

Town of Great Barrington Town Hall  
334 Main St  
Great Barrington, MA 01230

**Finance Committee**  
Meeting 09/25/18  
**Minutes**

Present: Tom Blauvelt, Janet lee, Will Curletti, Michelle Loubert, and Anne O'Dwyer. Also in attendance was Town Accountant, Susan Carmel. Selectboard Members Steven Bannon and Ed Abrahams were in the audience. Town Manager, Jennifer Tabakin was not available to attend.

Called to order at 5:30 PM

**Approve minutes of 08/03/18**

Voted to approve. All approved.

Anne will check into posting of recent FC minutes online (needs note-taker's signature before can be posted).

**Review/Discuss August Budget Report**

Tom – Blauvelt reminder (to Susan Carmel): that we would like quarterly budget reconciliation reports – for October meeting. Highlighting any significant above or below budget lines. Janet asked for information as to where they town is in tax collections with these reports.

RE August BUDGET report: The report has data up to 2 months into the fiscal year. A quick summary: The Technology budget is over the standard 16% for this time of year; Susan noted that most of these expenses are annual contract expenses; Public Buildings –there was a change in the structure of the position (from Maintenance Custodian – to 2 new positions); Health Dept – Health Agent & Health Inspector has been voted to be combined into one line, but are keeping it separate for tracking purposes; Debt Programs – are the \$4,000 from Band Program. (so balances out); Overall totals = are at 21.7% (vs. 16%), that is due to retirement fund costs, which occur early in the year (e.g., technology).

Tom Blauvelt asked if there is a separate line item for trees (on Main St)? - Susan noted that she under Tree Warden (01294). Steve Bannon commented that he, too, is not sure if this is the same budget that accounts for tree work on Main Street. Ed & Steve will take this to Sean.

Susan Carmel noted that she hoped to begin to be able to soon present dues revenues on a quarterly basis, as well.

Janet Lee asked when the Audit for FY 2018 will begin. Ms. Carmel said they will first come in in November (will be the new firm) , then back in January to finish.

Michelle Loubert publically thanks Susan for meeting with the new member (herself and Anne O'Dwyer) and found her to be an excellent educator re: budget matters. All Committee members agreed.

**Possible fund transfer request for broken air conditioner**

Susan Carmel requested \$20K for the replacement of cooling unit for the Town Hall server room. Michelle Loubert raised concern about receiving requests (and documents) at the last minute, making it hard to vote for something last minute. Would like to receive requests for money in a timely manner. The other Committee members agreed

Background – the coolant in the AC in the Accountant's office went out over the summer. It is not an easy fix—and it keeps the server cool. We could be risking losing our servers. Sean VanDeusen, Dir

of Public Works, has someone coming in to look at it. May require the repair person to go up on the roof, so concerned about waiting until winter time. Michelle Loubert and Anne O'Dwyer both indicated that they would like to see estimates for the work voting to approve a specific amount. It was agreed that Mr. VanDeusen would seek bids on the repair of the Air Conditioner for the server room, and to bring the estimates/bids to the October Finance Committee meeting, to be voted on by the Committee then.

#### **Updates from Town Manager/Accountant**

Susan Carmel reported that the first tax bills are being mailed out this week. This will bring in the first half of annual tax revenues.

#### **■ Budget Policy & Budget Preparation and Meeting Timeline revisions**

Michelle Loubert indicated again that she would like this information earlier.... Would like to have a Finance Committee Meeting Packet available online before meetings (the way the Selectboard has)

Michelle - motion – to approve/endorse the Selectboard revisions to the GB Budget Financial Policy for 2019 – 2<sup>nd</sup> and all approved.

#### **■ Revised dates for Budget Public Hearing**

Monday, March 4 - 6:00 (revised/changed from March 6)

#### **■ Conflict of Interest, OML, and Ethics training**

Tom: reminder to all Committee members to do the Conflict of Interest & other trainings again this year (must be done annually).

#### **■ Updates from other committees (Michelle)**

BHRSC Meeting

- Aug 16<sup>th</sup>
- Technology & SPED
- Next meeting will look at Muddy Brook

Next Steps (9/28 meeting): Michelle Loubert reported that the meeting focused on timeline and if to go with Mass School Building Authority (which submitted the last 2 proposals); Was a very open meeting re: topics. Next meeting Oct 2 and Oct 30. She also gave a compliment to Steve Soules, who is in charge of Facilities for the school district. She met with him and found he was very transparent and open— provided a wealth of information and time. Impressed with how much he handles/manages on a daily basis.

#### **■ New town audit firm**

Confirmed: The Town's new audit firm is Scanlon and Associates. Michelle Loubert and Susan Carmel both spoke very highly of the services they provide and have great confidence in the team at Scanlon.

\* Next FC meeting – October 16<sup>th</sup> at 5:30

#### **■ Citizen's Speak**

Ed Abrahams – thanks to so many town staff who do such a great job and educate us all about all that they do and what we need to know.

Adjourned at 6:15

