

**Finance
Committee
MEETING
MINUTES**

February 26, 2020

Town Hall

Paul Flaherty, Rick McGuire, Nick Ensko, Shawn Craig, Jonathan Calianos
Guests: Kelly McElreath, Derek Brindisi, Deb Teta, Stephen Matellian,
Maureen Dwinnell, Brett Simas, Sandra Hakala, Al Holman, Ted Briggs,
Diane Tiernan, Dennis Westgate, Chief Mark DiFronzo, Lyn Hagerty

The meeting was opened at 7:15 pm.

JC/NE motioned to approve minutes from July 10, 2019, September 10, 2019, September 26, 2019, October 10, 2019, October 30, 2019 and January 22, 2020. Unanimously approved.

Board of Health and Board of Selectmen were in attendance to discuss the significant increase in cost for recycling. Highlights include the following:

- Dilemma \$25K per day fine from the State since you cannot put recycling into the main stream trash
- Alternative, residents are responsible for their own recycling such as Berkowitz
- Let citizen decide what to do
- Eliminate curbside pick up service however, road side pick up of trash would increase
- We can get out of the contract however they could shut us down immediately
- Cost is \$95 per ton for recycling
- Nick reviewed cost – tax rate and cost of 2 bags 2 weeks. Average household is \$486. Berkowitz is \$390 per year. Some towns are doing it as a utility bill. As a utility, seniors would have other tax benefits.
- Rick McGuire – 3 private haulers where citizen choose who they would like to use
- BOH discussed the issues with private haulers
- An Override is a possibility to have the townspeople decide to continue to pay
- Every town and State are going through this issue
- Increasing bag fees would not considerable help the situation
- BOH could permit 4 haulers to pick up trash for private residents
- Town either stay in the business or get out of the business
- Hold the line item at Town Meeting for a separate discussion
- Simas: long term situation needs to be approved at State level and wait it out a year or 2 and a decision is not needed now
- Holman: believes the State will intervene in the next year due to the rising costs for all Towns
- Ask State Reps about the fines if we can talk and allow recycling at Blackstone
- It was determined BOH and Finance Committee will meet again on March 10 at BOS meeting for additional analysis of numbers

Fire Chief Mark DiFronzo was in attendance to discuss his articles:

Turnout gear article

- purchase 3 sets of gear for the firefighters. 8 gears will be purchased (like last year) 5 out of the budget and 3 from the article

Radio article

- Radio grant was applied for but it was not successful.

- Another grant is being applied for however the radios are not in good condition and they are not fire radios.
- They cannot be repaired.
- It is difficult to put it off another year due to the issues of the radios. Thought due to the number of calls could have been a detriment to getting the grant.
- Looking to purchase radios that is designed for fire service (water proof)
- One for every seated of the apparatus and 4 for the officers

HVAC article

- Fix and replace some AC condensing units, expansion tank and valves
- Original to the building built in 2004
- This will get the system to work and decide how to improve

Additional information: new truck should be in service this week. New Fire Chief car will probably be needed next year. Vehicle is 2013.

Ambulance runs in a deficit due to insurance. Revenue is \$260,000. Full staff in a couple of months due to career paramedics.

Dennis Westgate, DPW Director was present to discuss DPW articles:

- Reviewed budget increases such as snow and ice, vehicle maintenance, IT vendor
- Articles to replace a 1963 Forklift. There are not parts to replace when broken. When the forklift is needed, it is needed.
- 2001 Cushman is used to haul equipment by Parks/Cemetery every day of the week. Caught on fire last year and needs to be replaced even though it is running right now. It is not optimal to purchase new
- Maple Ave article for sidewalks is not sponsored by DPW but EDC. Article is \$138K. Complicated terrain due to pond and streams governed by the Army Corp. Need drainage, easements, etc. The construction cost is over \$700K
- Russell Ave article – issues were found when it was schedule for mill/overlay as part of the paving plan. There is no indication where the road ends and begins and it needs to be surveyed. It is 2 easements that never touch and the road goes over personal property. Engineering is \$104,000 to lay it out and obtain easements. The pavement plan will pay for the paving. Town Manager is reaching out to KP law to determine legal implications.
- Water article - capital based on report from Tighe & Bond. \$287K: repairs to west river well, repairs to 2 tanks to include engineering and contingency. Action plan from the DEP has been acknowledged and we are doing small projects.
- Wastewater article - \$450,000 due to waste water plant needs repairs in order to get I&I report going. The retained earnings balance will be less than water due to the repairs needed.

Finance Committee reviewed the draft warrant for the Annual Town Meeting and voted the following:

- Motioned by JC/RM to recommend Article 12A, 12B, 12C, 12D, 12E - UA
- Motioned by JC/NE to recommend Article 22, 25 from Free Cash and Article 26, 27 from Enterprise - UA

- Motioned by JC/NE to recommend unfavorable for Article 23 (Maple Ave) – JC/NE - UA
- Motioned by JC/NE to HOLD Article 24 (Russell Ave)
- Motioned by JC/NE to HOLD Article 9 (Road Repairs)
- Motioned by JC/NE to recommend Article 18, 19, 20 from Free Cash Article–UA
- Motioned by JC/NE to recommend Article 13, 15 from Free Cash Article–UA
- Motioned by JC/NE to recommend Article 8 to borrow-UA (it was noted to include this on the summary of articles)
- Motioned by JC/NE to recommend Article 6 to transfer-UA
- Motioned by JC/NE to recommend Article 5 for revolving funds-UA
- Motioned by JC/NE to recommend Article 17 from Free Cash-UA
- Motioned by JC/NE to recommend Article 28 to transfer-UA
- Motioned by JC/NE to HOLD Article 29 (NOVATIME)

In regards to budget, it was noted Town of Boylston is looking for a part time planner and there may be an opportunity to share

PF announced MURSD is certifying its budget on March 9th and BVT will be certifying on March 5th. Brief discussion of the school budget.

Next meeting date is March 11 for Education. Board of Selectmen will attend.

Meeting adjourned at 10:41 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Kelly A. McElreath