article is a placeholder with the possibility the amount might increase. *Dr. Beaudoin will share FinCom's concerns with the BOS.*

DPW Request for Snow and Ice

To see if the Town will transfer from Free Cash the sum of \_\_\_\_\_ to fund the snow and ice deficit.

Dr. Beaudoin suggested it is more appropriate to fund snow and ice using a five-year rolling average rather than through an Article Request. Mr. Durey stated, according to the DLS, using an Article Request form with an estimated amount is common practice. Previously, Mr. Bill remarked the deadline for vendor payments is the end of this fiscal year. FinCom members agreed to sunset the

article at the end of FY18. Moving forward, FinCom members agree the snow and ice deficit be determined with a rolling average.

*FinCom voted to approve payment of the Snow and Ice, 4, 1, 0, Roberts opposed.*

Rationale: Ms. Grammer

#### Firefighters Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

To see if the Town will vote to transfer funds from available sources a sum of \$115,000.00 to purchase firefighting personal protective gear.

Dr. Beaudoin remarked he is leaning towards replacing half of the gear (for more active members) now and waiting to replace the remaining gear later. Mr. Kelly stated currently all the gear is unsafe and therefore, at this time, it is necessary to replace all of the gear. He agrees moving forward gear be replaced using a rolling system.

*FinCom voted to approve the purchase of PPE for the fire department, 5, 0, 0.*

Rationale: Mr. Kelly

#### Replacement of the Fire Tanker Truck

To see if the Town will vote to transfer funds from available sources a sum of \$17,500.00 to apply for a Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Assistance to Firefighters Grant – Vehicle Replacement Program to cover 5% of the cost of a new tanker truck.

*FinCom voted to approve covering the 5% cost of a new tanker truck for the Fire Department, 5, 0, 0.*

Rationale: Mr. Kelly

#### Fire Alarm System Transfer

To see if the Town will vote to transfer funds from available sources a sum of \$31,000.00 to transfer Fire Department municipal communications equipment to new telephone poles on Main Street.

Ms. Grammer suggested adding a sunset clause of 2020.

*FinCom voted to approve the Fire Alarm System Transfer, with the addition of a sunset clause of 2020, 5, 0, 0.*

Rationale: Mr. Durey

#### Public Safety – Police Contractual Requirements

To see if the Town will transfer from available funds the sum up to \$36,000.00 to cover the first year of the police officers new contract (2018).

FinCom members questioned why an estimated increase was not in the budget. Ms. Grammer suggested it might be another aspect of negotiations. FinCom will discuss with the BOS prior to voting. Additionally, Chief Reed will revisit FinCom next week, March 12, 2018.

#### Public Safety – Dispatch Center Equipment Replacement

To see if the Town will close out and transfer the amount of \$5,991.35 from Article #6 dated April 27, 2015 to cover the cost associated with replacing equipment vital to the operation updates in security of the Dispatch Center.

FinCom members questioned, at the time, why was the Article not closed out and excess returned to the general fund. Ms. Grammer noted the Article needs a sunset clause added. Mr. Durey stated the replacement of the entire system might be more cost effective in the end.

Refurbishing of the Pipestave Water Tank

To see if the Town will vote to transfer the sum of \$66,000.00 from the Water Enterprise Fund Free Cash Account and \$66,000.00 from the Water Enterprise Stabilization Fund Account to make interior repairs to the Pipestave Water Tank.

Ms. Grammer remarked the Water Department rate fees would fund the project. Water Department representatives will discuss their budget with FinCom next Monday, March 12, 2018.

Pentucket Stabilization Fund

To see if the Town will vote pursuant to raise and appropriate the sum of \$315,000.00 to the special purpose education building stabilization fund, or take any other action related there to.

Ms. Grammer stated the amount relates to Selectman Anderson's desire to manage a smooth tax rate. She added if the new School Building were not approved the funds might be redirected to other schools, such as the Page School. Mr. Durey inquired if FinCom is pursuing funding the general stabilization fund or would the town fund one or the other.

Dr. Beaudoin stated FinCom is strongly in favor of contributing to the general stabilization fund. Members brainstormed from which areas funds could be transferred. FinCom will discuss the general fund with the BOS.

**Upcoming Meetings**

Monday, March 12, 2018: 6:00 pm

- Water Department
- Public Safety

The meeting adjourned at 8:35 p.m. FinCom members proceeded to the first floor hearing room of the 1910 building to discuss the FY19 budget and Articles with the BOS. See BOS meeting minutes, March 5, 2018, for details.

Respectfully submitted,

Elisa Grammer  
Secretary Emerita

*Meeting materials:*

Draft minutes March 5, 2018

Pentucket Regional School System Budget

Pentucket Stabilization Fund Article - \$315,000.00

Revolving Funds Article

Council on Aging – Chair Replacement Article

DPW – \$100,000.00 Building Repair Article

Police Articles

- Police Contractual Requirements
- Transfer of 2015 Console Replacement Article to Safety equipment Replacement (cameras, etc.)

Fire Department Articles

- Transfer of utilities from old telephone poles to new replacement poles
- Protective Fire Gear Replacement
- Request for 5% match on tanker replacement

Water Department – Refurbishing Pipestave Water Tank