

MINUTES

**Joint Budget Meeting, Selectboard and Finance Committee
Town Hall, 334 Main Street Great Barrington MA 01230
Tuesday February 13, 2018 at 6:00PM**

PRESENT

SELECTBOARD

Sean Stanton
Steve Bannon
Dan Bailly
Ed Abrahams
Bill Cooke

FINANCE COMMITTEE

Walter Atwood
Eugene Curletti
Janet Lee
Anne O'Dwyer
Tom Blauvelt

I. Call to Order

Sean Stanton called the meeting to order at 6:00PM. Will Curletti called the meeting to order at 6:00PM

II. FY19 Budget Overview

a. PUBLIC HEALTH

i. Inspector of Animals

Jennifer Tabakin said we will re-visit this line item because it is now under the Board of Health budget.

ii. Veterans' Affairs

The Veteran's Affairs office is now in a different location on South Main Street. Jennifer Tabakin said the Town pays for a portion of the rent. The Town will also pay upfront for the Memorial Day cemetery flags but then we apply for a reimbursement.

iii. Human Services/Grant and Aid

Jennifer Tabakin said that the Town gives money to different town organizations annually. Ms. Tabakin said that there is a decrease in this budget for FY19. Eileen Mooney asked the Town Manager for a report of the amount each organizations received in FY18.

b. CULTURAL/ RECREATION

i. Libraries

Amanda DeGiorgis, Library Director. Ms. Degiorgis spoke about the new events that the library offered in the last budget cycle. New proposed programs include, a Library of Things and Community Reads. The Library budget does not have any increases for FY19. Salaries have increased due to union negotiations. Ms. DeGiorgis said there is an opportunity through CW/MARS to switch the Internet at the library to Fiber, which would save the library about \$2,000 a year. CW/MARS will make this switch as soon as we are ready. Ms. DeGiorgis said the library would need to pay to upgrade the technology in order to accommodate Fiber Internet. The library would need to upgrade the wireless routers and the Internet switch. Ms. DeGiorgis said the estimated costs for the equipment upgrades are about \$2,800.00. Jennifer Tabakin said that there is probably money in the FY18 technology budget for these upgrades but she would need to get back to the Selectboard and Finance Committee. Sean Stanton said the Town should do this not only because we can save money the Internet is more efficient. Ed Abrahams asked if this switch is available to the Ramsdell Library. Ms. DeGiorgis said this is only available for the Mason Library.

ii. Parks & Recreation

Sean Van Deusen, Department of Public Works. Mr. Van Deusen said the Parks Department is at the end of a contract with park services, which is provided by Berkshire South. Berkshire South provides lifeguards and other staff for a few of the parks in town. Mr. Van Deusen said that there is an anticipated 20% increase for this contract with Berkshire South. Mr. Van Deusen said Berkshire South might be awarded the contract but he would like to budget enough so the Parks Department could meet Berkshire South's asking price.

Jenny Clark, a representative of the Berkshire Woman's Environmental Committee. Ms. Clark said the committee is very concerned about the usage of single use plastic water bottles and they intend to begin an educational campaign about the high quality of the Great Barrington and Housatonic public water. Ms. Clark said the Berkshire Woman's group would like to see additional access to public drinking fountains and how the Town can put money in the FY19 budget for labor and installation costs of more drinking fountains. Ms. Clark identified ideal locations for the fountains as, in front of the libraries, in each of the public parks, and at all of the baseball fields. Michelle Loubair asked that Housatonic Village is included in plans for additional drinking fountains.

c. INSURANCE, DEBT, & MISC

i. **Insurance**

Jennifer Tabakin said there is a new line for the mitigation account. The total increase for the FY19 insurance is \$244,920.00. Steve Bannon asked the Town Accountant how much is budgeted for a new employee's health insurance. Ms. Carmel said the position is budgeted for a family health insurance plan, which cost \$24,000 per year.

ii. **Debt**

Town Account Sue Carmel said the debt budget is separated into two lines; short and long term interest. Ms. Carmel said there is a \$200,000 increase in FY19. Steve Bannon asked if we restructured our debt. MS. Carmel said that we restructured the debt owed from the new Fire Station.

iii. **Retirement**

iv. **Miscellaneous**

Sean Stanton said that we are artificially keeping the budget from increasing. He said that we are not reducing the amount that we are spending we just reducing the amount we are spending.

Jennifer Tabakin said we can look at introducing a stabilization fund to offset utilization of the free cash. Steve Bannon asked the Town Manager for the numbers of the of free cash usage over the last five years.

d. CAPITAL

Sean Van Deusen, Department of Public Works. Mr. Van Deusen said this year will be a robust year for projects, they include; CPA funds will be used for the Lake Mansfield and the boat launch engineering, Bridge Street reconstruction, engineering of the South Street retaining wall, repair the Town Hall roof, repairs of the exterior police station building, repair the Mason library chimneys, and Town Hall steps construction. Mr. Van Deusen said that a public bathroom is proposed for the Chamber of Commerce building. Sean Stanton said there is a bathroom at the Chamber building. Mr. Van Deusen clarified that the proposed funds are to renovate the existing bathroom to make it ADA compliant. Steve Bannon pointed out that the hours at the Chamber of Commerce building are very limited and maybe there is a better location. Dan Bailly asked if in the reconfiguration of the Town Hall design there are plans for an ADA compliant public bathroom. The Town Manager and the DPW Superintendent said there is need for a feasibility study to identify if the Town Hall is the ideal location for a public bathroom or renovations to the current bathroom. Jennifer Tabakin said it is in the proposed capital budget because many have expressed a need for a wheelchair accessible public bathroom in the downtown area. Steve Bannon said until they come to a public meeting and express this concern he doesn't want it in the budget for FY19. Eileen Mooney asked for an update on moving the employees in at 20 Castle over to the Town Hall. The Town Manager said they are not asking for any additional money for the design or construction in FY19. Ms. Mooney asked if the Smart Growth money awarded to the town for \$550,000.00 from the State that could be used towards capital projects is referenced in this section of the FY19 budget. Jennifer Tabakin said that she recommends that the Selectboard wait and view the entire budget prior to allocating any awarded funds to projects. Ms. Tabakin said this money should be strategically placed for FY19 because we won't have as much to spend on capital improvements this year as we normally would.

e. WASTEWATER TREATMENT PLANT

Tim Drumm, Waste Water Treatment Plant Superintendent. Mr. Drum said FY19 Waste Water budget will see a 4% increase. Janet Lee asked for clarification on the Waste Water Treatment debt service payment line. Jennifer Tabakin said that this is the amount we owe this year to pay back the loans taken out to upgrade the facility.

III. Review of any Remaining Operating Budget Items

For FY19 there will be an increase in the operating budget of \$472,417.00. That is an increase of 4.3% of the Town's operating budget. The General Government has decreased \$130,014.00, Public Safety has increased \$120,400.00, The Dept. of Public Works has increased \$76,011.00, Cultural and Recreation has decreased \$8,380.00, Insurance has increased \$244,920.00, Debt has increased \$198,650.00, Retirement has decreased \$737.00, and Misc. has decreased \$33,433.00. The Berkshire Hills Regional School District voted to propose a 6.7% increase. Dan Bailly asked for the increase in the capital budget FY19. Jennifer Tabakin said the increase for borrowing for capital improvements in FY19 is \$534,500.00. Sean Stanton said in previous years the Selectboard and Finance Committee have had a five-year projection of projects. Mr. Stanton said it would be helpful to have something similar this FY19 budget process. Mr. Stanton said it is helpful to have these five-year plans in front of them while they make decisions on how much to allocate where.

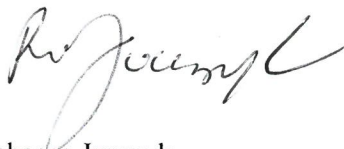
IV. Town Manager Final Budget Overview

V. Citizen Speak Time

VI. Adjournment

On a motion made by Steve Bannon, Seconded by Dan Bailly, with a unanimous vote the meeting adjourned at 8:00PM.

Respectfully Submitted,



Rebecca Jurczyk
Recording Secretary