

**FINANCE COMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES**

DATE: April 2, 2018

ATTENDANCE: Chairman Ed Hoak, Secretary Michele Hamilton, Joe Freitas, Nancy Gajoli, Barbara Miller and Melinda Paine-Dupont

Treasure: Wendy Cochrane

Accountant: Kathy Avilla

Meeting was called to order by Chairman Ed Hoak at 6:30pm.

A motion was made and seconded to approve the minutes for finance committee meeting of March 26, 2018. The committee unanimously voted to approve minutes.

This meeting was a joint meeting with the Town Public Works Department and the Library, for the purpose of introducing and walking through the budget request for each of these departments.

Mr. Robert Rose, representing the Public Works Department was introduced to the committee as the new Director that took over the position when the previous supervisor, Scott Fournier became appointed Chief of the Fire Department.

Mr. Rose indicated that for the Highway Department, the majority of the line items for the budget were level funded, including the director's position. The only exception was the salaries for permanent positions which include the step raises and full time benefits.

Mr. Rose explained to the Finance Committee the changes seen within the line items and drew our attention to the breakout of the P.W. Supplies-Oil and Grits. In years past, several line items that were not classified, their cost, were put into this line for billing purposes. This created a sizeable amount of monies and really no explanation where the money was being spent.

Mr. Rose took the time to break out the P.W. Supplies-Oil and Grits billing line and going forward we will have a clear understanding where that money is going, how the resources are being spent.

In addition, the Highway department personal is currently down from seven to five employees and a job position has been posted for one opening.

Mr. Rose indicated that The Transfer Station is in need of additional funding and funding unfilled position would be helpful. Mr. Rose went on to explain that at one time the transfer station was generating monies to help maintain the facility. This has changed, it is now costing the town to have someone come and remove the trash generated.

When it comes to details needed during road work, Mr. Rose explained that he sometimes has to dip into Chapter 90 monies and Tree account to pay the fees. He hopes to finish a few road projects and begin work on other roads. Mr. Rose provided the Finance Committee with a hand out to give us an idea of funds coming in over a period of time for the Transfer Station.

With the retirement of Bill Schneller as director of the Library, the Finance Committee had the opportunity to welcome Vicki Dawson as the new Director.

Vicki Dawson provided the Finance Committee with detailed report showing the General Expenses and revenues. In addition, the report showed a breakout of the payroll expenses and a comparison to what the total anticipated expenditures from all sources for FY18 and a total budget request for FY19. This gives the Finance Committee a good place to start for the budget.

In addition, Ms. Dawson explained that they are still working with Windows Seven on their computers and within a very small window the materials they work with will not be compatible. They currently have three computers for the public to use and four for the staff. This is an expense that will have to be considered soon.

Regarding the line item for Sails expense, the request is fully funded as the grant monies is not available until after budget season and they do not know when or if they will get any funding.

A discussion on capital projects that have been requested and various grants that have been applied for, what they are looking into and hoping to receive for the next fiscal year.

In other business, the committee was provided with a notification of Berkley K-8 School Committee was meeting with the Board of Selectman at 6:30pm in the Middle School Library and the agenda for the Board of Selectmen's upcoming meeting posted for Wednesday April 4, 2018.

A motion was made and seconded to adjourn the meeting at 8:10pm. The committee unanimously voted to adjourn.

Ed Hark
Nancy B. Gajoli
Bordwin
[Signature]
[Signature]

**FINANCE COMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES**

DATE: April 9, 2018

ATTENDANCE: Ed Hoak, Joe Freitas, Barbara Miller, Nancy Gajoli and Melinda Paine-Dupont (Michele Hamilton joined later after attending School Committee meeting)

Meeting was called to order at 6:30pm.

After a couple of small edits, motion was made and seconded to approve the minutes of April 2, 2018. Unanimously voted.

This was a posted as a public hearing for the Finance Team (Assessor, Treasurer, Tax Collector, Finance Committee) as well as the Town Clerk, FY19 Budget Request. Also on the agenda was discussion of Public Safety Officer for Berkley Public Schools.

George Moitoza reviewed the Assessors' budget. Mostly level funded. They will be changing over to Tyler, this is the system that was decided on by state. The initial cost is offset by lowered dues for the year and lower software expenses for the year. They did add to their training/travel expenses for some offsite training. They will need to update computers as the current operating systems are too old to run the new software. The state is supplying the initial software, we will begin paying Tyler in FY20. Future support will also be through Tyler. Will need to run two computers in tandem, currently running Windows 7.

Their clerical is down slightly due to a new clerk on staff. They are also now on a five year recertification cycle, used to be every 3 years. They are still way behind on inventory updates. They need to visit 1,00 properties. They have 3 people doing this, Mark, George, and Lisa.

The new system will reduce the amount of paper records needed and supplied to the Collector's office. 2x a year the database is downloaded. The abatements transfer automatically in real time. Exemptions are up \$10,000. George indicated that there are now 2 overlay accounts, one for current year and one for past years, where there used to be several. Need to have enough money set aside in the overlay accounts to cover any deficits due to abatements, exemptions, etc. There are 3 large abatements pending. These were due to errors not over-assessments. Exemptions seem to be increasing as our citizens are aging. Reserve military and guard get discounts and if disabled that amount is greater.

The Treasurer's report was given next by Wendy Cochran. She mentioned that it was agreed that the elected officials would not take a 2% increase and she needed to update her budget for that as the figures she initially gave showed that increase. She anticipates that the Collector and Treasurer Dept. will also need upgraded computers soon to utilize the new software. Joe asked if we have an IT person and the reply was that we use CTS as needed and do not have an in-house IT person. They also ensure that computers purchased by the town offices use similar OS and software. Wendy also mentioned that she shifted the clerical hours between Collector and Treasurer to better balance the two departments.

Insurance is up 5%, (schools are at 4% increase). Postage is now split out from "other". Other does still include bank fees. As with all departments an attempt is now being made to be more specific in budget requests instead of having a large "other" line item.

Discussion of taxes due to the town included the information that there are currently 10 parcels in land court. 5 are now paid (3 just closed the day before at \$108,000). A total of less than \$200,000 is now due to the town. They plan to use the proceeds from paid delinquent accounts to pursue more past due accounts in land court. The fact that we are working on doing better putting liens on properties right away. Wendy stated that she did not know this at first as she was "new".

Melinda asked about the errors that the audit uncovered and whether the issue(s) are now fixed. The answer was yes and that this was a benefit of using the new audit company as the old company had not found the error. The "Free Cash" is available for use and the Financial Advisory Committee will be making recommendations as to the use. These will need to be approved by the citizens at Town Meeting. Most of these monies were due to the error found in the audit but also if a department does not spend all of its budgeted monies the excess is moved into "Free Cash" or if local receipts are greater than estimated.

Ed then reviewed the Finance Committee budget. Generally unchanged. \$180 in dues to ATFC. Overall level funded.

Next Town Clerk, Deborah Pereira review her budget. Also, level funded but broken down more than in past years. Early voting costs money, some costs are covered by the state, the amount is decided by the state. When asked about the response to early voting she indicated that 25% were early and 10% voted via absentee ballots for our last major election.

The Town Clerk's office clerks position was also discussed. She is still seeking a candidate as of this meeting. The previously appointed candidate decided not to take the position.

Joe then gave a recap of the discussion which took place at the SRO meeting between the Berkley School Committee and the BOS. It was very adversarial. Payment/Cost was the main issue. The town through the BOS indicated a willingness to pay half the cost. The School Committee did not come to the meeting with a plan to include SRO's in the schools. The Principals indicated that other needs might be higher on their list including a health teacher are school counselors. Barbara added, "The school looks at a more "holistic" approach to Safety." Ed asked if roles and responsibilities and job descriptions had been discussed. Chief Labonte said that those were being explored. It was also discussed that they would anticipate the SRO becoming part of the fabric of the school but not being used for general discipline issues.

Then the cost was discussed. Also, brought up was the fact that this person would be a police officer and that person would also need additional training. The training would be provided by the state but the 40 hours of payroll would need to be considered as a cost to the town.

Then the question was asked about what if the officer(s) called in sick and vacation time, etc. That would all be up for discussion if the plan moved forward.

A feeling that the main issue is the need for additional police officers for the town and that this might be an issue of additional funding for that department rather than a move to SROs for the schools as a more appropriate first step. The need for camera upgrades for the school and police department at a cost of \$35,000 was discussed and it was agreed that this would be a good use of funds if they are available.

Michelle gave a report of the School Committee meeting she had just attended. The School Committee had revised their budget and had cut \$200,252. This was due to a retiring teacher and removal of items that were requested of the capital planning monies. They did add in the cost of ½ the SRO's at \$56,000 and a health teacher at \$48,000.

The result was a budget \$100,000 less than the previous budget and came in at \$8,219,986. Which is an 11.15% increase over last year. Also mentioned was that school choice funds are depleted. Also, the \$185,000 that was raised through fundraising last year was added back into the budget. The School Committee indicated that they would have a revised budget to the FinComm before 4/23/18.

There was a discussion among the FinComm Board about school choice and the number of seats to be made available next year as well as the long-term effects of those choices.

Wendy Cochran also commented that the BOS had requested a budget for the schools which shows a status quo.

Also discussed was the fact that the school committee had added the SRO as that had been a recommendation of the BOS at the last school committee meeting.

A motion was made and seconded to adjourn at 8:43pm. Unanimously voted.

Next meeting to be held April 23, 2018 at 6:30 in the Berkley Town Hall.

Ed Stark
Nancy B. Gayoli
Bodhi
Janet
Robert