

FINANCE COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES OF JANUARY 15, 2008

Attendance:

Present: Allen McRae
Dave Stevens
Dick Montminy
Fred Faulkner
Steve Venuti

Absent: Ken Adam
Susan McDowell

Also attending: Bonnie Holston, Finance & Budget Director

Meeting opened at 7:00 PM in Room 103, Shattuck Street Building

Discussion re Highway Department and related budgets:

Jim Clyde, Operations Manager, presented the proposed budgets for the Highway Departments, including the Transfer Station. He discussed the trade-offs that would have to be made if the departments are level funded, reminding the committee that nearly everything used by the Highway Department is petroleum based, from truck and equipment fuel to road pavement. Many other costs, such as charges for police details, are beyond his control. Jim pointed out that the transfer station hauling contract will be up for renewal, soon, and discussed the timing for requested bids for a new contract. He also commented on Groton's recent success in going to a "pay as you throw" system at their transfer station; increasing their recycling to nearly 50%, significantly greater than Littleton. Anything recycled is a cost savings to the town.

In discussing the Capital Plan Requests, in addition to \$300K in road work, Jim placed replacement of the town's 1999 truck at the top of the list, citing the two transmission replacements and overall condition of the truck. The 30 year old sidewalk plow was also high on his priority list. Jim pointed out the need for sidewalks to be plowed in a timely fashion for students to get to school safely.

Discussion re Fire / EMS Department budgets:

Steve Carter, Fire Chief, presented the proposed budget for the Fire Department. The Operating Budget for the Fire Department shows level funding; the Capital budget is the Chief's bigger concern. When asked to prioritize the list of proposed capital expenditures, the Chief put crew safety at the top of his list, including turnout gear replacement of \$65K, and \$15K to upgrade existing fire trucks to new standards for improved nighttime visibility. EMS enterprise revenue of \$305K from health insurance providers covers all salaries and other expenses related to the operation of the town's Emergency Medical Services. The Chief made a point of commenting on the successful collection of fees from insurance providers at a much higher rate than is typical for most towns.

General discussion of overall budget status:

Bonnie Holston and Keith Bergman continue to meet with all departments, trimming proposed budgets to eliminate the current shortfall. Bonnie will provide the FinCom with the results of those meetings during the upcoming week.

Questions from a town resident:

A resident of Power Road, who had attended most of the evening's meeting, asked a number of questions about where to direct inquiries about various town fees, and how to stay up to date on the financial activities of the town. The Committee directed him to the departments responsible for the policies about which he was inquiring, and gave him an overview of the budgeting process, highlighting that Financial Committee meetings are posted in advance and are open to all.

Minutes of January 8, 2008:

Dave Stevens moved, Allen McRae seconded, to approve the minutes of the January 8, 2008 Finance Committee Meeting.

VOTE: Approved by unanimous consent

The next meeting will be Tuesday, January 22, 2008, Room 103, Shattuck Street Building.

Motion to adjourn made by Allen McRae, seconded by Steve Venuti.

VOTE: Approved by unanimous consent

Meeting adjourned at 8:55 PM