

MEETING MINUTES-WEST NEWBURY
FINANCE COMMITTEE

Date & Time: Tuesday March 5th 2019 7pm

Location : 1910 Building 1st Floor Hearing Room

Attendees: Gary L. Roberts Jr., Chairman, Forbes Durey, Jim Sperelakis, Laurie Zwiak, Nathan Kelly, Jessica Knezek , Brad Beaudoin

AGENDA

1. Call to Order
2. Public Comment, Public comment is limited to 2 minutes per resident for items on the agenda. The chair may allow for more time depending on number of residents seeking to participate.

No Public Comment

3. Late File Items
4. Approval of minutes

Vote 6:0 approve minutes from 2/26/19

5. Review Town Manager proposed budget by department. Review non-capital associated articles

Board of Health, Paul Sevigny, Bob Janes present

\$22,000 appropriated in a new line item for continued monitoring efforts required by the DEP in conjunction with elevated levels of dioxane in detected in the groundwater in the Steel Landfill. Elevated methane gas levels have also been detected at the periphery of the landfill and require further testing followed by remedial action to improve proper venting of the landfill. This testing/remedial action will last many years and thus warranted creation of its own line item to track its costs separately. Sevigny notes that they will get better estimates on the project costs later this month, but there is a chance that FinCom reserve transfer may be required depending on final bid amounts.

Proposed Article #29: septic loan revolving fund. This is a standard article presented each year that services debt for septic system loan program that ran in 2001 to help homeowners pay for septic systems to comply with Title V.

Vote 6:0 approve.

Historic Commission, Bob Janes present

Budget passes 6:0 with no discussion.

Board of Assessors Stone, Baker, Atwood present

Assessors proposed budget shows a 6.5% increase, driven mainly by a vendor price increase of \$6,000 from Patriot Properties and \$900 for a cell phone stipend.

Vote 6:0 approve

Proposed Article #21- An article is being presented to expand eligibility for tax exemptions for seniors based on Clause 41c.

In 2018, there were 4 seniors who were approved for 41c costing around \$2000 from the overlay fund. The proposed changes to lower the age for qualification to 65 is expected to increase this pool to an estimated 10 seniors in town. The Board of Assessors feel that these changes may help older citizens who have been in town for a while maintain their homes who would otherwise be forced to move. Because the financial requirements of 41c are so strict, very few residents qualify and thus the impact to town finances as a whole are limited.

Vote 6:0 approve.

Inspection Services, Glenn Clohecy present

Inspection fees were increased last year in an effort to help cover the departments increased costs of operation. The department is mainly self-funded through collection of these fees. The inspector reports no pushback from increase of fees and reports they are still on the low end compared to neighboring towns. The inspector reiterated that he has not had a real wage raise for sometime and last year when he asked for a raise; it was delayed until the town manager arrived. There was some confusion as to whether the salary line as proposed included this raise or not. The proposed wage worksheet submitted by Inspection, totals \$128,318. While the Town Manager's proposed salary and wages, closely matches this figure at \$128,640, a decision was made to delay the vote for Inspection until this could be clarified. Forbes noted that the Inspector followed through with a request from FinCom to raise fees to help support the proposed wage increase.

As FinCom did not want to comment on employee wages without Town Manager verification. Inspection will be placed on next week's agenda.

As presented to FinCom, Inspection services shows a 4% increase, but this may or may not include ~\$5,000 in expenses that were duplicated during budget preparation.

Council on Aging, Theresa Woodbury present

The proposed budget has a 12% proposed increase due mostly to requested pay increase from the director. This requested raise represents a effort to bring her salary closer in alignment with similar positions in surrounding towns.

Vote 5:1 Beaudoin dissents due to the large % increase which isn't congruent with prop 2 1/2.

Finance committee

2% decrease in expenses as meeting minutes are now being recorded by the Committee Secretary. Durey made a motion to increase the Expense line by \$500 due to anticipated increased increased printing costs for the Spring 19 Town Meeting booklet and the new monthly charge for FinCom's email address on the town server.

6:0 approve Durey's amended FinCom budget.

Conservation Commission, Moderator, Cultural Council

No changes from last years budget. No comments from the Committee

Vote 6:0 approve

Harbor Master

The budget for this item was reduced to \$0 as there are funds in the general ledger to over these expenses. The Town manager did request \$2,000 in additional funds to extend harbor master coverage 3hrs every weekend during the summer 75% of the costs associated with the harbor master are reimbursed by the state.

Vote 6:0 to approve

Community Council Committee budget has been removed as this committee is no longer active.

6. Communications

Rationals Article #29- Jim, #1- Jessica

Beaudoin reports that the CIC will be submitting their litmus test scores for all articles for capital items on 3/6/19.

Jessica looked into the issue of the unfunded mandate for the Mill Pond Dam and is working with the Town manger to look into options that could potentially save the town money.

7. Adjournment