

JOINT FINANCE COMMITTEE AND SELECTMEN'S MEETING MINUTES
DOWNSTAIRS MEETING ROOM
1 AVENUE A, TURNERS FALLS, MA
March 29, 2017

Page 1 of 9

Chairman John Hanold opens the meeting

- Meeting was opened at 6:00 PM in the Downstairs Meeting Room
- **Finance Committee Members Present:** John Hanold, Fred Bowman, Michael Naughton, Chris Menegoni and Patricia Pruitt. Greg Garrison was absent
- **Selectmen Present:** Richard Kuklewicz and Michael Nelson. Chris Boutwell arrived at 8:04 PM.
- **Others Present:** Town Administrator Steven Ellis, Accountant Carolyn Olsen and Richard Widmer.
- The Finance Committee Chair announced that the meeting is being recorded by MCCI, and asked if anyone else was recording the meeting. There was no one in the audience.

Minutes -

Selectmen Moved:

To approve the minutes of March 15, 2017.

Vote: 2 In Favor 0 Opposed 0 Abstained

Finance Committee Moved:

To approve the minutes of March 15, 2017.

Vote: 5 In Favor 0 Opposed 0 Abstained

Capital Improvements Committee Report

Additions/updates include:

1. Approval of \$80,000 for electrical upgrades at Hillcrest.
2. Approval of \$15,000 to replace two hot water heaters at Sheffield. The specifications were changed to provide a lower cost as requested by the CIC.
3. Dry Hill Cross Road article will be considered next week.
4. Library roof and buildings study will be considered next week.
5. Mr. Ellis provided an update on the request for a study of the library buildings.
 - a. Director of Libraries Linda Hickman has worked hard to tighten to focus of the building study article.
 - b. After speaking to the trustees and an architect, the upper limit of the design study can be amended to \$40,000.
 - c. The study will allow the Town to understand the buildings' needs and plan for repairs and improvements. The results will provide initial plans and conceptual drawings for buildings. A schedule of required maintenance for each building will be a stated requirement of the RFP. The end result will be a schedule, plan, and understanding of each building and how much they cost to operate, maintain and improve.
 - d. State Library grant programs are currently designed for expansions and new buildings, but there is the beginning of understanding by the state that small communities cannot expand but need to maintain buildings.
 - e. Mr. Kuklewicz suggested we consider whether we should even keep the Old Town Hall/Montague Center Library building, and if so, if it should be used for other purposes. Would it be better to find someone to adapt it for re-use, and find another building for the

JOINT FINANCE COMMITTEE AND SELECTMEN'S MEETING MINUTES
DOWNSTAIRS MEETING ROOM
1 AVENUE A, TURNERS FALLS, MA
March 29, 2017

Page 2 of 9

library? Mr. Naughton thinks we need information on the rest of the building, not just the section used by the Library, and asked for initiation of a parallel process to review the non-library portion of the old Montague Town Hall. Mr. Ellis said that he expects the study to include the needs of the building as a whole, but would not include any information on potential re-use.

Budget Discussion and Deliberation

The most recent budget includes the following updated information from Mr. Ellis:

- 122 BOS. This budget was reduced from \$172,399 to \$169,212. Savings of \$3,187 were realized by reducing time for meeting minute support from 12 hours to 8 hours, which better aligns with actual use of this service. Additional savings came from trimming the last night of the MMA conference from the budget, which was a low value activity.
- 151 Town Counsel. The labor counsel portion of this budget was increased from \$20,000 to \$38,000. This portion of that budget is the result of two changes. The first is a change in the *accounting* of hours of service provided, which were apparently undercounted and under-charged over at least the past 18 months. The second is an increase in price per hour (to \$225) and elimination of a past practice of billing us at a discounted rate (\$173) for our first 76 hours of service (after which the rate increases to \$190). Note that I am trying to negotiate on getting a discounted rate, but the savings would not be that great.

Looking then at FY 18, without getting into too many details, I based our expected hours of service next year (165 hours) as 75% of the low estimate for current year hours of service (220, the high estimate is 250) at the new \$225 rate, which they suggest is a long overdue increase. In terms of hours to be used, I'm comfortable suggesting a lower level of total use due to decreased union negotiation, if nothing else. Of the three contracts, I anticipate two will be completed before town meeting (UE and TOMEA), but the police contract will be delayed until they choose representation and we can start negotiating again.

- 946 General Insurance. No change in bottom line figure. The estimate accounts for changed library value (now \$2.18M, was \$1.16M), select new vehicles, 5% general insurance increase, plus Strathmore, as well as \$1,195 participation credit.

Town Operating Budget - The Town's operating budget request currently totals \$8,993,941.

Selectmen Moved:

To recommend a Fiscal Year 2018 Town Operating Budget of \$8,993,941, with \$100,000 to be funded from Free Cash and \$8,893,941 to be funded from Taxation.

Vote: 2 In Favor 0 Opposed 0 Abstained

Finance Committee Moved:

To recommend a Fiscal Year 2018 Town Operating Budget of \$8,993,941, with \$100,000 to be funded from Free Cash and \$8,893,941 to be funded from Taxation.

Vote: 5 In Favor 0 Opposed 0 Abstained

JOINT FINANCE COMMITTEE AND SELECTMEN'S MEETING MINUTES
DOWNSTAIRS MEETING ROOM
1 AVENUE A, TURNERS FALLS, MA
March 29, 2017

Page 3 of 9

WPCF Operating Budget - The WPCF's operating budget request currently totals \$2,384,214.

Selectmen Moved:

To recommend a Fiscal Year 2018 WPCF Operating Budget of \$2,384,214, with \$200,000 to be funded from Taxation and \$2,184,214 to be funded from Sewer User Fees.

Vote: 2 In Favor 0 Opposed 0 Abstained

Finance Committee Moved:

To recommend a Fiscal Year 2018 WPCF Operating Budget of \$2,384,214, with \$200,000 to be funded from Taxation and \$2,184,214 to be funded from Sewer User Fees.

Vote: 5 In Favor 0 Opposed 0 Abstained

Colle Operating Budget - The Colle's operating budget request currently totals \$97,525.

Selectmen Moved:

To recommend a Fiscal Year 2018 Colle Operating Budget of \$97,525, to be funded from Colle Receipts Reserved for Appropriations.

Vote: 2 In Favor 0 Opposed 0 Abstained

Finance Committee Moved:

To recommend a Fiscal Year 2018 Colle Operating Budget of \$97,525, to be funded from Colle Receipts Reserved for Appropriations.

Vote: 5 In Favor 0 Opposed 0 Abstained

Airport Operating Budget - The Airport's operating budget request currently totals \$49,925.

Selectmen Moved:

To recommend a Fiscal Year 2018 Airport Operating Budget of \$49,925, with \$16,667 to be funded from Taxation and \$33,258 to be funded from Airport User Fees.

Vote: 2 In Favor 0 Opposed 0 Abstained

Finance Committee Moved:

To recommend a Fiscal Year 2018 Airport Operating Budget of \$49,925, with \$16,667 to be funded from Taxation and \$33,258 to be funded from Airport User Fees.

Vote: 5 In Favor 0 Opposed 0 Abstained

School District Assessments

FCTS

Selectmen Moved:

To recommend a Fiscal Year 2018 FCTS Assessment of \$747,340, to be funded from Taxation.

Vote: 2 In Favor 0 Opposed 0 Abstained

Finance Committee Moved:

To recommend a Fiscal Year 2018 FCTS Assessment of \$747,340, to be funded from Taxation.

Vote: 5 In Favor 0 Opposed 0 Abstained

JOINT FINANCE COMMITTEE AND SELECTMEN'S MEETING MINUTES
DOWNSTAIRS MEETING ROOM
1 AVENUE A, TURNERS FALLS, MA
March 29, 2017

Page 4 of 9

GMRSD

Selectmen Moved:

To recommend a Fiscal Year 2018 GMRSD Assessment of \$9,356,560, with \$100,000 to be funded from Free Cash and \$9,256,560 to be funded from Taxation.

Vote: 2 In Favor 0 Opposed 0 Abstained

Finance Committee Moved:

To recommend a Fiscal Year 2018 GMRSD Assessment of \$9,356,560, with \$100,000 to be funded from Free Cash and \$9,256,560 to be funded from Taxation.

Vote: 5 In Favor 0 Opposed 0 Abstained

Operating Appropriations to Reserves

Town General Stabilization

Selectmen Moved:

To recommend appropriating \$52,395 to the Town's General Stabilization Fund, to be funded from Taxation.

Vote: 2 In Favor 0 Opposed 0 Abstained

Finance Committee Moved:

To recommend appropriating \$52,395 to the Town's General Stabilization Fund, to be funded from Taxation.

Vote: 5 In Favor 0 Opposed 0 Abstained

Town Capital Stabilization

Selectmen Moved:

To recommend appropriating \$34,930 to the Town's Capital Stabilization Fund, to be funded from Taxation.

Vote: 2 In Favor 0 Opposed 0 Abstained

Finance Committee Moved:

To recommend appropriating \$34,930 to the Town's Capital Stabilization Fund, to be funded from Taxation.

Vote: 5 In Favor 0 Opposed 0 Abstained

FCTS Stabilization

Selectmen Moved:

To recommend appropriating \$23,792 to the FCTS Stabilization Fund, to be funded from Taxation.

Vote: 2 In Favor 0 Opposed 0 Abstained

JOINT FINANCE COMMITTEE AND SELECTMEN'S MEETING MINUTES
DOWNSTAIRS MEETING ROOM
1 AVENUE A, TURNERS FALLS, MA
March 29, 2017

Page 5 of 9

Finance Committee Moved:

To recommend appropriating \$23,792 to the FCTS Stabilization Fund, to be funded from Taxation.

Vote: 5 In Favor 0 Opposed 0 Abstained

OPEB Trust Fund

Selectmen Moved:

To recommend appropriating \$50,000 to the OPEB Trust Fund, to be funded from Taxation.

Vote: 2 In Favor 0 Opposed 0 Abstained

Mr. Naughton opened a discussion on whether we can afford this when considering all of the other requests.

- Regarding the position that providing funding for OPEB is viewed favorably by bond rating agencies, Mr. Naughton noted that we have adopted financial policies, have put money into this trust fund and wonders if we really need to put any money into this fund or if we could reduce the amount to \$25,000.
- Mr. Naughton's preference to balance the budget is to buy the flail mower with through a lease/purchase agreement and only use general stabilization for the Sheffield electrical work. The cost difference between leasing the flail mower and an outright purchase is not known. Mr. Naughton is concerned about the total requests from the DPW and asks if, assuming we approve \$76,000 for a dump truck and \$75,000 for the discretionary account, we can afford another \$110,000 in one year for the DPW and suggested that this may be more than we need to do on an annual basis.
- Mr. Hanold noted that the DPW discretionary request is for \$100,000, but the CIC only recommended \$75,000. Mr. Naughton would prefer to approve the full request. Mr. Bowman reiterated that the CIC recommended \$75,000 based on the balance in the current year's appropriation at that time, which was prior to the reserve fund transfer request for the unexpected replacement of a vehicle, and noted that the CIC could revisit their recommendation next week.
- Mr. Naughton questioned if we fund the OPEB appropriation, then going forward is it more appropriate to fund all remaining requests or to maintain as much as possible of the stabilization balance.

Finance Committee Moved:

To recommend appropriating \$50,000 to the OPEB Trust Fund, to be funded from Taxation.

Vote: 5 In Favor 0 Opposed 0 Abstained

Annual Discretionary Accounts

DPW

Selectmen Moved:

To recommend appropriating \$100,000 for the DPW Discretionary Account, to be funded from Taxation.

Vote: 2 In Favor 0 Opposed 0 Abstained

JOINT FINANCE COMMITTEE AND SELECTMEN'S MEETING MINUTES
DOWNSTAIRS MEETING ROOM
1 AVENUE A, TURNERS FALLS, MA
March 29, 2017

Page 6 of 9

Finance Committee Moved:

To recommend appropriating \$100,000 for the DPW Discretionary Account, to be funded from Taxation.

Vote: 5 In Favor 0 Opposed 0 Abstained

Police

Selectmen Moved:

To recommend appropriating \$15,000 for the Police Discretionary Account, to be funded from Taxation.

Vote: 2 In Favor 0 Opposed 0 Abstained

Finance Committee Moved:

To recommend appropriating \$15,000 for the Police Discretionary Account, to be funded from Taxation.

Vote: 5 In Favor 0 Opposed 0 Abstained

Information Technology

Selectmen Moved:

To recommend appropriating \$15,000 for the IT Discretionary Account, to be funded from Taxation.

Vote: 2 In Favor 0 Opposed 0 Abstained

Finance Committee Moved:

To recommend appropriating \$15,000 for the IT Discretionary Account, to be funded from Taxation.

Vote: 5 In Favor 0 Opposed 0 Abstained

Non-Capital Articles

New Town Website

Selectmen Moved:

To recommend appropriating \$5,000 to purchase and install a new town website, to be funded from Taxation.

Vote: 2 In Favor 0 Opposed 0 Abstained

Finance Committee Moved:

To recommend appropriating \$5,000 to purchase and install a new town website, to be funded from Taxation.

Vote: 5 In Favor 0 Opposed 0 Abstained

JOINT FINANCE COMMITTEE AND SELECTMEN'S MEETING MINUTES
DOWNSTAIRS MEETING ROOM
1 AVENUE A, TURNERS FALLS, MA
March 29, 2017

Page 7 of 9

Carnegie Air Exchange

Selectmen Moved:

To recommend appropriating \$5,000 to purchase and install an air exchange system at the Carnegie Library, to be funded from Taxation.

Vote: 2 In Favor 0 Opposed 0 Abstained

Finance Committee Moved:

To recommend appropriating \$5,000 to purchase and install an air exchange system at the Carnegie Library, to be funded from Taxation.

Vote: 5 In Favor 0 Opposed 0 Abstained

Highland Park Fence

Selectmen Moved:

To recommend appropriating \$3,500 to purchase and install a fence at Highland Park, to be funded from Taxation.

Vote: 2 In Favor 0 Opposed 0 Abstained

Finance Committee Moved:

To recommend appropriating \$3,500 to purchase and install a fence at Highland Park, to be funded from Taxation.

Vote: 5 In Favor 0 Opposed 0 Abstained

Unity Park Walkways

Selectmen Moved:

To recommend appropriating \$15,000 to maintain Unity Park walkways, to be funded from Taxation.

Vote: 2 In Favor 0 Opposed 0 Abstained

Finance Committee Moved:

To recommend appropriating \$15,000 to maintain Unity Park walkways, to be funded from Taxation.

Vote: 5 In Favor 0 Opposed 0 Abstained

Public Records Software

Selectmen Moved:

To recommend appropriating \$4,500 to purchase and install software to manage public records requests, to be funded from Taxation.

Vote: 2 In Favor 0 Opposed 0 Abstained

Finance Committee Moved:

To recommend appropriating \$4,500 to purchase and install software to manage public records requests, to be funded from Taxation.

Vote: 5 In Favor 0 Opposed 0 Abstained

JOINT FINANCE COMMITTEE AND SELECTMEN'S MEETING MINUTES
DOWNSTAIRS MEETING ROOM
1 AVENUE A, TURNERS FALLS, MA
March 29, 2017

Page 8 of 9

Conservation Fund

This fund has a current balance of just over \$50,000. It was noted that there is no immediate need, so there no immediate harm in not appropriating this now. Given this, the Selectmen are unlikely to place this on the warrant.

Sheffield Water Heaters

Selectmen Moved:

To recommend appropriating \$15,000 to purchase and install water heaters at the Sheffield School, to be funded from Taxation.

Vote: 2 In Favor 0 Opposed 0 Abstained

Finance Committee Moved:

To recommend appropriating \$15,000 to purchase and install water heaters at the Sheffield School, to be funded from Taxation.

Vote: 5 In Favor 0 Opposed 0 Abstained

Millers Falls Community Building

- Mr. Widmer explained the intent of the article. Last fall, as part of a community building activity in Millers Falls, community members organized a stair cleanup, planted flowers, started a mural project, and organized a Veterans Day event including a field day event for kids and adults. Mr. Widmer believes there is good energy available to pull the community together, and would like to develop the existing Millers Falls Improvement Association and have three community meetings to create a community action plan, which could include art programs and other options.
- Mr. Naughton, as a resident of Millers Falls, is in favor of this. Other members remembered when Millers Falls was a vibrant community with a wealth of community activities.
- Mr. Hanold asked if it was this was something that would come under the Town's Parks and Recreation Department and if it was the beginning of an annual appropriation.
- Mr. Ellis said that in principle he really supports community building in Millers Falls, but noted that this does not seem like Parks & Recreation work. If the request had been made differently, it might have come under Planning and Community Development. Mr. Ellis noted that with the state no longer offering the Adams grants that were the primary support of the RiverCulture program, there may be a way to broaden RiverCulture's scope to include all of the villages. All villages might appreciate this type of support, and as a pilot it may have some real merit, but Mr. Ellis hesitates to suggest this would render the types of outcomes we want to plan on long term.
- Mr. Kuklewicz asked if it would be better for this project to come under the umbrella of a community organization.
- Mr. Menegoni wants to encourage a sense community and thinks this might be a good first step.
- Mr. Naughton supports the idea but not this particular proposal using tax money to fund a group like this. Mr. Naughton is more in favor of this coming from the Community Development Discretionary Fund that is overseen by the Selectmen.
- Ms. Pruitt asked about Montague Center's events on the common, and asked if they ever asked for tax money. Other than the January 1st Sawmill Run, which is sponsored by the Parks and Recreation

JOINT FINANCE COMMITTEE AND SELECTMEN'S MEETING MINUTES
DOWNSTAIRS MEETING ROOM
1 AVENUE A, TURNERS FALLS, MA
March 29, 2017

Page 9 of 9

Department through the Recreation Revolving Fund, there is no town involvement in any of the activities.

- Mr. Widmer noted that every penny is significant and that this money would go directly to the Millers Falls' community. The fact it hasn't been done before should not preclude it from happening and he is not expecting this to become an annual request.
- Mr. Naughton expressed concern that if this is approved, it's opening it up to anyone to say they want a community group and come up with the actual use after getting the money.

Selectmen Moved:

To recommend appropriating \$1,500 for community building activities in Millers Falls, to be funded from Taxation.

Vote: 2 In Favor 0 Opposed 0 Abstained

Finance Committee Moved:

To recommend appropriating \$1,500 for community building activities in Millers Falls, to be funded from Taxation.

Vote: 3 In Favor 1 Opposed 1 Abstained

Boutwell arrived at 8:04 PM.

Topics not anticipated within in the 48 hour posting requirements Mr. Hanold and Mr. Naughton will be at the Greenfield Savings Bank on Saturday for a community event that will allow the public a chance to meet them and ask questions about the budget and budget process. Since no other members expressed an interest in attending the event, it will not be posted as a Finance Committee meeting.

Next Meeting Dates:

- | | |
|----------------|--|
| April 5, 2017 | Final meeting with CIC - Discuss Carnegie roof, library building needs study and Dry Hill Road articles, vote on Special Article requests, review draft Finance Committee Report |
| April 12, 2017 | Revise Finance Committee Report and Policy Actions |

Meeting adjourned at 8:10 PM

List of Documents and Exhibits:

- March 15, 2017 Minutes
- Capital Improvements Committee report
- GMRSD revised assessment information
- Summary of requests and potential sources

Minutes Approved April 5, 2017

John Hanold, Finance Committee Chair

Richard Kuklewicz, Selectboard Chair