

## **FINANCE COMMITTEE**

### **MEETING, January 30, 2019**

A scheduled meeting convened at 7:00 p.m. in Room 7.

Members of the Committee in attendance: Mr. Creighton, Mr. Weld, Mr. Oldeman, Mr. Pratt and Ms. Mellish. Ms. Harrison and Mr. Even were not in attendance.

Town Administrator, Mr. Federspiel, Finance Committee Clerk, Ms. Hunter and Town Accountant Ms. Mainville were also in attendance.

Town Clerk, Ms. St. Pierre, Town Moderator, Mr. Wilson and CPC Representatives, Ms. Thorne and Mr. Burke presented.

Mr. Creighton called the Finance Committee meeting to order.

#### **Review of Meeting Minutes: Minutes for January 23, 2019**

*Mr. Oldeman moved to approve the minutes of January 23, 2019, Ms. Mellish seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.*

#### **Review of Electronic Voting Equipment:**

Mr. Wilson had a few introductory comments – he stated he believes the Town should stick with electronic voting. He has had only positive feedback about electronic voting and was surprised the response to electronic voting was as positive as it was. Mr. Wilson complimented Ms. St. Pierre on her comprehensive job contacting vendors and surrounding communities regarding moving to new technologies.

Ms. St. Pierre was a firm believer in yay and nay votes at Town Meetings until the marijuana issue surfaced and shifted her belief to electronic voting which allows residents to vote more comfortably and privately.

Ms. St. Pierre has reviewed leasing and purchasing options of electronic voting systems, as well as studied application-based polling technology. Her recommendation is to purchase a system that runs off of radio frequency without the need to rely on the internet. Radio frequency technology has been in existence for decades and is still widely used. Ms. St. Pierre's preferred vendor is Turning Technologies. Turning Technologies is willing to provide a complimentary demonstration of their equipment and technology at the Annual Town Meeting on April 1, 2019.

Shared Services are being pursued with neighboring communities. Topsfield, Newbury and Essex may be interested in partnering with MBTS. There are challenges with partnering: conflicting meeting dates, equipment maintenance and other unforeseen issues. However, in the spirit of shared services and the resulting savings to the Town identifying likely partners will continue.

Adding the cost of clickers and laptops for Power Point presentations will be included in the Capital Budget and added as a separate Article for approval at Town Meeting.

**Review of CPC Proposals:**

CPC is proposing spending \$438K in FY 20 across the 3 approved categories for community funding: Open Space/Recreation, Community Housing and Historic Preservation. At the end of this application process there are \$420K remaining in CPC funds with an anticipated \$500 from the State this year

Applications for CPC funding are now closed in December; previously applications closed in February and CPC was reviewing applications through the budget cycle. According to Ms. Thorne the change in application process helps the Committee in the review and decision-making process.

Ms. Mellish had 2 questions regarding this year's grant list.

1. Repaving Masconomo Park Parking Lot, Ms. Mellish asked how this qualified for funding. Mr. Burke replied the repaving provided access to recreation and was approved by the State. Ms. Mellish also questioned the amount of the request and how the project would be fully funded? Following discussion, it was decided to hold the project for additional review and a more accurate estimation of the full project from Mr. Dam, DPW Director.

2. Historic Restoration of Town Common, Ms. Mellish asked what the project would look like and how the restoration would be maintained? Mr. Federspiel stated there is a meeting next week to review a proposal for new plantings to compliment the new veterans memorial and modifications to the walkway to Seaside One. The Committee was invited to attend. Additionally, Mr. Federspiel indicated there were funds in the budget to maintain the Town Common.

The Committee also discussed:

- Maintenance of approved projects and how to assure maintenance is implemented.
- Project management with the new DPW team in place.

- Affordable Housing Trust – Mr. Creighton asked what pace the Town should be on for developing affordable housing? The Trust is reviewing and exploring all options with the most desirable option a possible 40R built on Pleasant St. at the current DPW site.
- Historic projects funded by CPC requiring phased funding: Rotunda, Crowell Chapel and Chowder House.
- CPC has developed a 5-year plan through 2020 working with Department Heads and focusing on the Master Plan. Ms. Thorne believes this will help CPC plan for likely projects in advance of annual applications.
- Cash in the fund and not being invested in projects. CPC can only fund projects applied for and for FY 20 some of the costlier projects did not meet the criteria for funding.

*Mr. Creighton moved to approve the project list (holding on line 11A Repaving Masconomo Park Parking Lot waiting for a cost analysis of the project), Mr. Oldeman seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.*

#### **Review of General Government Budgets:**

Mr. Federspiel to provide additional information on positions in Town Hall specifically in Town Administrator's and Treasurer's offices.

- Committee discussed at length issues raised at White Beach and historically the round about and how much time the TA spends on these areas. The Town Administrator informed the Committee he had likely responded to 100 emails on the round about and the White Beach issue has escalated and is challenging. It was agreed communication with key residents may have helped to avoid the current situation.
- Communication issues around decisions residents do not support is being reviewed with the BOS – how best to keep residents informed on possible contentious issues requires better communication among all Town Departments, Committees and Elected officials.
- Town Meeting passed 20 MPH speed limit – complaints are likely from residents who did not attend the Town Meeting where they could have voted on the speed limit.
- Contributory Pensions reduced to \$1,265,948.
- Health Care is down, some staff shifting to spouse's plan and MIIA doing well and passing savings onto Towns.
- Worker's Comp – up 15% previous provider, Hartford, no longer writing Worker's Comp policies – because of Fire and Police and State requirements it is necessary for the Town to employ a provider with State regulation expertise to assist the Town in meeting all State compliance issues.
- Building Maintenance is down to what has been spent in previous years – budget adjusted to reflect actual spending.
- Revenue from ambulance – Mr. Federspiel to follow up.

*Ms. Mellish moved to approve the budget for Historic Commission and Conservation Commission, Mr. Oldeman seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.*

*Ms. Mellish moved to approve the Human Services Budget, Mr. Pratt seconded the motion. The Motion passed unanimously.*

New numbers are required for Animal Control Officer.

Police, Fire, Harbor and Emergency Services budgets were previously passed.

**Review of Police Staffing:**

- Employee in department resigned and has reimbursed the department.
- Outstanding question re: Chief Conley and Gloucester opens possible discussion on Public Safety Director

**Review of Capital Projects and Planning:**

Discussion on Capital Projects was moved to the Committee meeting on February 13, 2019.

**Other business that comes before the Finance Committee, discussion only.**

- The Committee requested detail of Professional Services line item.
- Harbormaster there is interest in securing a 3<sup>rd</sup> boat – Harbormaster Pike has leads on a Coast Guard boat and is pursuing additional information on the boat.
- Citizen Petitions: there are 2 – non-binding vote on fluoridation and additional ban on plastic.
- Town Moderator – update Town Meeting by-law to allow for electronic voting. Town Clerk recommending increase for late registration of dog licenses.
- School Budget issue with Essex will be discussed at next meeting.
- Discussion re: Essex North Shore Regional Agricultural & Technical School, MBTS pays for 5 students and some applicants not being accepted due to new lottery system.
- CPC add ongoing maintenance to application – but there is no way to fund and when not funded projects Could become. restoration projects.

**Adjourn:** *Mr. Creighton moved to adjourn the meeting, Ms. Mellish seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.*

**Meetings Scheduled for Finance Committee:**

**Meeting Materials:**

- FY 20 Preliminary Budget

Final Minutes, January 30, 2019

- Finance Committee Minutes January 23, 2019
- Electronic Voting Analysis
- CPC Project Summary Spread Sheet