

JOINT FINANCE COMMITTEE AND BOARD OF SELECTMEN MEETING  
February 27, 2013

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**Meeting Date:** February 27, 2013  
**Location:** 1 Avenue A, Turners Falls MA

**Board of Selectmen**  
**Called to Order:** 6:05 PM

**Finance Committee Members Present:** John Hanold, Michael Naughton, Lynn Reynolds and Sharon Kennaugh. Greg Garrison was absent.

**Board of Selectmen Members:** Pat Allen, Christopher Boutwell and Mark Fairbrother.

**Others Present:** Town Administrator Frank Abbondanzio, Town Accountant Carolyn Olsen

**Mr. Boutwell announces remote participation by Pat Allen due to geographical distance.**

### **Minutes**

Selectmen Moved:

To approve the minutes of February 20, 2013.

Vote: Allen Aye Boutwell Abstained Fairbrother Aye

### **WPCF Stabilization**

- Mr. Naughton would like some history to look at as he reviews the numbers on Mr. Garrison's spreadsheet outlining the proposed fund.
- Mr. Abbondanzio expressed some concern about some of the revenue assumptions that don't have a lot of history to support the numbers.
- Mr. Hanold is interested in the amounts that would be generated by certain rate increases.
- It was determined that the discussion on creating a WPCF Stabilization fund should include Water Pollution Control Facility Superintendent Bob Trombley, interested industrial users, Sewer Commissioner Mark Fairbrother, Tax Collector Patty Dion, Mr. Garrison and Mr. Hanold. Mr. Hanold volunteered to contact industries and set up the first discussion meeting.

### **Capital Stabilization Fund**

- Mr. Naughton asked how it would be funded and noted that he doesn't see a reliable source of funding.
- Mr. Abbondanzio said that in other towns it's often done as policy by setting aside certain percentages for pay as you go capital items and for major capital items. Some towns also have debt policies setting borrowing limits. Mr. Abbondanzio will locate and update his information.

### **Recommendations on Special Articles for the Annual Town Meeting**

Since the Finance Committee has no quorum, this will be tabled until everyone is present.

### **Balancing the Fiscal Year 2014 Budget**

- The requested budget currently shows a shortfall of \$91,269.

- Of this, \$25,000 for the Assessor's special article will be moved to the Special Town Meeting before the annual and be appropriated from Free Cash, which will not affect the budget shortfall, but which will reduce the use of Stabilization.
- Ms. Olsen previously identified between \$17,000 and \$23,000 of reductions in the Public Buildings Utilities department. Reducing that budget by the average of \$20,000 the shortfall would drop to \$71,269.
- By eliminating the \$25,000 Assessors' article from the Annual Town Meeting, the use of Stabilization is reduced to \$125,000 – slightly more than half of the \$200,000 previously set as a target use of Stabilization.
- One alternative is to purchase the bucket truck for \$95,000 from Stabilization, which will reduce the use of taxation by the \$21,187 lease payment. This slightly exceeds the target use of Stabilization, but reduces the budget shortfall to \$50,082.
- Another option would be to pay for the final \$54,055 lease payment from Stabilization. This would use more Stabilization than originally intended. Mr. Hanold has some philosophical angst about funding from Stabilization an item more properly funded from Taxation, and about using more reserves than planned, but feels that given the difficult economic times we are in pretty good shape.
- Ms. Allen is concerned about the police and dispatch budget needing more funding this year via Special Town Meeting appropriations and whether there are adequate budgets for next year.
- Mr. Naughton said in past years we put \$300,000 from free cash to lower the tax levy and changed that to \$250,000 when the economy went south. So another option is to increase the use of free cash back to \$300,000.
- Mr. Hanold asked everyone to closely look at the budget to see if there are any areas that can reasonably be cut.

**Board of Selectmen Meeting Adjourned at 7:25 PM**

Selectmen Moved:

To adjourn.

Vote: Allen Aye Boutwell Abstained Fairbrother Aye

**List of Documents and Exhibits –**

- Minutes of February 20, 2013
- Working Budget with Funding Detail tab from FY14 02-21-13 file
- Draft “Appropriations from Free Cash & Reserves” for Annual Town Meeting

**Next Meetings**

- March 6, 2013                      GMRSD
- March 13, 2013                    Board of Health & Building Inspector budgets, Final Votes of Schedules I & II, Final Decision on Use of Reserves
- March 20, 2013                    Libraries, Council on Aging & Parks and Recreation budgets, FCTS Stabilization Fund