

MEETING MINUTES-WEST NEWBURY
FINANCE COMMITTEE

Date & Time: Tuesday March 12th 2019 7pm

Location : 1910 Building 1st Floor Hearing Room

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

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.

None.

3. Late File Items

At the last meeting, the building inspector questioned if his negotiated wage raise was included with the Town Manager's budget. This issue is still being reviewed by the town manager.

DPW has applied for CPC funds for use for the proposed handicap ramp renovation planned for the town library.

The town manager reports that he has been given access to a university-built dam-burst modeling software which would allow potentially the town to handle the emergency action plan for the Mill Pond Dam in-house at savings for the town.

4. Approval of minutes

Under the FinCom section of the meeting minutes, the FinCom approved an increase of \$500 in the FinCom expense budget funding for cost of printing the town meeting booklet and fees associated with FinCom's e-mail account.

Minutes approved 6-0.

5. Presentation by Thomas Atwood regarding the citizens petition to reduce the CPA from 3% to .5%

Atwood states that the CPA represents taxation without formal planning. He notes that back in 2006 he voted to approve the CPA tax surcharge. Annual CPA spending is roughly 70K/year. He goes on to note that at .5%, the CPA surcharge would generate 68K in FY2020 and 77K by FY2025, enough to cover the average yearly spending. It was also noted that the balance of the CPA account is currently \$2.2M with little to no plan for how the moneys are to be spent. A general review as to the allowed uses for CPA funds was given by Atwood at Durey's request. Sperelakis asked why he chose .5%. The response was that .05% closely matches the yearly average CPC fund spending. Atwood also suggests that if the same amount of money that is raised through the CPA surcharge were invested conservatively, the return on investment would likely be more then or equivalent to the current \$80K received in state matching funds.

Atwood notes that as a former CPC member, the committee was always looking to find uses for the CPC funds but struggled to find them. Knezek asked if his objective was to reduce CPC funding or to increase awareness for the need for increased planning. Atwood's response was both.

Knezek asked for the Town Manager's opinion. Jennings noted that planning could be improved for use of CPA funds.

Beaudoin noted that FY18 state matching funds were roughly \$80K vs the CPA surcharge \$282K, however this is expected to decline, as projected by DLS in the August 2018 Report to \$35K in FY2023 with a CPA surcharge of \$319K. Because the matching funds are significant, continued CPA surcharge is beneficial, but Beaudoin agrees that the town could do a better job planning for their use. In the future, if state funding diminishes as projected, he would like to re-evaluate decreasing or eliminating the CPA surcharge.

Vote 3:3 Beaudoin, Kelly, Sperelakis dissenting

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

Police Department, Interim Chief Durand present

Jennings notes that the proposed wages increase for the School Resource Officer is not a true increase, because the town is budgeting enough to cover the entire salary. In the past, Pentucket has paid a portion of this expense and rather then budgeting based on the Town's share, the town manger recommends budgeting for the full amount, with the reimbursement, coming in as revenue.

There is a proposed increase in \$18K for the police cruiser replacement. This line item, is also inflated due to changes in accounting practices. The proposed \$50K for a new police cruiser is the going rate, the figure from last year, \$32K was the net price taking into ac-

count trade-ins and the police cruiser revolving fund. Taking both these items into account total police budget increase is 2.9-3.4%.

With regard to the SRO, Durey asked if the healthcare, benefit, and vehicle costs for the SRO are shared with Pentucket or the neighboring towns. His concerns are that these costs are significant and that despite the Pentucket portion of wages, West Newbury is footing the bill for these additional costs, without guarantee any given year that Pentucket will fund their portion of wages.

Durey notes that this is another example of a department budget significantly above the prop 2 1/2 target of 2.5% growth (FY2020 proposed 6.9% increase). He notes that these large year over year increases are not sustainable and feels like something has to change. Kelly notes that the majority of this 6.9% increase is artificial and that the Police Dept. has restricted the year-over-year growth of the dept. to about 3% which is acceptable.

4:2 Beaudoin, Durey dissenting

Dispatch, Interim Chief Durand present

Beaudoin asked if the staffing turnover with dispatch has improved. The interim Chief Durand says that it has with the addition of some new part-time dispatchers.

Proposed budget increase is 2.9%

6:0 approve

Fire, Chief Dwyer Present

Proposed budgetary increase, 6.1% which accounts for about \$17k. Roberts asked about measures the dept is taking to protect firefighters. Chief Dwyer reviewed previous capital projects, including personal protective gear and replacement air-packs. Because they bought as part of a regional collective they were able to receive significant savings on the cost of these capital items and expects there to be turn back of unused funds.

Vote 6:0 approve

Article #9: Fire rescue vehicle. This vehicle received priority #1 vote from CIC. The Chief noted that this vehicle going on almost 100% of calls. The existing vehicle is a 1993 model. He expects this vehicle to last 20-25 years.

Vote 6:0 approve

Animal Control

The animal control budget is still being negotiated. Chairman Roberts recommends waiting until these negotiations are complete.

Emergency Management, Lee Delp

The only proposed change is COLA.

Open Space

No comment on this topic

Vote 6:0 approve.

Benefits

The town manger reports that per employee health insurance increase is 3.6%. The Group Insurance line carries a 10% increase but this is taking into account uncertainty if new hires with the police chief and librarian will require family plans(a benefit that carries a \$14k cost)

6:0 approve

Capital Expenditure Items

DPW \$93K for building repairs to the library, public safety complex and town offices. The library portion has been submitted to CPC for funding.

6:0 approve, Sunset date 2021

DPW \$45k for F250 44 utility truck.

4:2 Beaudoin, Knezek dissenting, Sunset FY2020

DPW \$32K for new F150. The main reason for replacement of the old vehicle is that it does not have 4 wheel drive.

0:6 disapprove

7. Communications

3/19 is the next meeting of FinCom. Sperelakis will be unable to attend.

3/25 is a joint meeting with the board of selectmen and town meeting moderator

8. Adjournment