



TOWN OF BERKLEY FINANCE COMMITTEE

Meeting minutes of Monday, February 21, 2023

FINANCE COMMITTEE MEETING FOR FEBRUARY 21, 2023 AT 6:00PM

IN ATTENDANCE: CHAIRMAN JOE FREITAS, VICE CHAIR MATT CHABOT, MICHEL HAMILTON AND TABITHA MCCROHAN

The meeting was called to order at 6:00 pm by chairperson Joe Freitas opening the meeting was followed by chairperson introduction of the New Town Administration Mark Stankiewicz.

The Finance Committee will continue its efforts to ensure discipline, fairness, and transparency in the budget process by seeking budgetary input from all concerned. Inviting all departments and supervisors to a final public hearing on the FINCOM FY24 budget recommendation.

Chairperson Joe Freitas expressed the turnaround of personnel within the departments and explained that we are going to examine wages as a "dollar" amount and not as a percentage. Our recommendations will meet the contractual requirements. Michele Hamilton mentioned that the state is really pushing regionalization for the smaller communities for all departments. Town Administrator Mark Stankiewicz explained the negative side of regionalization.

The purpose of this meeting is to discuss the Fiscal Year 2024 Proposed Budget.

The first department to present its fiscal year 2024 budget was the Assessors Department, by the Assessor Gary Hoitt, and the Assessor's Board members, George Moitoza and Jeannie Rosso.

Mr. Hoitt walked through the budget items and gave a brief description of them and why they were changed. MMA Premium for assessor's George and Mark of \$800, a new line item; software expense increase by \$9,155.00. This increase includes the \$3,700 requested for Near Map software.

Salary increases of a total of \$859 met the contractual requirements of 2%. This increase did not include salaries line-item request for a clerical at \$8,710. and salaries for temporary hours of \$871 (a just in case situation), for a total of \$9,581.

The following line items were level funded for fiscal year 2024

- Expenses @ \$10,835
- Recertifications @ \$5,000
- Training and Testing @ \$3,000
- List and serve @ \$6,000
- Mapping @ \$6,680

In addition to the above a line-item of \$5,000 for a new computer for requested clerical. The total budget for the Assessor's came in at an estimated increase of \$21,694. However, the \$5,000 has been temporarily removed from the budget line-items and put through as a Capital improvement expense. Giving us a new budget increase of \$16,694.

Chairperson Joe Freitas asked the Assessors for a quick review of the revenue that may be coming in towards the 2024 budget. George provided us with a rough estimate on the Solar Fields at \$158,970 and we are also looking at the Marijuana business may be coming online and may generate some revenue. The appraisers also shared with the Committee that they sent about 8 000 motor vehicle bills out, an undetermined amount of money coming in. They also shared that the state is looking into increasing the tax rate vehicles by 8-10% more for the coming year. A necessary step to catch up with inflation.

In conclusion, Chairperson Joe Freitas requested clarification for the first Motor Vehicle for 2023 and what they may be looking for an approximate abatement expected. Also, clarification of the actual number of properties inspected in 2022.

Next on our agenda was the Town Clerk, Heather Almy, who is also responsible for Elections and Registrations.

- The first discussion was related to the Town Clerk department. Salaries increase of \$1,556 which meets the contractual obligations. Postage line items were increased by \$150 due to increased prices and more mail coming out of the department. The census line-item was increased by \$100 and other charges line-item was increased by \$300.

The following line items were level funded for fiscal year 2024.

- Dues, Subscription/Membership @\$550.00
- Salaries Consultant @ 0.
- Additional Equipment @ \$1,000.
- Certification Bonus @ 0.

The new budget request came in at \$63,582. An increase of \$2,642. From the previous year 2023 budget. The bulk of the increases come from the contractual changes.

Elections and Registration request is \$5,000 less than the 2023 budget because there are only local and no state or federal elections for budget time.

The following line items were level funded at zero amount for fiscal year 2024.

- R&M equipment.
- Postage.
- Police Detail.
- Travel.
- Additional Equipment.

There was a clarification on the new copier. The copier was bought and not rented, and it comes with toner and services.

It has come to the Finance Committee that the Town Clerk is not paid for the details of setting up and supplying for elections. Because of the details and time that is involved the Finance Committee is looking into the possibility of recommending a stipend. The actual monies set aside for salaries are for the temporary employees who are called in, and do not include the Town Clerk.

A brief discussion took place as far as the reserve funds and it was decided to keep the \$25,000 and not take any funds out at this time.

A brief discussion took place as far as the Finance Committee Facebook page and only members of the committee can put information on the page.

Recently the Town of Berkley Accountant has resigned her position and currently the assistant accountant has been filling in of the position.

A motion was made by Michele Hamilton to approve the reimbursement of \$225 and seconded by Matt Chabot. A verbal roll call was taken, and the committee unanimously approved the reimbursement.

Invitation to present their budgets at this evening's meeting included the Planning Board, Board of Health and the Veterans Agent. They did not attend, and no information was available for discussion at this meeting.

Chairperson, Joe Freitas called for a motion to adjourn. The motion was made by Tabitha McCrohan seconded by Matt Chabot. A verbal roll call was taken, and the committee unanimously approved the motion to adjourn at 8:00pm.

Joe Freitas - 2.27.2023

[Signature]

02/27/2023

Michele Hamilton
2/27/2023