

## SELECTBOARD & FINANCE COMMITTEE DRAFT MINUTES – Mar 30, 2021 06:30pm

Selectboard Members Present: Leigh Davis, Steve Bannon, Ed Abrahams, Bill Cooke, Kate Burke

Finance Committee Members Present: Anne O'Dwyer, Meredith O'Connor, Michelle Loubert, Will Curletti, Tom Blauvelt

1. Meeting called to order by Anne at 6:31pm.
2. Finance Committee Public Hearing FY 22 Budget: Motion by Tom, second by Will to open the public hearing. Unanimous by roll call vote. Anne noted that this meeting is required by town bylaws.
  - i. Overview of FY 22 Changes was given by Sue Carmel, Finance Director. See meeting packet ("FY22 Budget Changes") for detailed breakdown & explanations.
  - ii. Dr. Belman from Southern Berkshire Ambulance Services (SBAS) thanked the Selectboard & Finance Committee for their support. Dr. Belman emphasized the expertise of the EMTs and medics at SBAS and the working relationship with the Fire Department & Hospital. He again thanked the boards for taking the time to discuss this. Anne read the 4 funding conditions presented by the Town of Great Barrington (see budget packet). Dr. Belman said that he agreed wholeheartedly with these requests.
  - iii. Update by Mark Pruhenski about the Housatonic School: \$10,000 to install plywood on windows & \$14,000 for tarping the roof. There is a request for this to be taken from the reserve fund. The current balance of the reserve fund is \$50,000.
- b. Public Input
  - i. Eric Gabriel, Housatonic: Question regarding boarding up of Housatonic School – does it need to be contracted out? Sean replied that we need to because it is 2-story.
  - ii. Phil Orenstein, Great Barrington: Regarding salary increases; how does the process work? Mark responded that he decided those himself based on his personal interview with the candidates. He then brings these recommendations to the Selectboard before offering the candidates any specific salary.
  - iii. Karen Smith, Great Barrington: Question regarding public bathrooms. She is stunned by the lack of public bathrooms. Would the community impact funding be able to be used for bathrooms? 'Pot for potties' campaign proposed...
  - iv. Finance Committee motion to close public hearing: moved by Tom, seconded by Will. Unanimous.
3. Deliberations
  - a. Operating Budget: the Boards decided to go through the "FY22 Budget Changes" handout

- i. Selectboard/Town Manager: Increase of \$8,000. Motion by Michelle to approve this line item. Seconded by Will. Unanimous by roll call vote. Selectboard motion by Ed, second by Bill. Unanimous.
  - ii. Techology: Reduction of \$12,500. Finance Committee motion by Michelle, second by Will. Unanimous. Selectboard motion by Ed, second by Bill. Unanimous.
  - iii. Assesors' Office: Increase of \$11,790. Finance Committee motion by Michelle, second by Tom. Michelle expressed her concern about this increase. Anne asked about the reason for this increase. Mark responded that in order to make the job attractive to this well-qualified candidate with over 10 years of experience. Ed added that there are few qualified candidates looking for this type of work. Roll call vote, approved 4-1 with Michelle dissenting. Selectboard motion by Ed, second by Bill. Unanimous.
  - iv. Treasurer/Collector: Decrease of \$200. Finance Committee motion by Michelle, second by Will. Unanimous. Selectboard motion by Ed, second by Bill. Unanimous.
  - v. Police Department (Patrol Officers): Decrease of \$2,509. Finance Committee motion by Will, second by Michelle. Unanimous. Selectboard motion by Ed, second by Bill. Unanimous.
  - vi. Police Department (Sergeants): Increase of \$858. Finance Committee motion by Will, second by Tom. Unanimous. Selectboard motion by Ed, second by Bill. Unanimous.
  - vii. Highway Department: Increase of \$5,265. Finance Committee motion by Will, second by Tom. Michelle noted that she is uncomfortable with this raise prior to the salary analysis. Roll call vote, 4-1 with Michelle dissenting. Selectboard motion by Ed, second by Bill. Unanimous.
  - viii. Veterans' Affairs: Increase of \$6,000. Finance Committee motion by Anne, second by Michelle. Unanimous. Selectboard motion by Ed, second by Bill. Unanimous.
  - ix. Anne recommended that the Finance Committee consider using reserve funds for the Housatonic school preservation at the next meeting. Michelle agreed with Anne on this. Tom agreed as well.
  - x. Motion to approve proposed FY22 Operating Budget as amended (\$12,928,888) by Ed (for Selectboard). Seconded by Bill. Unanimous. Motion for Finance Committee by Will, seconded by Michelle. Unanimous.
- b. Capital Requests:
- i. Steve requested an estimate from Sean Van Deusen for public bathrooms. He said it would likely be around \$100,000. \$1,229,665 balance in free cash per Sue. \$1,000,177 is Community Impact Funding. Leigh asked if there are grants available for this project. Chris replied that he is unsure but there may be. Michelle asked about the engineering line item in the streets & bridges, which was clarified by Sean.

- ii. Discussion ensued regarding the implication of recommending this item. The parking lot was separated out into a special article: motion by Ed, second by Bill. Unanimous. Finance Committee motion by Tom, second by Michele. Unanimous.
    - iii. Tom moved that the DPW capital budget be increased by \$100,000 for public restrooms. Michelle seconded. Unanimous. Selectboard motion by Ed, second by Bill. Unanimous.
    - iv. Selectboard motion to approve FY22 capital requests as amended by Ed, second by Bill. Unanimous. Finance Committee motion by Tom, second by Michelle. Unanimous.
  - c. FY 2022 Special Articles
    - i. Community Impact Funding: \$350,000. Selectboard motion by Ed, second by Bill. Unanimous. Finance Committee motion by Tom, second by Will. Anne clarified that the \$1,200,000 includes the assumption that this line has been removed already. Unanimous.
    - ii. Emergency Medical Services: \$25,000. Finance Committee motion to recommend funding of no greater than \$25,000 provided that SBAS adopts the 4 recommendations as detailed in the executive summary. Michelle seconded, and thanked staff for an informative and helpful executive summary. Unanimous. Selectboard motion by Ed, seconded by Bill. Unanimous.
    - iii. BHRSD Vocational Tuition & Transportation: \$65,000. Motion by Tom, second by Michelle. Unanimous. Selectboard motion by Ed, seconded by Bill. Unanimous.
    - iv. Stabilization: \$200,000. Finance Committee motion by Will, seconded by Tom. Unanimous. Selectboard motion by Ed, seconded by Bill. Unanimous.
    - v. Capital StabilizationL \$200,000. Finance Committee motion by Michelle, seconded by Tom. Unanimous. Selectboard motion by Ed, seconded by Bill. Unanimous.
- 4. Board Time
  - a. Steve thanked all the staff & committee members for putting together an exceptional budget/budget season. Anne thanked Will & Michelle for their service as their terms are ending. Ed noted that we do not have enough participation at this point in the term.
- 5. Citizen's Speak
  - a. Garfield Reed: Commending Finance Committee & Selectboard for voting on the \$65,000 for vocational programs.
  - b. Paul Storti: Thanked Will & Michelle for their service on the Finance Committee. Thanked Sue & Anne for their assistance with creating his first budget (as this is his first year as Chief).
- 6. Media Time
  - a. None
- 7. Meeting adjourned at 8:10pm