

# JOINT FINANCE COMMITTEE MEETING

October 7, 2015

Page 1 of 3

**Meeting Date:** October 7, 2015

**Called to Order:** 6:00 PM

**Location:** 1 Avenue A, Turners Falls MA

**Finance Committee Members Present:** John Hanold, Fred Bowman and Patricia Pruitt. Michael Naughton, Chris Menegoni and Greg Garrison were absent. There was no quorum.

**Selectmen Present:** Rich Kuklewicz, Michael Nelson. Chris Boutwell was absent.

**Others Present:** Town Accountant Carolyn Olsen

## **October 1, 2015 Special Town Meeting**

Commentary and follow up:

- Mr. Bowman suggested having alternate members of the Finance Committee who would only be able to vote if they were required to meet the quorum. They would still be able to participate in the discussion.

## **Preliminary information and questions related to Fiscal Year 2017 budget process.**

Things to consider before getting fully into the budget process.

### Part-time clerical help

- Mr. Kuklewicz has suggested adding an appropriation for part-time clerical help for town boards and committees. Mr. Kuklewicz is concerned that town committees without staff support are responsible for their own minutes, which are not on the town computer, and this can be problematic. Mr. Kuklewicz has also noted that many departments don't necessarily have specific skills at doing minutes.
- Mr. Bowman asked how many committees don't have staff support for minutes. Some are CIC, CAC, Broadband, Civic Center and Energy Committee.
- Ms. Olsen suggested determining who would need the services, how much time they need, then getting an hourly rate from Harmon and adding the request into the Shared Budget.
- Mr. Kuklewicz has heard that some town halls close to the public one morning a week to catch up on paperwork without interruption from the public.

### Information Technology budget

Does it still make sense to keep IT expenses as part of the Shared Department, or should it be its own department? Currently the IT expenses are about 50% of the total department budget, and have almost 50% of the line items.

### Department meetings

Does the committee want to meet with all departments or just the usual suspects? Other options are to depend on department narratives for general information or invite departments to meetings before January so the discussion of department functions does not interfere with budget meetings.

## JOINT FINANCE COMMITTEE MEETING

October 7, 2015

Page 2 of 3

Mr. Hanold noted that we usually meet with the school districts, DPW, WPCF, and Police/Dispatch.

### Financial Policy regarding annual appropriations to Town General Stabilization Fund

Since the Town General Stabilization fund is comfortably above the minimum, should we plan on putting the \$50,000 that the Financial Policies recommend go there to the OPEB Trust Fund instead?

- This transfer was not made last year, but the Town Administrator had requested that the appropriation be made to an OPEB fund.
- Minimum balance for the Fiscal Year 2017 budget is \$842,908. The current balance is \$903,268, which is \$60,360 above the minimum.

### Budget Message

- There was agreement to request a single, level services budget scenario.
- Additional items will be requested separately with supporting documentation.
- Ms. Olsen will draft a budget message to be reviewed at the next meeting which will be sent out on November 2<sup>nd</sup> and be due on December 21st, hearings to begin in January.
- Mr. Bowman would like to know what departments have accomplished in the past year; IE amount of roads paved, Chapter 90 projects, etc.
- Mr. Hanold's hot-button is: once we know the answers, what do we do with the information?
- Mr. Bowman suggested an inventory of both buildings and infrastructure showing the condition of everything and what repairs are needed. Noted we have a lot of infrastructure on the hill that needs work, and that area doesn't get grants. Noted that this is a lengthy process, and that it may not be able to be completed during the Fiscal Year 2017 budget process.
- Ms. Pruitt wants to make sure that the inventory information includes which items are safety issues.
- Ms. Olsen will forward standard narratives to Finance Committee and Board of Selectmen members for review so that specific questions or requests for additional information can be identified.

### **Topics not anticipated within in the 48 hour posting requirements-**

- The Town Planner will be requesting a reserve fund transfer for emergency work done on the Millers Falls Road stabilization project that will result in total expenditures exceeding the appropriation. It would be helpful if this could take place before November.

### **Selectmen's meeting adjourned at 7:28 PM**

### **Set Next Meetings: October 21<sup>st</sup>**

- Reserve Fund Transfer
- Review/Approve Budget Message

JOINT FINANCE COMMITTEE MEETING

October 7, 2015

Page 3 of 3

- Answer questions raised above on page 1 of minutes.
- Determine what information to request in terms of town owned building, infrastructure, and maintenance and repair needs for each item.
- Decide if the committee wants to meet with any departments prior to receiving budgets.

**List of Documents and Exhibits:**

- none