

January 18, 2017

Meeting of the Finance Committee held on Wednesday, January 18, 2017 beginning at 6:04 p.m. in Conference Room #1 in the Town Hall.

Members present: Heidi Fogg, Acting Chair, Joan Cavallo, Susanne Boyea, Raymond Yando, Richard Moskal, Nelson Duarte and Beverly Tokarz

Members excused: Maureen Downing and Eric Gregoire

First Order of Business: The Pledge of Allegiance

At this time the committee met with Town Administrator, Ms. Ellie Villano to discuss a Reserve Fund Transfer request.

At the beginning of the fiscal year, Mr. Jim Young retired. A consulting firm needed to be hired in order to close the books while searching for a new accountant. At the time Ms. Villano had mentioned to the committee that she would be asking for money once the Town Accountant was hired because there would be a lap in the amount of money in that account. She is requesting \$29,500 to be added to the Town Accountant's salary line item. That will cover the retirement payout, the money to the CPA firm that they paid and about \$1,500 in training. She attached the spread sheet outlining the line items and charges. The CPA firm is finished. The books have been closed and everything has been cleaned up. They also did some best practices training with the new accountant. Ms. Collins is doing very well. She is very numbers oriented, deadline oriented, very friendly and helpful. She has met with each of the department heads as they have requested. With the cleanup of the budgets, everything is where it needs to be. Ms. Villano has also received numerous compliments from many people up to and including the school superintendent on Ms. Collins. She is moving as fast as she can to get her certification. Schedule A which is supposed to be filed by the end of November, sometime Mr. Young would file by the end of March which did not sit well with the State or the Selectmen. Ms. Collins filed the Schedule A before the due date. Her new relationship with the Assessors caused one of the earliest tax rate settings. She's very diligent. Ms. Fogg said that will probably be reflected when the committee meets with department heads knowing that they have a better idea and understanding of their budget. Ms. Collins also found money in the Jail Mitigation account from several years ago that can be used towards a capital project.

The \$29,500 will bring the accountants account back to where she needs to be to complete her salary and her training through the end of this fiscal year. Mr. Moskal asked how much money does Finance have? Ms. Tokarz informed the committee that the account was set at \$100,000. The Fire Chief requested \$ 4,500 and now with the \$29,500, the balance will be \$66,000.

Moved by Ms. Boyea, seconded by Ms. Cavallo to approve the Reserve Fund Transfer in the amount of \$29,500. (The said amount will be added to the Town Accountants salary line item)

Vote: 7-0 in favor

Ms. Villano informed the committee that the Budget sub-committee will submit their parameter request to the Board of Selectmen at their February 7th meeting. The health insurance numbers are not yet available. The Selectmen are trying to change the employee health insurance rates



which are now 75% Town, 25% employees over a three year period. There will also be design changes. The sub-committee is going flat against last year's budget. Whatever the payroll number is, it is and nothing to expenses unless justified. Mr. Moskal asked how much money is in the Stabilization Fund. Ms. Villano answered either 2.9 or 3.1 million

Moved by Mr. Yando, seconded by Ms. Cavallo to approve and sign the Finance Committee Minutes of November 16, 2016.

Vote: 6-0-1 in favor. Ms. Bovea abstained

The committee signed the secretary's salary worksheet

The Board of Appeals reorganized on November 10, 2016 as follows: Anthony Jarvis, Chairman, Paul Zielinski, Vice Chairman, Kathleen Bernardo, Manny Lopes, Joseph Wlodyka, members and Paul Kessler and Alan Aubin, alternate members.

At this time Mr. Moskal updated the committee on the Senior Center Building Committee. He didn't attend the first meeting which discussed a 2 ½ year study that was done and paid for by the Friends of the Senior Center at a cost of \$32,000 for the assessment and suggested floor plan at an estimated cost of a new Center at 10 million dollars including the land. Ms. Fogg attended that meeting. Mr. Moskal was voted chairman of the new committee. He feels that the cost should be between 8-12 million. The committee has worked with the Planning Board to locate Town owned space instead of spending \$4-500,000 to get a 4.5 point acre of land. The building committee said that there was no suitable space. There is space but it needs to be adjusted, there is a lot of space being wasted. There are two favorable sites and possibly a third site. They are in the process of executing a RFP which they plan to release by February 1st. for the land. The first thing that needs to be done is find the land and secure it. They need funding but stipulate that if the Town does not vote for the Center the money that was put down for the land will go back to the Town. There have been four centers built within the last two years. They are Agawam, Westfield, Chicopee and Holyoke. The committee will visit them to get some ideas on what is really needed. Their looking to build a Center with 20,000 sq. ft. Mr. Moskal is hoping that when they get into the money issue that the committee and the Board of Selectmen will get a tour of the present facility. They also have to put together a marketing approach to get the voter approval.

Ms. Fogg said that the project is a bit complicated because of the way that it came about. The school came in front of the precinct members asking for money for the study. Nobody knew that the seniors were working towards a new facility and a study. The other obstacle that may come about is that if there is a sense that the Town's going to move forward with the building of a new school, there may be a question about the school that becomes vacant. Mr. Moskal addressed the issue with his committee. That school would have to be totally renovated or destroyed to make it functional for a Senior Center. The electrical, heating etc. has to match the design. It would be better to destroy it and take the space. The school is four or five years out, the police department is very upset about adding more traffic to that area. Ms. Cavallo mentioned the fact that when the first presentation was made to the Finance Committee by the Senior's, their aim was to get the

question on the March, 2017. There was meeting last evening with the Selectmen and Town Counsel. There are several ways that the question can be placed on the ballot. It can be placed on the ballot without a dollar amount or have an amount. They are not ready to say how much it will cost. Mr. Moskal doesn't want to rush things. He wants to do it right the first time and make it pass. Ms. Boyea said that support is needed but facts are needed to gain the support. There was a study done where there are more seniors than younger individuals in Town. The committee meets every week. Mr. Moskal would like to give the Finance Committee an update at every meeting.

Ms. Boyea informed the committee that she and Ms. Downing attended the School Committee's Budget Meeting. Each building Principal, Special Ed Director, IT person, Grounds and Maintenance person gave their budget and what they needed, justifying all of their causes. Dr. Gazda took in the information and will present their budgets at a School Committee Meeting, where changes will be made if needed. They are waiting for the Selectmen to give their parameters. Many people wanted new positions, intervention for the lower grades and there are new programs from the State that need to be implemented needing operating expenses not provided by the State. The meeting was short; she will be notified when the next meeting is scheduled.

Moved by Ms. Boyea, seconded by Ms. Cavallo to adjourn the Finance Committee Meeting at 6:55 p.m.

Vote: 7-0 in favor

The image shows five handwritten signatures stacked vertically. From top to bottom, they are: Sue Boyea, Heidi Fogel, Joan Cavallo, Nelson Duarte, and Moskal. Each signature is written in black ink on a white background.

Tudlow Finance Committee