

ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING

Wednesday, January 10, 2018

7:00 PM

Houghton Building – 697 Main Street

Members present: Brad Cote, Connie Benjamin, Ann Hurd, Ted Kirchner, Joe Myerson and Brian Boyle

Members absent: None

Call to order: Chairman Cote called the meeting to order at 7:01 PM. The entire meeting can be viewed by going to:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WnBTsHKksFc&list=PLu94OVLkDQ_LWB3HSPkculG6ztnCxFowO&index=1

Agenda Item #1: Town Clerk budgets (161, 162, 163)

- Town Clerk Pam Powell presented the following budgets:
- Town Clerk (161)
 - The Salary/Wages portion of this budget is increasing slightly due to a step increase and COLA adjustments.
 - The Purchase of Services line is for the town's mandatory P.O. Box. Pam has been told by the post office that the rates will go up, so she increased the budget from \$150 to \$175.
 - Software Support pays for the annual updating of the town's online Code after a town meeting. This line is being level-funded at \$1,600.
 - Web Services pays for the annual maintenance of the online Code, and it is also being level-funded at \$1,200.
 - Supplies and Dues are level-funded at \$350 and \$150, respectively.
 - Because she anticipates turning back some of her Meetings budget, Pam agreed to reduce that line from \$3,200 to \$3,000.
 - **MOTION:** Connie Benjamin moved to approve the Town Clerk budget as modified during the meeting, for a total of \$103,202; seconded by Joe Myerson. **VOTING IN FAVOR:** Brad Cote, Connie Benjamin, Ann Hurd, Ted Kirchner, Joe Myerson, and Brian Boyle. **VOTED AND PASSED. UNANIMOUS (6-0).**
- Elections (162)
 - Pam explained that this budget fluctuates based on the number and magnitude of elections in a given year. In addition, for FY19, Pam is proposing to pay the poll workers an additional \$2 per hour, raising the Wages line from \$2,277 to \$3315. There will be an offset for that increase because the town is given a wage grant for state elections.
 - Purchase of Services is used to pay for the coding of the voting machines and the printing of ballots. That is being reduced from \$4,600 to \$3,825.

- Supplies will decrease from \$550 to \$400 because we are having fewer elections in 2018.
- **MOTION:** Brian Boyle moved to approve the Elections budget as submitted, for a total of \$7,540; seconded by Connie Benjamin. **VOTING IN FAVOR:** Brad Cote, Connie Benjamin, Ann Hurd, Ted Kirchner, Joe Myerson, and Brian Boyle. **VOTED AND PASSED. UNANIMOUS (6-0).**
- Street Listings/Registrars (163)
 - According to a formula in the M.G.L., the Wages line increases from \$150 to \$200 because the town now has 4,000 registered voters.
 - Purchases of Services is for the printing, collating, and mailing of the annual census. This is level-funded at \$1,600. Pam said that we are required to mail the census.
 - Supplies is also being level-funded at \$355.
 - **MOTION:** Connie Benjamin moved to approve the Street Listings/Registrars budget as submitted, for a total of \$2,155; seconded by Joe Myerson. **VOTING IN FAVOR:** Brad Cote, Connie Benjamin, Ann Hurd, Ted Kirchner, Joe Myerson, and Brian Boyle. **VOTED AND PASSED. UNANIMOUS (6-0).**

Agenda Item #2: Animal Control budget (292)

- Animal Control Officer Susan Latham presented the Animal Control budget.
 - The Wages portion of this budget is increasing slightly due to COLA adjustments, from \$18,237 to \$18,602.
 - Ms. Latham explained that the Animal Control Officer deals with a wide range of animals and situations, ranging from missing dogs, to snakes, to injured hawks. The services are available on-call 24/7, every day of the year.
 - Connie noted that the historical run rate for the Purchase of Services line has been less than \$300. Ms. Latham agreed to reduce that line from \$700 to \$300.
 - **MOTION:** Connie Benjamin moved to approve the Animal Control budget as modified during the meeting, for a total of \$20,402; seconded by Ted Kirchner. **VOTING IN FAVOR:** Brad Cote, Connie Benjamin, Ann Hurd, Ted Kirchner, Joe Myerson, and Brian Boyle. **VOTED AND PASSED. UNANIMOUS (6-0).**

Agenda Item #3: Historical Commission budget (691)

- Martha Remington and Alice Coggeshall presented the Historical Commission budget.
 - Purchase of Services (\$3,400) is used for cemetery conservators and a preservation consultant.
 - Supplies (\$2,500) is used to fund supply purchases that arise from the work being done by the conservators. Martha noted that Purchase of Services and Supplies basically go hand-in-hand.
 - In terms of potential capital-item requests, Martha mentioned that the town is very cramped for space. We could use extra file cabinets, or even potentially a vault for the town hall. Chairman Cote asked the Historical

Commission to give some thought to their 5-year capital needs so that the town can start to plan for them.

- **MOTION:** Connie Benjamin moved to approve the Historical Commission budget as submitted, for a total of \$6,250; seconded by Ann Hurd. **VOTING IN FAVOR:** Brad Cote, Connie Benjamin, Ann Hurd, Ted Kirchner, Joe Myerson, and Brian Boyle. **VOTED AND PASSED. UNANIMOUS (6-0).**

Agenda Item #4: Agricultural Commission budget (179)

- Teresa Sauer and Jan Johnson presented the Agricultural Commission's budget.
- This budget is being level-funded at \$1,746. It includes the following components:
 - \$500 to support the Bolton Fair. One of the commission's student members is going to be involved in this effort.
 - \$200 for a class at Florence Sawyer School that is part of the extended-day program.
 - \$100 for Central MA Grown, which is an agricultural co-op membership.
 - \$200 for library books, as part of an effort to educate more people about agriculture.
 - \$220 for reprinting agriculture-related educational brochures.
 - \$526 for farm tours. This is a new concept, but the idea is to work with local farmers to identify specific seasonal dates when people could tour their farms. Teresa Sauer said that she would reach out to the Economic Development Committee and Parks & Recreation to let them know about this idea.
- **MOTION:** Connie Benjamin moved to approve the Agricultural Commission budget as submitted, for a total of \$1,746; seconded by Joe Myerson. **VOTING IN FAVOR:** Brad Cote, Connie Benjamin, Ann Hurd, Ted Kirchner, Joe Myerson, and Brian Boyle. **VOTED AND PASSED. UNANIMOUS (6-0).**

Agenda Item #5: Advisory Committee business

- The committee briefly discussed and edited the draft minutes for our 12/12/17 and 1/2/18 meetings.
 - **MOTION:** Joe Myerson moved to approve the December 12, 2017 minutes; seconded by Ted Kirchner. **VOTING IN FAVOR:** Brad Cote, Ted Kirchner, Joe Myerson, and Brian Boyle. **VOTED AND PASSED. UNANIMOUS (4-0; two abstentions).**
 - **MOTION:** Connie Benjamin moved to approve the January 2, 2018 minutes; seconded by Ted Kirchner. **VOTING IN FAVOR:** Brad Cote, Connie Benjamin, Ann Hurd, Ted Kirchner, Joe Myerson, and Brian Boyle. **VOTED AND PASSED. UNANIMOUS (6-0).**
- The committee also discussed the schedule for the next several weeks. Among other things, we would have a session regarding potential revenue sources.
 - Ninotchka mentioned that in order for an article to appear on the warrant, it would need to be submitted to the Selectmen by February 8, 2018. If we want to propose an article regarding the meals tax, we would need to do that before February 8th.

- The committee would also like to have a session regarding the town's personnel & salary administration policies. Because Donna Madden is the expert in this area, we can address that topic when she presents the Human Resources budget. Ted requested that we receive copies of written materials in advance.
- The committee would also like to have a session to re-visit the draft Capital Planning Policy that would set time constraints regarding the spending of funds approved at annual town meetings.
 - According to the draft policy, all spending articles should be (a) initiated within 1 fiscal year of approval at town meeting, and (b) completed within 3 fiscal years.
- Following up on our prior discussion of the Snow & Ice budget, Ted Kirchner presented a statistical analysis. He proposed that our objective for Snow & Ice should be to spend exactly (or more than) what we budget, so that we don't collect more taxes than necessary in a given year. The average actual Snow & Ice expense over the past 14 years is \$337,000. Assuming a normal distribution, if we set our budget at \$180,000 (which is where it is set now), we would spend less than that amount only 10-11% percent of the time. Ted noted that he does not see a compelling reason to budget above that.
 - Ninotchka pointed out that we currently have a line in the budget for "Potential Snow & Ice Deficit to be raised," which is set at \$100,000 each year.
- The committee also briefly raised questions regarding the town's Conservation Fund, which currently has about \$30,000 in it. We agreed that we would like to understand what guidelines, if any, govern the use of that fund.

Adjourn: **MOTION:** Connie Benjamin moved to adjourn at 8:34 PM; seconded by Ted Kirchner. **VOTING IN FAVOR:** Brad Cote, Connie Benjamin, Ann Hurd, Ted Kirchner, Joe Myerson, and Brian Boyle. **VOTED AND PASSED. UNANIMOUS (6-0).**

Documents Referenced

Departments' FY19 budget submissions

Approved by the Advisory Committee