

West Newbury Finance Committee
Minutes of the meeting
Monday, September 12, 2016

Chairman Codair called the Finance Committee meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. in the second floor hearing room of the 1910 Building with Mr. Ellis, Ms. Grammer, Mr. Phillips, Mr. DeLena, and Mr. Winch in attendance.

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

Fire Chief Michael Dwyer: \$45,000.00 for purchase of a Fire Department Communications Repeater

Chief Dwyer presented the Special Town Meeting (STM) Article request for the purchase of a Fire Department communications repeater. He stated there is an urgent need for the purchase of this communications tool, used in communications between ambulance services, police and fire departments.

The current fire department transmissions contain static and are of poor quality. Chief Dwyer provided an audio example of a recent transmission between an ambulance service and dispatch. The proposed upgrade in the fire department communications system would occur in two phases. The first phase involves the purchase and installation of the communications repeater. Phase II involves the upgrade of the current communications system and is slated for presentation in the spring.

Chief Dwyer explained the purpose of the repeater is to boost signals. The need of a repeater is necessary due to the topography of West Newbury. The hills and valleys of the town include a high point at the Page School and a low point at the Pentucket Regional School. Currently, two police repeaters are located at the Page School and at Pentucket. If approved, the repeater will be located on Pipestave Hill at the Page School complex.

An update of the entire communications system (Phase II) is in the research stage. The first decision would be choosing a fiber optic or microwave system. A combination of a switch in frequency and installation of a repeater will significantly improve fire department communications.

Police Chief Arthur Reed: \$39,720.00 from free cash for the purchase of a 2017 Ford Interceptor Utility Vehicle for the Police Department

Officer Johnson accompanied the chief. Chief Reed explained the vehicle would replace the oldest car in the fleet. The car currently has 125,000 miles on the odometer. Idle time also adds wear to the power train of the vehicle. Maintenance of the vehicle since the spring Town Meeting amounted to a total of \$3,400.00.

Chief Reed expressed safety concerns with officers driving the older vehicle and stated the replacement car is more maneuverable during winter. The four-car fleet allows for vehicle maintenance and cruiser down time. The chief's plan is to replace the oldest car in the fleet on an

annual basis and replacing Crown Victoria cars with SUVs. Chief Reed added the information that vehicle resale values significantly drop after 80,000 to 90,000 miles on the odometer.

When queried about not replacing the fourth vehicle and operating the fleet with three marked cars, Chief Reed stated the amount is important for fleet maintenance. Officer Johnson added the department has been operating with four marked vehicles for approximately the last ten years. Chief Reed further remarked officers use vehicles during court appearances or as transportation for training. Routine maintenance visits will also remove vehicles from the active fleet.

Police Chief Arthur Reed: Addition of a full time Police Officer for the overnight (11pm to 7am) shift using \$44,300.00 from free cash

Chief Reed's main concern is one of safety. Currently, a single officer covers the shift. If backup were necessary, the officer would need to rely on assistance from the surrounding towns and cities. An increase in response time would result. Motor vehicle stops and domestic situations are the most common events occurring on the third shift. The frequency of responses varies.

Chief Reed also stated the training of reserve officers is insufficient for them to work third shift alone. In order to run a shift, including vacation and time out, a shift would ideally run with three officers. However, with two full time officers in place, reserve officer can fill in with a full timer. The chief reported with the exception of Merrimac, all of the area cities and towns employ two third shift officers. Currently, Merrimac is in the process of hiring a second officer for third shift.

Chairman Codair inquired if the addition of the new officer would cut down overtime expenses. Chief Reed replied training takes place during the day and therefore a training officer's shift would need to be covered.

Chief Reed has compiled a listing of overnight police responses from 2013 to the present. *Chief Reed will forward an electronic copy to Chairman Codair.*

Town Counsel Michael McCarron: Transfer of \$1,400.00 from Free Cash to provide an updated computer program online registration of dogs in the Town

The current program allows usage at one computer only. Mr. McCarron, thereby, processes the applications and renewals. A cloud-based program would efficiently increase the processing of license information from any of the office computers.

The initial cost of the program is a one-time set up fee of \$1,400.00. The \$600.00 maintenance fee is currently in the budget.

Town Counsel Michael McCarron: Amendment of the West Newbury Town Bylaws by adding a new provision to SECTION XVIII Enforcement of Town Bylaws by adding a new provision to relating to Lodging House Licenses, to wit:

XXXVIII. Lodging House. (Building Inspector, Health Agent, Fire Chief, and Selectmen)

Mr. McCarron relayed this will allow the BOS to enforce regulations and impose a fine of up to \$300.00. Additionally state law designates a \$50.00 license fee.

Town Counsel Michael McCarron: Amendment of the West Newbury Town Bylaws by adding a new provision to SECTION XXXVIII Lodging House Licenses, to wit:

All lodging houses, as defined in Massachusetts General Laws (MGL) Chapter 140, as amended, located in the Town of West Newbury, shall be licensed by the Board of Selectmen. Any person desiring to conduct, or conducting a lodging house shall be subject to all regulations promulgated by the Board of Selectmen. Said regulations shall not be consistent with MGL Chapter 140, as amended.

Mr. McCarron stated the proposed article allows the Board of Selectmen (BOS) to develop regulations governing lodging house licenses consistent with MGL Chapter 140. The amendment would address the issue of rooms or buildings let on a short-term basis by AirBnB and other internet vendors.

Town Counsel Michael McCarron: Amend the West Newbury Town Bylaws by adding a new provision to Section XXXIX Short Term Rentals.

The BOS has requested Mr. McCarron to address a gap regarding lodgers specifically one to three individuals. Rental of owner-occupied residential premises to short term paying guests is pursuant with licensure in accordance with this bylaw. Short term paying guests are defined as those staying in the dwelling for six or less consecutive nights. The BOS will receive all applications for approval. The bylaw will allow the BOS to vote and thereby set regulations.

Historical Committee members Robert Janes and Eric Rich: transfer from Community Preservation Act funds the sum of \$66,000.00, with \$36,722.00 from CPA Historic Resources Reserve and with \$29,287.00 from CPA Unrestricted Fund Balance, to conduct an Inventory of Historical Properties, or take any other action relative thereto.

Mr. Janes noted there are 300 building in West Newbury that are 100 plus years old. The Historical Committee is requesting funds to conduct an inventory of historic buildings in town. A Request for Proposal (RFP) is standard procedure. The lowest bidder receives the contract.

In order to receive matching funds from the Massachusetts Historic Commission, the project will extend over a three-year period. MHC will provide matching funds of 50% with a \$10,000.00 to \$12,000.00 monetary cap. Therefore, the annual expenditure of \$22,000.00 allows West Newbury to receive an \$11,000.00 grant from MHC for three consecutive years.

Mr. Janes remarked the last survey occurred in 1974. Updated photographs of buildings were taken, but little information was gathered. The Historical Committee proposes hiring a historical expert who, with owner approval, will examine the original construction of each building. Due to the length of time of the project, the Committee will prioritize the buildings inspected. The cost per survey is \$220.00 a building. The surveyor will provide individual building reports to include both structural information and a list of famous residents or guests associated with the building.

Community Preservation Committee Judy Mizner and Jean Nelson (Administrative Assistant): Amendment of Chapter XXXVI of the Town Bylaws, Community Preservation Bylaw to correct references, update provisions, and revise the Bylaw relative to appointment

procedures, chairman limitations, and various other requirements, or take any other action relative thereto.

Chairman Mizner began by stating there are two versions (CPC and BOS) of the proposed bylaw changes. Ms. Mizner remarked she plans addressing the CPC version. Ms. Grammer inquired as to which version is to go in the FinCom booklet. Ms. Mizner answered the CPC will submit their own version.

Chairman Mizner questioned why rules governing all town committees should not also apply to the CPC. Currently, the tenure of the chairperson, rules of quorum and appointment to the committee are different for the CPC. Ms. Grammer suggested the high level of stewardship of the CPC may explain the limitations.

Chairman Mizner suggested the CPC does not appropriate funds but rather recommends the distribution of funds. Once CPC approves the distribution of funds, the BOS, FinCom, and ultimately the town review the project.

Chairman Mizner will revise the wordage of the amended bylaw and forward the revision to Ms. Grammer. Ms. Grammer stated the FinCom booklet would be completed by October 10th.

The meeting adjourned at 10:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Elisa Grammer
Secretary