

JOINT FINANCE COMMITTEE, BOARD OF HEALTH AND SELECTBOARD  
MEETING MINUTES  
UPSTAIRS MEETING ROOM, 1 AVENUE A, TURNERS FALLS, MA  
WEDNESDAY, MARCH 6, 2019  
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The Chair opens the meeting

- Meeting was opened at 6:00 PM in the Upstairs Meeting Room
- **Finance Committee members present:** John Hanold, Richard Widmer, Jen Audley, Chris Menegoni, Fred Bowman, and Michael Naughton. Greg Garrison was absent.
- **Montague Selectboard members present:** Chris Boutwell and Michael Nelson. Richard Kuklewicz was absent.
- **Montague Board of Health members present:** Chris Boutwell, Al Cummings, and Michael Nelson
- **Others present:** Town Administrator Steve Ellis, Town Accountant Carolyn Olsen, Director of Health Gina McNeely, and Parks & Recreation Committee member Al Cummings, and Director of Parks and Recreation Jon Dobosz.
- The Chair announced that the meeting is being recorded by MCTV and asked if anyone else was recording the meeting. No one else was recording the meeting.

### Minutes

Finance Committee Moved:

To approve the minutes of February 27, 2019.

Vote:   6   In Favor                        0   Opposed                        0   Abstained

Selectboard Moved:

To approve the minutes of February 27, 2019.

Vote:   2   In Favor                        0   Opposed                        0   Abstained

### Board of Health Budget

Additional discussion:

- Mr. Nelson said the board had additional discussions, and their ultimate decision was to maintain current staffing for Fiscal Year 2020 so that the new Director is part of the decision about the town nurse. They will be submitting an amended budget.
- Mr. Nelson said that a perfect world they'd have a full time director, full time inspector, ½ time administrative assistant and 20 hour nurse.

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- Mr. Ellis asked if there would be a benefit to hiring school nurses during summer break. Ms. McNeely's experience is that school nurses like their down time in the summer.
- Mr. Nelson hopes to have a new conversation with the Finance Committee about a public health nurse after the new director has been on board for 6 months.

### **Parks and Recreation Budget**

See budget questions and answers at the end of the minutes.

Additional discussion:

- The additional \$3,000 to grounds and maintenance on an annual basis is expected to allow adequate renewal of playground surfaces at all parks.
- Mr. Widmer asked how Parks and Recreation be even more of an add-on for the schools programmatically, and specifically by sponsoring AAU basketball programs. Mr. Ellis noted that AAU is a distinctly different program and Mr. Dobosz said he doesn't know of any AAU teams sponsored by a Parks & Recreation department.
- Ms. Audley asked if Mr. Dobosz sees programs being offered by Parks & Recreation departments in other towns that he would like to offer. This summer Mr. Dobosz will have a program showing movies in the park in conjunction with the Friends of Sheffield and RiverCulture. Otherwise, considering the size of our community, there isn't much out there that we could do that we aren't already doing.
- In response to a question from Mr. Hanold, Mr. Dobosz noted that our park acreage is low in comparison to towns of similar size. There is also a new guideline to have a park within 10 minutes walking distance of all homes, but this would be very difficult to accomplish in Montague.
- Mr. Dobosz said that if the department had more resources, the first priority would be improvements to existing parks, especially those that are not eligible for CDBG grants. Adding more programming is more complicated due to balancing programs that generate net revenue with those that operate at a loss due to low demand but which act as a service to those small groups.
- Mr. Naughton asked about the cost of using GMRSD facilities, and suggested we can start a conversation with the district about possibility of school facility use by town departments or other public programs, noting that a Civic Leaders topic is the public image of the school system and ways to make public aware of what the schools have to offer.

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- Mr. Bowman asked what facilities would be beneficial. Some requests and suggestions include an outdoor pool dream, indoor recreation space for children and youth programs, and a town gym. Mr. Dobosz noted that during the summer when the offer a summer playground program based at Unity Park, they could really use more indoor space for days when it's raining or very hot. Mr. Dobosz said that of the 34 summer program operating days last year, 17 days had temperatures of 90 and above, and he will try to utilize more indoor school space this year.

### **Information Technology Budget**

See budget questions and answers at the end of the minutes.

Additional discussion:

- Mr. Naughton is concerned that the consultant budget is going up, when his time spent on the Citizen Serve implementation should be reduced next year. Mr. Ellis stated that there are other projects to be worked on, including discussing the strategy of whether to move from a system of using servers to a cloud based system.
- Mr. Ellis stated that he is very satisfied with the service and responsiveness of the consultant.
- Mr. Naughton asked, given the difficulty of the Citizen Serve implementation, why the consulting budget is still increasing. Mr. Naughton asked why we can't we live with \$36,000 because some time will be freed up. Ms. Olsen said that the consultant services are requested as a flat annual fee for a specific scope of services. Lowering the appropriation could result in receiving no proposals that meet the appropriation limit.
- Mr. Naughton asked if it would make more sense to the billing methodology of the legal budget, in which the town is billed for actual use.
- Mr. Ellis noted that when you create a fixed price contract, the consultant accepts the risk of the amount of time that will actually be needed. Mr. Ellis said we are getting solid value for the time and managing risk. Ms. Olsen pointed out that the consultant's extrapolated hourly rate is lower than any of the hourly rates received in other proposals.
- Mr. Naughton said he was satisfied that the consultant is providing good service to the town.
- Ms. Audley added that this is a very modest budget and the feedback is that what we have is working.

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**Adjusted Final Affordable Assessment**

- After providing last week's affordable assessment to the GMRSD, the district notified Ms. Olsen that the debt figure used has been revised with an increase of \$4,829. This increases the affordable assessment by the same amount, increasing last week's \$10,225,377 to \$10,230,206.

Finance Committee Moved:

To recommend a revised GMRSD Affordable Assessment of \$10,230,206 for Fiscal Year 2020.

Vote:   6   In Favor                        0   Opposed                        0   Abstained

Selectboard Moved:

To recommend a revised GMRSD Affordable Assessment of \$10,230,206 for Fiscal Year 2020.

Vote:   2   In Favor                        0   Opposed                        0   Abstained

**Planning Requests –**

Suggestions for inclusion in the report:

- First year of part time cultural coordinator, having town employee working for all villages has been positive – obtaining grants, programs, more visible cultural effects and impact on economy.
- Planning department brings in a lot of grant money for programs like sidewalk improvements.
- Planning intern works on planning projects that there is otherwise insufficient capacity to complete.

**FCTS Assessment**

Mr. Widmer was impressed with the amount budgeted for community building programs.

Suggestions for inclusion in the report:

- There was another dramatic enrollment increase from Montague, which increased the FY20 assessment, and Montague's total enrollment in the FCTS could increase by as

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many as 24 students for Fiscal Year 2021, which will result in an even more significant assessment increase.

- Having the Tech school in town draws a lot of local students which supports to local labor market but has the unfortunate effect of costing a lot of money. The existing trade labor pool is aging and needs new blood, and people coming out of tech school sometimes can get better paying jobs than college graduates. There is a great demand for tech school graduates.
- Review of programs lead to creation of new veterinary tech program.
- Changes in the Chapter 70 formula provide more aid for districts that have higher levels of high need students. As a result of this change, the FCTS will have increased chapter 70 revenue in Fiscal Year 2020.
- Increases in Montague's enrollment include both students that transfer in from the GMRSD and the "recapture" of students that were enrolled in other schools. While this reduces the GMRSD's tuition payments and the town's GMRSD assessment, the expense is reallocated to the town in increased assessments to the FCTS.
- FCTS has collaborated with shared teachers and has just done a combined bus contract with several local school districts.
- Mr. Ellis suggested spending more time on explanations of persuasive things than on obligations.

**The Selectboard and Board of Health adjourned at 7:47 PM.**

**Draft Finance Committee Report to Town Meeting Format Options**

Ms. Audley presented two options for showing discussion and recommendations in the Finance Committee Report to Town Meeting. The first option is based on the most recent Finance Committee Report to Town Meeting. Ms. Audley noted that last year town meeting members were provided with both the Finance Committee report, which included the motions and recommendations, and background information (some of which referred to the report)The second option incorporates most of the specific information below each motion so that all of the information is in one place.

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- Mr. Naughton suggested having no more than a page for each article. If more information is needed we can note that more detail is located elsewhere.
- The consensus was to go with the second option, noting it makes it a combined voice of the Selectboard and Finance Committee.
- Mr. Naughton liked the sample that showed boxes to right of the town budget line items with notes in boxes. Ms. Audley suggested using footnote numbers at bottom of each page for specific notes.
- Mr. Naughton would like a column for the % increase for each budget line and also put in a plug for at least one pie chart, possibly in the main report.
- Ms. Audley asked for feedback on the specific information provided in the sample, and there was agreement to try to pare it down even further.
- Mr. Hanold suggested eliminating department numbers if we need the space. Ms. Audley noted that the department numbers may be helpful for those people looking for more details on the website.
- Mr. Hanold offered to write something about the financial policies, and Ms. Audley suggested including this with the special articles transferring money to various reserves.
- Ms. Audley will send out a revised partial draft for discussion next week, and asked that members look over the report from last year and think about what we want to keep, what might get moved, and what to add.

**Topics not anticipated within in the 48 hour posting requirements – none**

**Next Meeting Date:** – March 13<sup>th</sup> to make preliminary budget recommendations, review what to include in the Finance Committee Report regarding the Planning requests and FCTS, and review draft report to town meeting.

**Meeting adjourned at 8:25 PM**

**List of Documents and Exhibits:**

- Minutes of February 27, 2016
- Questions and Answers: Parks & Recreation and Information Technology

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**630-PARKS & RECREATION**

1. Do you feel that your requested budget for 5242 Facilities/Grounds R&M will be adequate? Narrative does not indicate clearly if the Facilities line will be adequate in FY2020. How do you feel about this? It sounds as if unanticipated repairs and maintenance are a regular part of your department's operations -- that's understandable given the nature of your work. Are you genuinely satisfied with the current system for managing unexpected expenses? Would you be able to do more or do better if your annual budget included more funding for emergency repairs and maintenance?

The Parks & Recreation Commission met on Thursday, January 24, and discussed the questions noted. We looked at these questions and interpreted them as asking generally the same thing. Within the next year, the Parks & Recreation Department is looking at a number of initiatives within the Facilities & Grounds realm. These items will include, but are not limited to the following;

1. Unity Park - replenish wood chips in playground, installing new infield clay on ballfields, establish water hook-up near Field #2, installation of additional security cameras, replacement of volleyball net, possible development of additional pollinator habitat
2. Highland Park (Millers Falls) - replenish wood chips, possible development of additional pollinator habitat, re-configure ballfield design with installation of new infield clay on ballfield
3. Montague Center Park - replenish wood chips, possible development of additional pollinator habitat, re-configure ballfield design with installation of new infield clay on ballfield
4. Rutter's Park - replenish wood chips

Please note that some of these are annual maintenance items (wood chips), and others are anticipated as being either one-time or periodical expenditures that will occur every few years. Obviously, unanticipated expenses are a "known-unknown". Parks & Recreation does its best to cover costs through its Revolving Fund when the Facilities & Grounds line-item has been exhausted. It would be exceptionally challenging for the Revolving Fund to adequately support the items noted above. Therefore, upon further reflection, we request an additional \$3,000 in our Facilities & Grounds R&M line-item in our operating budget for FY2020.

2. Our committee is wondering about opportunities for the town to collaborate more closely with GMRSD. Your department is already doing this in many ways -- through facilities use, co-sponsored events, etc. What would Parks & Rec need in order to take its efforts to a higher level? What opportunities or challenges do you see?

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We are not only partnering with GMRSD on the Warrior Dash Adventure Race, and the Summer Lunch Program, but we're also in the planning stages of developing a "Movies in the Park" series during the summer months with the Friends of Sheffield. When it comes to programming, we seem to be working well with the school district. We're not sure what the committee means by "higher level", so we're curious with having this discussion.

One challenge that some members of the commission have expressed as being a concern is with regards to the cost of using GMRSD facilities. We are thankful that we receive a pro-rated fee for using facilities, but there are some programs that are run on school district properties that have difficulty breaking-even (primarily due to the cost of using such facilities).

We appreciate the opportunity the Finance Committee has given us to more deeply scrutinize our budgetary needs, and look forward to continued dialogue in regards to our request.



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**155-INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY**

1. If the IT Consultant bids on his contract with the town, shouldn't any desired increased be handled through that process?

The quote process, for a contract effective on July 1, is not started until late spring. I budget an increase in anticipation of likely responses.

2. How has the implementation of CitizenServe affected the use of the IT Consultant's time in FY19? How much of his time is devoted to this? How is this expected to change in FY20?

From 3/15/18 to 1/5/19 (42 weeks), approximately 127 (out of 464) hours were spent on CitizenServe issues. There will still be notable need for consultant's time next year to complete BOH, unsure how much can be done during short-staff and transition in BOH.

3. Same questions for the Tax Collector software

Expecting 2-3 hours a week until software up and running, not expecting time for next year.

4. Who are the CitizenServe licenses assigned to?

Licenses are currently assigned to the Town Administrator, Director of Health, Health Inspector, Health Department Administrative Assistant, Director of Assessing, Building Inspector, Building Department Administrative Assistant, Electrical Inspector, Gas & Plumbing Inspector, Director of Planning, and Planning Administrative Assistant. We are currently assessing the need for these licenses, and changes may be made.

5. 5346 Server Anti-Virus - why isn't this in the Discretionary Account?

Because it's the kind of known, plannable expense that has been requested to be in departmental budgets.

6. Why does this budget need a discretionary account? Why couldn't the town's needs be satisfactorily handled by adding accounts for equipment purchases, equipment repair & maintenance, etc. to the regular budget?

As stated before, and as discussed at multiple meetings, including meetings this past summer that generated agreement to keep the discretionary accounts, I request a discretionary account for flexibility and ease in budgeting. Given the town's generally tight budget, it would be difficult to suddenly request a significant increase because it's time for a new \$10K main server. While I do my best to anticipate and plan needs (as shown in the inventory file I gave you), sometimes equipment past its warranty fails, new needs arise (a computer for the Buildings Maintenance crew to allow for e-mails from town departments), or things that are planned become more complicated and expensive than anticipated. Other times we decide that equipment is working well, and doesn't need to be replaced yet. When savings occur, funds remain available for future years, and if we have a few good years, as happened recently, I revise the annual request downward to allow funds to be used for other purposes.

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7. Where are things like software license fees for MS Office budgeted?

The Office licenses were charged to the discretionary account due to the total cost (over \$5K)

8. What sorts of redundancy are in place? (If the IT Consultant were hit by a bus, is there specialized knowledge that only he has, or is it shared with other people?)

There isn't any redundancy. A prior employee of the consultant is available in emergencies when the consultant is unavailable.

9. Why is the IT Consulting contract bid as a lump sum, and not, say, as an hourly rate (with perhaps a guaranteed block of hours to be purchased, with additional hours at the same or a different rate)?

Because it's easier to budget this way.

10. Has the scope of work expected from Moody been clarified, and is it consistent with the estimate?

I'm not aware of any lack of clarity, and the work performed has been consistent with the scope of work in the contract.

11. What is the completion status of CirizenServe? Are we operational?

The building inspector's office is operational, BOH is in process and nearing fully operational status. Work still needs to be done to backfill system information and the timing of this is affected by staffing issues in the Board of Health.