



Select Board & Finance Committee Meeting

Monday February 8, 2021, 7:00 pm

VIA Zoom Computer and Audio

Pursuant to a notice duly filed with the Town Clerk, a meeting of the Select Board and Finance Committee was held VIA Zoom Computer and Audio due to the COVID-19 Pandemic, on Monday February 8, 2021, at 7:00 PM.

Select Board Present: Steven Gougeon, Chair; Todd Olanyk, Vice Chair; Tom Carter
Finance Committee Present: Lindy Gougeon, Chair, Carol Lebold, Kyle Taylor, Tom Miner Jr, Ben Markens

Also Present: Jennifer Morse, Town Administrator; Beth Bezio, Police Chief; Doug Field, Council on Aging; Donna Scott, Town Hall Building Committee; Stuart Harris, Town Hall Building Committee; Mary Quigley, Town Hall Building Committee; Wayne Wickland; Amanda Jao, Senior Center Director; Alexis Fedorjaczenko, Town Clerk; Buz Eisenberg, Moderator.

Gougeon convened the meeting of the Select Board at 7:01 pm, with one recording device. The Finance Committee was already in session.

BUDGET HEARINGS

A. Police Department – Chief Bezio

Chief Bezio reviewed the budget worksheets noting small increases to the Dues, Contracts, Uniforms and Equipment line items. The chief said that she is tracking the fuel with the new hybrid cruiser and the benefits of the hybrid will be seen in the next fiscal year budget. There was also a small increase in hours for the Community Policing program. The Chief praised the new cruiser saying that it is good on gas, good in the snow, has more space and is quiet. There was discussion on funding the cruiser every year and creating a cruiser stabilization account, Morse stated this is now reflected in the Capital Budget worksheet. There was discussion on the community outreach program and the hard work of Officer Gertschner. Carol thanked the Chief for everything that she is doing especially the community check in program.

B. Council on Aging/Senior Center – Doug Field & Amanda Jao

Doug shared the Local Council on Aging Expenses noting that there is little spent since they can't currently gather due to COVID 19. They hope to start planning events again in the late summer/fall. Doug gave an overview of the Senior Center Budget explaining that the increase in wages is determined by the Town of Shelburne and further explained that there is a new line item due to the cyber-attack in 2019 which resulted in the new Northeast IT contract.

Amanda Jao joined the group and explained that the only new items on the budget is the Northeast IT contract at \$7200. She shared that COVID will determine when they can start opening for more in person services and events, but they hope to do so with warmer weather and decrease in cases. Amanda and Doug were thanked for all their hard work.

Highland Ambulance Update - Steve attended the budget presentation just before the meeting and the assessment to the town will be going down approximately \$8000. Carter asked if they had a plan to increase wages as the EMT's currently make a low hourly rate. S. Gougeon replied that they are working on a plan.

Minutes- January 25,2021

Finance Committee: **A motion was made by Miner and seconded by Taylor to accept the meeting minutes of January 25, 2021.**

Roll Call Vote: L. Gougeon- Aye, Lebold – Aye, Taylor – Aye, Miner – Aye, Markens – Aye 5-0

Select Board: **A motion was made by Carter and seconded by Olanyk to accept the meeting minutes of January 25, 2021.**

Roll Call Vote: S. Gougeon – Aye, Olanyk – Aye, Carter – Aye 3-0

C. OTHER BUDGETS

- A. Franklin Regional Council of Governments
- B. Elected/Appointed Officials
- C. Town Hall Utilities - Morse explained that the custodian has been budgeted for five hours per week and moving into FY22 there is a request to increase her hours from 5-6 at the Town Hall and give her 2 hours per week to clean at the Highway Garage. Since COVID 19 started she has been working approximately 8 -10 hours per week at both locations keep the building sanitized. There was question about the large increase to sewer/water expenses which Morse said was estimated on the usage and increased rates. Morse will get a breakdown of the estimated usage and rates for the next meeting.

D. Town Hall Building Committee – Stuart Harris, Mary Quigley, Donna Scott

Stuart shared that the following are Town Hall projects on the list for the next year; basement stainless cover- window well to the Chief office, floor repair in the Town Clerk office, Southeast Office plaster repair, and handrail & ramp to offices. Money is available in the budget for materials and volunteers can do the work if people are patient.

Carter asked for an update on completed projects since last year. These projects included painting and cleaning the front stairs, storm window and sash repair, faucet repairs. There is a large project with the attic with the stage support. Mary spoke of the Green Communities project of insulation, heat and ventilation noting that more money is being spent in fuel to heat lower hall. Carter spoke about the filing cabinets and visual lack of appeal in lower hall. Stuart said that they have a build out in the basement in mind, but it will cost roughly 20,000.

Carter inquired about the mold remediation and Quigley will get a new bid on the work to be done thinking it will not cost the \$9400 still available.

Stuart spoke of the plan for the Steeple Project and that he will be looking for volunteers to assist. It is expected to cost \$20-25,000 to get the steeple on the common

A motion was made by Carter and seconded by Olanyk to endorse the Town Hall Building Committee and volunteers to work with them to get started on the removal of the steeple for repair.

Roll Call Vote: S. Gougeon – Aye, Olanyk – Aye, Carter – Aye 3-0

The Town Hall Building Committee members were thanked for their time and dedication.

E. CAPITAL

Morse shared that nothing was added some of the lines were adjusted to cover multiple years of funding such as the cruiser, assessor’s software, and window/sash repair. There was question if the sash/window is a capital expense and the group determined it is a good location to track the multiyear expense and perhaps it should be broken out along with the bridge repair line which is also an ongoing maintenance project. Carter asked the group to discuss what the top three priorities on the current list might be and there was discussion on Bridges and the Fire Truck being priorities.

Carter suggested at the last Select Board meeting that the Town give the School District a maximum amount that the Town of Ashfield can pay per year for Capital Expenses and asked the group if they felt that \$75,000 was a good number. Both Select Board members agreed with this suggestion and there was further discussion regarding the request which is estimated to be between \$300-\$350,000 for health and safety repairs to Sanderson and Mohawk. There was further discussion between the boards which ultimately agreed that giving the School Committee a number to work with is a good path forward. There is a joint Finance Committee meeting on Thursday February 11, 2021 at 7 p.m. to meet with the Business Administrator, Superintendent and School Committee chair regarding the FY22 budget.

F. STIPENDS

L. Gougeon explained the stipend documents in the packet which showed what the stipend amount would be if paid hourly. There was discussion on stipend positions remaining stipend and not made hourly. Carter noted that certain positions require additional time and effort due to state mandates.

Finance Committee Motion to Adjourn

A motion was made by Miner and seconded by Lebold to adjourn the Finance Committee meeting at 8:43 p.m.

Roll Call Vote: L. Gougeon- Aye, Lebold – Aye, Taylor – Aye, Miner – Aye, Markens – Aye 5-0

CAUCUS & TOWN MEETING – Alexis Fedorjaczenko & Buz Eisenberg

Town Clerk Alexis Fedorjaczenko presented the Select Board with an election calendar and proposed legislation sharing that the current executive order regarding elections will expire in March. There is concern about holding the Caucus indoors due to COVID 19 and gathering restrictions. Discussion on moving the date of the Annual Town Meeting and Election to June in hopes of better outdoor venue weather was agreed by all board members. Fedorjaczenko shared that some communities are forgoing caucus and doing just nomination papers since the gathering limitations are in place. There was discussion on setting the Town Meeting date for June 5, 2021 and the Caucus as late as April 20, 2021 which is the required forty-two days before the election. It was agreed that if the caucus date was later in April and the gathering requirements are unchanged the event could be held outdoors. Buz reported that he had already spoken the Senator Hinds and Representative Blais office regarding legislation and both offices are supportive.

A motion was made by Carter and seconded by Olanyk to hold the Town Meeting and Town Election on Saturday June 5, 2021 pending legislation due to the COVID 19 pandemic and April 20, 2021 for the Town Caucus.

Roll Call Vote: S. Gougeon – Aye, Olanyk – Aye, Carter – Aye 3-0

Carter asked Fedorjaczenko to forward the last date for ballot questions and debt exclusions to the Town Administrator.

Select Board Adjourn

A motion was made by Olanyk and seconded by Carter to adjourn the meeting at 9:14 p.m.

Roll Call Vote: S. Gougeon – Aye, Olanyk – Aye, Carter – Aye 3-0

Respectfully Submitted:

Jennifer Morse,

Town Administrator

Document List

1. Meeting Agenda – February 8, 2021
2. Meeting Minutes – January 25, 2021
3. Police Department Budget Worksheets
4. Local COA and Senior Center Budget Worksheets
5. Town Hall Building Committee Budget Worksheet
6. FRCOG Budget Worksheet
7. Stipend Worksheets
8. Town Hall Utilities Budget Worksheet
9. Stipends Documents
10. Capital Budget Worksheet
11. Greenfield Recorder – Senior Center Expansion Article
12. Senior Center Usage
13. Town Clerk Election Calendar