

JOINT FINANCE COMMITTEE AND SELECTMEN MEETING

January 11, 2017

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Meeting Date: January 11, 2017

Called to Order: 6:00 PM

Location: 1 Avenue A, Turners Falls MA

Finance Committee Members Present: John Hanold, Fred Bowman, Greg Garrison, Chris Menegoni, Patricia Pruitt and Michael Naughton.

Selectmen Present: Michael Nelson. Chris Boutwell arrived at 6:05 PM. Richard Kuklewicz was absent.

Others Present:

Montague: Town Administrator Steve Ellis, Town Accountant/Acting IT Administrator Carolyn Olsen and Treasurer/Tax Collector Eileen Seymour

Recording

The Finance Committee Chair announced that the meeting is being recorded by MCTV, and this is a duly posted meeting of the Montague Finance Committee and Montague Selectboard with a quorum of the Finance Committee but not the Selectboard.

Minutes -

Selectmen Moved:

To approve the minutes of January 4, 2017.

Vote: 2 In Favor 0 Opposed 0 Abstained

Finance Committee Moved:

To approve the minutes of January 4, 2017.

Vote: 4 In Favor 0 Opposed 1 Abstained

Department Budgets

Treasurer/Collector: Department 145

- The \$3,500 request for Equipment <\$5K is for a planned copier replacement for the Tax Collector. The current copier is 8 years old and starting to fail.
- The Tax Title item shows a requested 10% increase that is primarily due to an increase in rates from the attorney. We currently have 34 tax title and 21 land court cases active. We do anticipate another 10-12 accounts to go to tax title in September. 62 accounts are currently delinquent.
- Mr. Naughton asked if the level of tax title work is expected to continue at these levels or if a backlog has been created. Ms. Seymour feels that the current level will be ongoing level.

Information Technology: Department 155

- The Town has a contract with Moody Consulting for IT work including hardware/software maintenance, updates, installation and troubleshooting. Work outside of the contract is billed at \$90 per hour. The contract covers all departments except the Police Department and the Water Pollution Control Facility (WPCF). The Fiscal Year 2017 contract is for \$28,000. An increase is expected for next year, part of which may be allocated to the WPCF if that department is brought into the contract. Moody Consulting has been working with the WPCF to update their computer system and an added benefit will be that the WPCF and Town Hall will be able to host off-site server backup for

each other. Mr. Moody is currently focusing on this, as well as implementing the permit software and the new town hall phone system.

- Ms. Olsen is requesting a change in how minor IT expenses are charged. In the current and previous years, the only IT appropriations were specifically for the IT Administrator, IT Consultant, website hosting, website registration, domain registration and DSL line. All other expenses, including miscellaneous parts and supplies, are charged to the special article. Ms. Olsen is requesting that a line item be added in the IT budget for miscellaneous parts and supplies with an individual cost of less than \$400. This will preserve the special article for larger purchases. The requested amount for this line item was based on the analysis of prior year detailed expenses in the special articles. Some room for the unexpected was included.
- The Fiscal Year 2018 budget also includes a one-time request for additional town e-mail addresses for board and committee members. The cost per address is \$81.12, which includes license fees for both Exchange Email Client and Windows Access Client. Regarding the two fees, Mr. Naughton thinks it's worth considering how individuals prefer to access their e-mail accounts, and perhaps buy only the specific licenses needed for current officials.
- Mr. Garrison thinks that the licenses are not only for the ways to access e-mail, but also for the storage and access of the e-mails. While some individuals may not need both, since membership will change over time it is reasonable and prudent to purchase all licenses that may be needed. (Ms. Olsen checked with Horace Moody later, and found that both licenses are needed for each e-mail account. The user needs one license to access Microsoft Windows for password authentication, and another license to access the Microsoft Exchange e-mail server.) The first town board e-mail has been set up for the Selectboard and is ready for testing.
- The current balance in the \$24,000 IT Special Article is \$20,018. A spreadsheet was provided detailing the planned expenditures for the balance of Fiscal Year 2017 and for the next 5 years. It is currently projected that the annual Discretionary Fund requests will decrease from \$15,000 for Fiscal Year 2018 to \$13,000 for subsequent years.
- Ms. Olsen has also submitted a special article request for \$5,000 for a new town website. Some of the issues with the current website are that there are only 4 licenses, there have been major difficulties in doing updates, and certain tasks have complicated steps that are prone to error. Notes on a demonstration of a potential new website are attached.
- Mr. Naughton noted we're being asked to spend \$34,000 for an IT consultant. Something over 50 computers and several servers –it's not a pokey set up. There is a question of whether we want to trust something of this size and significance to someone who's not a town employee. Not seeing a problem at this time, but we are getting to the point of having enough in the budget for an IT person. Mr. Ellis noted our funding would not even support a ½ time experienced person and that the Town has a fairly complex and complicated system with a lot of integration issues that we may be postponing.

Permit Software Maintenance

The recently purchased CitizenServe permit software has an annual support fee of \$16,500. This has been preliminarily shown in the Shared budget for Fiscal Year 2018 because the software will be used by multiple departments for either issuing permits or obtaining information and there is no identified means by which to allocate the expense among the departments that will be using it. Mr. Naughton had questioned the appropriate location for this expense. Options are to show the expense in the Shared

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Budget, the IT Budget, or to allocate the cost among the Building Inspector, Board of Health, Board of Assessors, and Planning and Community Development.

- Mr. Hanold is comfortable leaving it where it is.
- Mr. Ellis can not yet see a rationale for either an equal split or a by-use split. The system is still being built. Departments are currently uploading forms and data, and once this process is completed the company will start doing the build out for Montague's specific needs. The department heads need a chance to work with the system in order to see how the use is allocated. By next year we may have a better idea of whether there is a reasonable basis for allocating the support cost across departments.
- Mr. Naughton's preference is to allocate, even if not specific, rather than lumping it together in another place.
- Mr. Garrison would like to have time for the software to be developed and look at allocating the cost for FY2019.
- It was agreed that the expense would remain in the Shared Costs for Fiscal Year 2018, but the issue will be reviewed for the Fiscal Year 2019 budget.

Capital Requests received to date (some amounts may be adjusted in the future):

1. \$100,000 DPW Discretionary
2. \$110,000 Flail Mower
3. \$60,000 1 Ton Dump Truck
4. \$385,000 Sewer Drains
5. \$80,000 Hillcrest Electrical Upgrades
6. \$25,000 Sheffield Water Heaters
7. \$120,000 Montague Process Pilot Est
8. \$48,500 WPCF Pickup
9. \$80,000 Replace WPCF Underground Fuel Tanks
10. \$785,000 Increase Septage Tank Capacity
11. \$200,000 Increase WPCF Capital Stabilization Fund

Non-Capital Special Article Requests received to date:

1. \$52,395 Operating Budget Appropriation to General Stabilization
2. \$50,000 Operating Budget to OPEB Trust Fund
3. \$15,000 IT Discretionary (for items over \$400)
4. \$5,000 New Town Website
5. \$15,000 Police Discretionary
6. \$15,000 Unity Park Walkways
7. \$3,500 Highland Park Ballfield Fence
8. \$20,000 WPCF Discretionary

Potential articles not yet received: DPW Facility, School underground fuel tank replacement, Town Building maintenance work, Dry Hill Cemetery access, and Libraries' building issues.

Possible funding needs at a Spring STM:

- IBPO Contract

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- Strathmore work- potentially \$100,000. The state fire marshal has stipulated that certain actions must be taken.
- Fiscal Year 2017 Legal Budget

Preliminary Use of Reserves

Current available reserves are:

- WPCF Capital Stabilization Fund: \$200,102
- WPCF Retained Earnings: \$176,696
- Free Cash (net of \$200k for Operating Budgets): \$206,940
- Town Capital Stabilization Fund: \$24,980 (Policy requires minimum \$25,000 balance)
- Town General Stabilization Fund: \$802,626 (+\$73,346 not yet transferred in for a total of \$875,972) (Policy requires minimum balance of \$873,247 leaves nothing available for use)

Given the lack of available reserves normally used to fund capital expenses, do the Selectmen and Finance Committee intend to take the General Stabilization Fund below its minimum balance per policy in order to fund Fiscal Year 2018 Special Articles? The conclusion was that it is not intended to use the General Stabilization Fund for any Fiscal Year 2018 appropriations unless deemed absolutely necessary.

Topics not anticipated within in the 48 hour posting requirements

- Mr. Hanold noted that the Finance Committee has received the Conflict of Interest information and requested that members comply with the requirements by the next meeting.
- Mr. Ellis noted that the Selectmen voted to allocate \$20,000 for the use of securing the Railroad Salvage building.

Next Meeting Dates:

January 18, 2017	Town Clerk, Minimum wage and Poll Workers/Park & Rec summer help, Schedules I & II
January 25, 2017	Libraries, Feedback from Building Maintenance Study
February 1, 2017	Police, Dispatch, Benefits, General Insurance, Intergovernmental
February 8, 2017	Planner, Public Works
February 15, 2017	WPCF, and STM Issues (if STM planned)

Meeting adjourned at 7:05 PM

List of Documents and Exhibits:

- January 4, 2017 Minutes
- Notes on website demonstration

Minutes Approved January 18, 2017

John Hanold, Finance Committee Chair

Richard Kuklewicz, Selectboard Chair

Notes on the Current Website and possible New Site:

Use of the current website has brought up a number of issues:

1. There are only 4 licenses which means multiple employees use the same license.
2. There have been major issues in trying to do updates.
3. Certain functions, like trying to add a PDF file to a webpage, have been problematic at times and sometimes do not work.
4. The steps to some processes are very complicated and prone to making errors.
5. Virtual Town Hall (VTH) has a new website version, built on an entirely different platform, and therefore has less need/desire to make improvements to the version the Town uses.
6. While the decision to purchase VTH's new website version has not been made, 3 employees were able to see a demonstration, and were very favorably impressed.
7. VTH's new website software is more user friendly, does not require separate licenses for individual users, and makes it much easier to add data or attachments. Some specific information:
 1. There will be unlimited access to all old First Class files.
 2. The one time cost is \$5,000.
 3. Our annual support cost of \$3,050 will remain the same.
 4. The new product is built on a new platform (Drupal – which the Commonwealth of MA is changing to) with more features and responsive design. For instance, it reshapes the screen to match what the view is using – pc, tablet, phone.
 5. The main page can be organized in different ways using tabs, “find it fast”, “where do I go for ?” and “quick” menus.
 6. The new product allows for unlimited users (instead of the current five “official” users), with multiple permission levels. It can be made very specific as to who can do what.
 7. The new product can automatically pull content from different areas.
 8. All department links show on each linked sub-page.
 9. Integrated with Twitter and Facebook for emergency notifications.
 10. The Virtual Town Hall corporate website has additional information.
 11. Some of the town's using this new website product include: Mashpee, Whately, Northfield, Chelsea, Plymouth and Salem.

Additional thoughts and considerations:

1. Currently there are **TWO** parallel websites being used for the Town of Montague: www.montague.net and www.montague-ma.gov
2. The official one is www.montague-ma.gov and the other **NEEDS** to be disbanded as soon as possible. Some staff are still giving out the .net website address. Horace is aware of this and has been for a number of months. The sooner the .net site is disbanded, the quicker we can get all town staff to use the correct one. The police budget paid \$685 last year (3/31/16) for 5 years of hosting their website and use of the montague.net domain.
3. Currently the COA, Libraries, and Police departments have their own “official” websites which are available through links on the town website. Consider bringing these on board with a new website, provided it meets their needs.
4. Involve ALL departments in both selection process and determination of how to organize and setup the new website.