

## **TOWN OF BERKEY FINANCE COMMITTEE**

### **MINUTES OF MAY 12, 2020**

#### **Meeting May 12, 2020**

**Called to order @ 6:00 pm**

**Due to the Covid 19 pandemic regulations, we are utilizing Zoom for a Virtual Meeting, and in accordance to the rules must do verbal roll call of members.**

**In attendance by roll call:** Nancy Cajoli, Melinda Paine-Dupont, Michele Hamilton, Joe Freitas.

Chairmen Joe Freitas introduced Town Administrator, Heather Martin-Sterling as a participant in this evenings meeting.

#### **Review and approve minutes of February 24<sup>th</sup>, 2020.**

Motion was made and seconded to approve the minutes of February 24, 2020 as presented. Roll call vote for approval done and unanimously voted to accept the minutes by the committee. (4-0)

#### **Fire Department**

Chief Scott A. Fournier of the Berkley Fire Department submitted a letter indicating the three quotes requested by the Finance Committee for the replacement of the well located at the Berkley Fire Station #2 located at

|                        |                              |             |
|------------------------|------------------------------|-------------|
| Hard Well Drilling     | 43 Padelford Street, Berkley | \$16,657.16 |
| Lucas Pump             | 8 Eldon Street, Middleboro   | \$17,000.00 |
| American Well and Pump | 550 State Road, Dartmouth    | \$17,617.56 |

During the process of getting quotes, Chief Fournier, discovered that additional cost may be needed for additional electrical work and the possibility for a hot water heater.

Chief Fournier has put in a request for \$20,000, \$16,657.00 to cover the cost of the quote from Hard Well Drilling and \$3,343 as a contingency for any additional work that may be necessary.

Chairman Joe Freitas asked administrator Heather Martin-Sterling, "in the evening that all funds are not used or needed for the project, what would happen to the remaining funds"? Heather indicated that any additional funds remaining would be returned as free cash.

After discussion, Chairman Joe Freitas requested a motion be made to authorize the requested of \$20,000.00 for the replacement of the well located at Berkley Fire Station from the Berkley reserve funds. A motion was made and seconded to authorize the request and per Virtual Regulations, a verbal roll call was made. The committee unanimously approved the motion.

Chairman Joe Freitas indicated that the remaining balance in the reserve fund account is reduced to \$30,000.00.

### **Berkley School K-8**

Chairman Joe Freitas indicated he had received a letter from Superintendent Thomas Lynch, requesting \$36,000.00 towards the replacement of the generator.

At a previous meeting, the initial requested was \$70,000.00. At that time Superintendent Mr. Lynch was advised that the funds were not available and if we were to approve this requested the town would have no emergency funds available.

The committee voiced several opinions regarding this issue, all legitimate concerns, including the understanding for the need of the generator. However, with the financial state were in because of the pandemic, we discussed the impact this request could have at this time on the town.

Chairman Joe Freitas mentions the possibility of going back to Mr. Lynch and seeing if they might have the funds to fund the entire project.

While we were having a discussion regarding the situation, Administrator Heather Martin-Sterling had reached out to Superintendent Thomas Lynch and explained the committee's dilemma and asked if the school budget could find the necessary funds needed to fund the project. Superintendent Thomas Lynch said they could find the funds to replace each the generator. This information was provided to the committee from Administrator Heather Martin-Sterling.

In results to the Generator for School, a motion was made to **not** approve the request for Emergency Funds. Per Virtual rules, a verbal roll call was done, and the committee voted unanimously to not approve the request. (4-0)

### **Fiscal Year 2021 Budget.**

Chairman Joe Freitas requested the committee to review the front page of the budget and Joe pointed out the current figures are estimates. Notice the reduction of 2020 levy, chapter 70 funding, and state local aid. Mr. Freitas also pointed out that the School Choice Sending of \$47,493 that was to be transferred to the school budget is still under Back charges.

The budget input by department shows level funding. Due to the pandemic, there is a possibility of a 5% reduction in funding. This may not necessarily take place. This is something that we will not know until later in the year.

Because the finance committee members received the report, Mr. Freitas is requesting that we review the budget and see if we have any concerns or questions. Also, Mr. Freitas is recommending that the committee consider a 6-month budget. Basically, carrying over fiscal year 2020 budget and work off that until such time the committee has more solid figures to work with.

### **Library.**

The finance committee received a letter and a break down of the Berkley Library's budget for 2021. The letter indicated some minor issues related to a previous budget submitted. Including an increase from \$135,951.00 to \$137,670. \$135,951 is projected for approval at the next town meeting. Ms. Hamilton

would like clarification on what is the magic number. Mr. Freitas recommended we reach out to Ms. Dawson for clarification. Ms. Hamilton will take care of this request.

**Other issues.**

Water damage issue, Serpt is working on this through the Master Plan project and this will save the town monies.

Certified Cash is \$935,244.

Stabilization account and the hopes in not having to request for transfer of funds.

Try to maintain a working budget that will prevent layoffs.

Ms. Paine-Dupont mention that our various discussions and the direction we are considering is a workable solution.

This needs to be sustainable working budget and we need to stay focus on keeping those employed remain employed.

Some humor, how we indicated to ourselves at past meetings how we were in such a good place financially and how we could feel comfortable with future budgets. What happens a "Nancy."

It only shows that we never know for sure what is around the corner.

A request was made to post a meeting for Tuesday May 19, 2020.

A motion was made and seconded to adjourn the meeting at 7:00 pm. Roll call taken, committee voted unanimously 4-0 to adjourn.