

Meeting Minutes - Finance Committee - 3/10/20 - Meeting opened at 7:00 PM  
Present: Roberts, Durey, Kelly, Sperelakis  
Absent: Beaudoin, Knezek

**No public comment.**

**Inspection Services** - Presentation by Town Manager, Mr. Jennings - decrease in salary/wages due to turnover in staff. Happy to have Mr. Joslin on staff now. Expense increase due to need for a new plotter. Sam Joslin - New Building Inspector: Current plotter is obsolete, no more parts/ink, despite only being 7-8 years old. Very important to have a working plotter for his role.

Durey: Motion to Approve Budget as presented by TM. Sperelakis: second. Approved 4-0-0.

**ZBA** - Presentation by Town Manager, Mr. Jennings - budget is now embedded within the wage structure in the inspectional services budget. \$100 increase in expenses due to upcoming changes.

Durey: Motion to Approve Budget as presented by TM. Sperelakis: second. Approved 4-0-0.

**Council on Aging** - Presentation by Town Manager, Mr. Jennings - Site Coordinator's salary is paid partially out of a grant. Mr. Jennings has recommended COLA increase for Director, and wage increases for two hourly employees - site director and van driver; both are relatively low current wages, for long term employees.

Theresa Woodbury - Site manager has 10 years experience, and has helped build up the program. 20 seniors at the meal tonight, and the site manager did a great job. Van driver is helpful to seniors, goes above and beyond, and gets positive notes/feedback.

Durey: Motion to Approve Budget as presented by TM. Sperelakis: second.

Discussion: JS - how many people do you serve? 100 unique people attend; 825 people get newsletter

Approved 4-0-0.

**Board of Health** - Presentation by Town Manager, Mr. Jennings - Hauling/Disposal is up for renewal this year.

Durey: Motion to Approve Budget as presented by TM. Sperelakis: second.

Discussion: Hauling contract.

Janes - did not want a 10 year contract. Strongly prefer dealing with Mello. Much more personalized service. They will come back and pick up if there is a mistake.

Blake Seale - JRM would give barrel for recycling that would be automated claw pickup, and would continue traditional pickup. Mello would give us two barrels, and both would be automated claw pickup. Automation is where the industry is going, in order to save money on labor, worker's compensation claims, etc.

Durey - Testing schedule for landfill, will it reduce at some point?

Seale and Jennings: Not until it is approved by Environmental Protection, but it could eventually. Tom Fahey - predictable trend with groundwater.

Seale: no current market for recycling still. Our current rate is 7-10% contamination, \$100/ton charge.

Approved 3-1-0. Kelly dissented.

**Article 11** - Septic Loan Revolving Account Transfer

Durey: Motion to Approve Article 11as presented by TM. Sperelakis: second. Approved 4-0-0.

**Conservation Commission** - Presentation by Town Manager, Mr. Jennings. Conservation Agent was hired at bottom of scale, and proposal is to move higher on scale, with an increase of responsibilities, to include being the Land Agent.

Judy Mizner: looking to put him at mid-range of pay level. A lot of the land in town is in the care/custody of the Conservation Commission, so the additional duties that we want is to see him monitor what maintenance requirements there are in open space and trails; also communicating with other committees about issues that are found and coordinate with them to take care of the problem.

Durey: Motion to Approve Budget as presented by TM. Sperelakis: second.

Discussion: Sperelakis: who's responsible for trails in town?

Mizner - no one person. If a committee is in charge, it's them. Otherwise, Concom on conservation land.

Approved 4-0-0.

**Planning** - Presentation by Town Manager, Mr. Jennings; Leah Zambernardi present.

Kelly/Roberts/Durey - Planning board should be who is giving write up on recommendation with vote, and should prepare a short rationale for FinCom booklet

Durey: Motion to Approve Budget as presented by TM. Sperelakis: second. Approved 4-0-0.

**Town Clerk** - Presentation by Town Manager, Mr. Jennings. No true comparables in other towns to do a salary comparison. 5% increase. Mr. McCarron brings a great deal of value.

Mr. McCarron - I believe I should be brought more into the middle of the grade that I am at, not at the bottom of the line.

Durey: Motion to Approve Budget as presented by TM. Sperelakis: second. Approved 4-0-0.

**Board of Registrars** - Presentation by Mr. McCarron - particularly big year due to the Presidential Election. This year's primary was the highest ever. Expected to be a record breaking year.

Durey: Motion to Approve Budget as presented by TM. Sperelakis: second. Approved 4-0-0.

## **Article 22**

Durey: Motion to Approve Article 22. Sperelakis: second.

Covers salaries and expenses for early voting for State Primary and Presidential Election. The money will be reimbursed by the State.

Approved 4-0-0.

Mr. McCarron - new vote tallying machine is working well. It pulls the ballot in slower, but gives a clicking noise after it has finished reading a ballot.

**Education** - Presentation by Town Manager, Mr. Jennings. Big change in budget last week at school committee. Helps bring overall increase close to 2% goal of BOS.

Dr. Bartholomew - Full day Kindergarten is part of the new budget. Want to expand technology model to include Chromebooks for Grade 7/8, which would stay with them through Grade 12. PTO funds technology at elementary school. Wanted to not have any athletic/participation fees, but it was not approved by the School Committee. Chromebook idea was modified to see who has that model already for 8th grade, and will purchase for 7th grade. 34% of budget is dedicated to Special Education, which is 23% of population. Six children will cost more than \$2 million. Getting a very small amount from the Student Opportunity Act.

Jennings - reductions in the budget this year were driven by Groveland and Merrimac, as both would have been forced into an override.

Greg Lebreque: 2 step method required by state if people don't agree. Used to use a per pupil method, but had to change in 2005. 2 step method requires a minimum contribution. Capital expenses are always based on a per pupil method.

Roberts - you don't have enough money to do the things you want to do.

Dr. Bartholomew - Goal is to make cuts that are least impactful on students.

Durey - School Resource Officer: Please give rationale for reimbursement amount.

Dr. Bartholomew - we do not pay for any training for the officer. Increased to a \$30,000 base, and 2.5% increase is what we do for all salaries. It's great to have the SRO around. He's not at the school 100% of the time, and would prioritize a teacher if forced into a choice.

Lebreque: statute says that the Town has to provide a SRO.

Durey: Motion to Approve Pentucket Budget as presented by TM. Sperelakis: second. Approved 4-0-0.

**Historical Commission** - Presentation by Town Manager, Mr. Jennings. Requested \$1000 increase, but TM recommendation was \$600. Want to do more with mailings. Board of Selectmen have an operating budget that could be drawn from as the need arises.

Durey: Motion to Approve Budget as presented by TM. Sperelakis: second. Approved 4-0-0.

**Whittier and Essex North Shore Agricultural** - Presentation by Town Manager, Mr. Jennings: with Whittier and Essex North Shore Agricultural, the budget can be unpredictable, and can change at any time because it is all due to student enrollment. Someone could transfer in at any time and that would change the cost.

Durey: Motion to Approve Whittier Budget as presented by TM. Sperelakis: second. Approved 3-0-1. Kelly abstained.

Durey: Motion to Approve Essex North Shore Agricultural Budget as presented by TM. Sperelakis: second. Approved 4-0-0.

**Mill Pond Committee** - Presentation by Town Manager, Mr. Jennings. Money was spent last year on water testing on blue-green algae. Mill Pond management plan says they should be annually testing water, but not clear on what.

Kelly - testing should be for chemicals that could impact people if they consume fish.

Durey: Motion to Approve Budget as presented by TM. Sperelakis: second. Approved 4-0-0.

**Cultural Commission** - Presentation by Town Manager, Mr. Jennings. Active committee, but mostly funded out of state grants, and need it here to preserve the account.

Durey: Motion to Approve Budget as presented by TM. Sperelakis: second. Approved 4-0-0.

## **Article 26**

Durey: Motion to Approve Article 26. Sperelakis: second.

Mill Pond Tables and Benches.

Durey: too expensive

Disapproved 0-4-0.

## **Pipestave Parking Article**

Jennings - the idea is just to have a study done to see if there are ways to improve the parking at Pipestave Hill from an unbiased apolitical civil engineer. Needs to be a consensus building process with all of the stakeholders. BOS can act as arbitrators between disagreement between stakeholders who have their approval coming from different sources.

**Communications**

Roberts: Thoughts and prayers go out to Mr. Beaudoin for his loss of a loved one.

**Adjournment - 8:55 PM**

Minutes taken by Kelly