



Town of Wilmington

Finance Committee

Meeting Minutes

Tuesday, February 27, 2018

Finance Committee Chairman, Theresa M. Manganello, called the meeting to order at 7:00 pm in Town Hall, Room 9. Members present were Neal Couture, John F. Doherty, Jonathan Eaton, Marianne Gallezzo, Michele Kincaid, Leigh Martinson, Bernard P. Nally, and Kevin Stokes. Excused: None.

PRESENT IN INTEREST: Jeffrey Hull, Town Manager and Denise Casey, Assistant Town Manager.

HISTORICAL COMMISSION

PRESENT IN INTEREST: Terry McDermott, Town Museum Curator and Kathleen Reynolds, Chairperson of the Historical Commission.

Ms. McDermott stated that the mission statement of the Historical Commission was implemented by the state legislature in 1963 to evaluate and protect historical and archaeological assets of the Commonwealth. The Wilmington Historical Commission was established, and the Col. Joshua Harnden Tavern was acquired by the Town, at the Annual Town Meeting in 1973. The Tavern was open to the public since its acquisition, though it was maintained and tours were provided by a caretaker who rented the adjacent structure on the property (the "El"). The Town Museum at the Col. Joshua Harnden Tavern was established in 1999 when the last caretaker vacated. At that time, it was decided to maintain the building as a Museum with an employee, as opposed to a residence. The mission statement for the Town Museum is to shed light upon the history of our community from pre-incorporation to present, to increase understanding and appreciation of our community heritage, and preserve and present for public education and enjoyment the collections acquired by the Town Museum, which document the Community's history.

Ms. McDermott reviewed the list of Historical Committee members and stated that personnel for the Town Museum include herself, and Denise Gentile, Clerk for the Historical Commission. She provided a summary of the responsibilities of the Historical Commission, including: attending monthly Commission meetings; attending Town department meetings involving historical preservation of resources; raise public awareness for historical resources in Town; support events sponsored by the Historical Commission, or other Town departments when historical subjects are featured; engage in ongoing research on Town history; oversee the Town Museum; sign off on demolition permits. The clerk of the Commission is responsible for attending commission meetings; preparing minutes; filing; and photocopying. The Curator's responsibilities include: opening the museum; organizing exhibits; accepting donations; answer questions; research questions and provide information for various Town projects; perform various tasks as directed by the Commission; and sign off on demolition permits.

In 2017, the Historical Commission signed off on 23 demolition permits and had 1,400 visitors to the Town Museum. Ms. McDermott noted that number included visitors to the Haunted Woods event in

October. The Haunted Woods was organized by another group, but the event brought a boost in attendance and was a terrific opportunity to promote the Museum.

Historical Commission goals and accomplishments in FY 2018 include: continued oversight of the Town's historical resources and raising awareness of historic districts. Ms. McDermott stated that she is researching the cost of a building assessment for the Harnden Tavern. It is an old building in need of a lot of repairs, and a building assessment would provide the Commission with a road map of the most pressing issues to preserve the building. Any funds leftover will go toward the continued window restoration project of the Museum's forty-two windows. Only five have been restored to date, mostly with the help of state grant money.

Ms. McDermott provided an overview of the FY 2019 budget. Personnel services in the amount of \$24,694 provide salaries for the Curator and the Clerk. Professional services, in the amount of \$2,250, provide for consulting services as needed. State agencies like Mass Historical, and Historic New England provide advice to a certain extent, but practical advice on historic preservation is costly. Even completing certain portions of grant applications require some professional oversight. Programs and activities are budgeted at \$3,000, which pays for posters, printing, promotional supplies, and special storage boxes for artifacts (acid-free or plastic bins). Furnishings and equipment is budgeted at \$1,500 for items such as office supplies and seasonal decorations for the Museum and other historic Town buildings.

FY 2019 goals include: continued oversight of the Town's historical resources; raising awareness of historic districts; maintaining the Museum's collections; schedule a building assessment study (or at least complete research, so that it can be performed in FY 2020); and continue with the window restoration project.

Ms. Manganelli asked what the cost is to restore each window. Ms. McDermott stated that the windows vary, and the cost is dependent on the size. She noted that she works exclusively with Alison Hardy of Amesbury, MA, who is an expert in antique windows. She stated that the large picture window in the front of the building cost \$2,000 to restore. Other smaller windows cost \$1,500 for one and \$1,900 for the next two. A few years ago, the Historical Commission received grant money, through the Methuen Festival of Trees, to restore three-quarters of the windows in the carriage house, which is adjacent to the museum. The remaining funds came from the Historical Commission budget. The carriage house also showcases and stores historical exhibits, and it was important to provide protection for the artifacts. Ms. McDermott stated that Ms. Hardy performed beautiful work in restoring the carriage house windows, but historic window preservation and restoration is very expensive.

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

PRESENT IN INTEREST: John O'Neil, Director of Information Technology and Michael Morris, Town Accountant.

Mr. O'Neil provided an overview of the Information Technology (IT) staff, duties, and mission statement. The department is committed to meeting current and future technology needs of all Town departments and provides support and protection for the 200 workstations and laptops, 200 end users, 90 mobile

devices, 75 printers, and 25 network switches, 20 access points, 10 servers, 2 phone systems, and 3 website domains, across thirteen physical site locations.

Since July 1, 2017, the IT department has resolved 765 tickets, an average of 4-5 tickets per day, with an average response time of less than ten minutes. Mr. O'Neil stated that he is on call if there are any problems after hours.

The total IT budget for FY 2019 is \$610,055. Miscellaneous contractual services are budgeted at \$385,000 for services including: cell phones and data services for police cruisers and DPW trucks; internet service provider; web hosting domains; software support; hosted email services; telecommunications; printer maintenance; and wiring projects and maintenance. The increase for this budget account is for the purchase of software, which will archive social media accounts, as they are deemed public record under the new Public Records Law.

Mr. O'Neil noted some FY 2018 accomplishments including: purchase and implementation of digital display board for the Buzzell Senior Center entrance hall; upgrade of tablets in police cruisers; and removal and replacement of computers still using Windows XP from the Town networks.

FY 2019 projects and goals include: completing network upgrades, segmenting and isolating guest wireless network; implementing IT policies and procedures; addressing lack of stable backup power supply; moving to a hosted Voice-Over Internet Protocol (VOIP) system; alarm solution for Water department; replacement plan for Zetron at Public Safety; and migration of Library staff email to internal Town domain, which will relieve Brad McKenna, Technology Librarian, of server maintenance duties, so he can focus on Library specific tasks.

Capital Outlay includes: \$55,000 to replace desktop computers and maintain 3-5 year replacement cycle; purchase diagnostic laptop and tablet for DPW mechanics, so they can provide services in-house for vehicles like fire trucks; and purchase of a mobile tablet for Recreation to accept electronic payments at Silver Lake. \$20,000 is budgeted for UPS backup power and conditioning for the Public Safety data room and dispatch communication room. Current UPS units in those areas are antiquated and need constant battery replacement.

\$1,050,000 is budgeted to replace the Town's Enterprise Software. Mr. O'Neil stated that the current software, SoftRight, is no longer supported or developed, which has become a problem for Wilmington, and other communities still using SoftRight. The Enterprise Software is critical to performing both Town and School business as it controls day to day operations including tax collection, tax and utility billing, accounting, purchasing, and payroll. Conversion to a new enterprise system will be a long process, and likely take more than a year to complete. Ms. Casey stated that the Town's Enterprise Software Task Force were provided with demos of three software vendors: Vadar, Oracle, and Munis. She noted the most significant benefits of Munis being the size and reliability of the company, modules available, scalability, customer support and long-term stability. Funds will be paid to the vendor as each module is implemented. Mr. Hull noted that funds will come from free-cash. Following implementation, maintenance fees are expected to be \$200,000 per year.

Reserve Fund Transfer

Mr. Morris stated that IT is seeking a transfer from reserve funds in the amount of \$60,000. Mr. O'Neil stated that it is critical to replace some old switches. Mr. Hull stated that original request at last year's Town Meeting was for \$45,000. However, when Mr. O'Neil assessed the situation, he noted that as many as fourteen switches needed replacement. The transfer of funds would provide \$105,000 which includes the switches, labor, installation, and configuration.

The Finance Committee discussed the request. A motion was made by Mr. Doherty, seconded by Ms. Kincaid, and by the affirmative vote of all, it was:

VOTED: To approve the transfer of \$60,000 from the reserve account to the IT Miscellaneous Contractual Services account for the replacement of network switches.

BOARD OF ASSESSORS

PRESENT IN INTEREST: Karen Rassias, MAA, Principal Assessor.

Ms. Rassias stated that the Board of Assessors budget increased \$11,794 this year to \$311,250. Appraisal and inventories increased \$725. The Assessor has used a Certified Public Accounting (CPA) firm to perform audits on personal property assessments. For one audit, the CPA charged \$2,700, but gained \$400,000 worth of revenue for one year. Ms. Rassias stated that she has a list of other companies for whom she will be performing similar audits.

Subscriptions and dues is budgeted at \$4,800. This funds access to a system called CoStar, which is a resource for commercial and industrial regional data. This data is useful for Appellate Tax Board cases to compare rents, sales, vacancies, and comparable properties. The monthly fee for the system is \$395.

Furnishings and equipment is budgeted at \$3,150. Ms. Rassias stated that the department would like to purchase a four-drawer fireproof file cabinet, to protect historical permanent records, and two chairs, to replace the current secondhand chairs.

Appellate Tax Board Costs is budgeted at \$20,000. Ms. Rassias stated that she tries not to use that every year, however, if a case is filed, these funds provide for town counsel, appraisals, and cost estimators. She stated that the money is turned back to free cash if it goes unused. But it provides for safety if a case comes up. Ms. Rassias noted that she has tried five cases since she arrived, and has won all five.

Mr. Doherty asked how many cases the Town is currently facing. Ms. Rassias stated that there are a handful of residential cases. Two cases from FY 2015 and FY 2016 have recently been settled: 200 Ballardvale Street and 100 Fordham Road.

Ms. Rassias provided a summary of the Assessor's roles and responsibilities including: maintaining fair market value, as that is what determines the tax levy each year and property tax is the largest revenue source in Town; maintain assessment and database of each parcel and re-evaluate every five years; update records; subdivision plans and property splits; tracking overlay; provide certified lists of abutters; and personal property tax valuation, tracking, and collection. She noted that personal property tax can

be time consuming, however, it has carried the Town through difficult economic times. Other responsibilities include: motor vehicle excise; chapter land; statutory exemptions; annual tax classification hearing; submitting timely tax recapitulations; process real estate and personal property tax abatements. The department continuously communicates with other Town departments and Assessor's function is important to Town finances.

Ms. Rassias stated the total FY 2018 amount to be raised is \$108,852,525.23. Property tax accounts for 73% of revenue. The average single-family home value is \$439,673, and the average real estate tax bill is \$6,335. The Average Commercial/Industrial value is \$1,800,000 and average tax bill is approximately \$59,000.

Since 2014, tax exemptions for veterans have stayed consistent. Elderly exemptions decreased because the department started asking for documentation. FY 2017 exemptions were comprised of 75% for veterans and 25% for elderly and blind residents.

Assessor's department goals for FY 2019 include: cyclical reinspection program; identify next personal property audit; prepare and organize permanent records for archive; update assessed values; prepare new collection/tax billing software training; appraisal for Textron property; work with Engineering/GIS resolve map differences; and street numbering with next generation 9-1-1.

TOWN CLERK

PRESENT IN INTEREST: Sharon George, Town Clerk.

Ms. George provided a summary of the Town Clerk's office staff, mission, and responsibilities including: dog licensing; keeper of vital birth, marriage and death records; issue business certificates; keeper of records where Zoning Board of Appeals and Planning Board decisions are filed; and administration of elections and Town Meeting. Each year, the Clerk's Office registers approximately 2,600 dogs.

Ms. George noted that 2018 is a big election year with the Annual Town Election in April, with the Primary Election in September, and Mid-term Election in November. In 2014, an omnibus election bill was passed by the state legislature which included provisions for early voting and allows sixteen and seventeen-year-olds to pre-register to vote. The first early voting, for the 2016 Presidential election, was mandated by the Secretary of the State with no funding available to reimburse communities. Wilmington processed 6,000 ballots for eleven days of early voting. A 2018 bill is supposed to go legislature to add five days of early voting to the September primary election. However, the bill may not pass, as the legislature does not want to fund it and elections are already underfunded. Mr. Stokes asked if the 6,000 early ballots increased the average for the Presidential election. Ms. George stated that the average is approximately 80-81% for presidential elections. The Town had 81% voter turnout including early ballots, which was approximately a 0.4% increase. She noted that early voting saw approximately 500 voters per day and cost the Town approximately \$16,000. Ms. Manganelli asked how many voters in Wilmington vote in primary elections. Ms. George stated that the numbers fluctuate, and that it is significantly less than regular elections. Mr. Nally asked if there were any security issues with early voting. Ms. George stated that she did have concerns and hoped that for future early elections, ballots can be run through voting machines instead of being kept in envelopes. On election

day, election workers had to open the envelopes and run them through voting machines from 7:00 am until midnight. Ms. George noted that in FY 2017, which included the 2016 Presidential election, the Town spent \$34,000 for elections. The Town has still not received reimbursement for unfunded mandates. The anticipated reimbursement is only \$2,600.

Ms. George provided a summary of FY 2019 expenditures including: \$14,000 for elections; \$200,026 for personnel salaries; \$250 for Miscellaneous Contractual Services to support the time stamp machine; \$1,200 for training and conferences, which Ms. George needs to attend to maintain accreditation; \$6,500 for print and advertising, which increased \$3,250 for refurbishing more than one historical book per year; \$1,400 for materials and supplies such as office supplies, dog license tags, seals for certificates, and paper for census; and \$1,800 for furnishings and equipment for three new desks.

Ms. George stated that dog registrations generated \$42,496 in revenue in 2017. In 2012, Animal Control Law Chapter 140 was revamped and allowed communities to charge a \$50 fine for people who ignore repeated warnings to comply with registration. In 2017, late fees generated \$7,460, and civil fines generated \$7,900, which increased dog license revenue by \$17,451.

Elections

Ms. George stated that the personnel budget for elections is \$44,387 and provided a breakdown of the costs of each election: \$8,129 for September Primary (including early voting); \$19,128 for November General Election (including potential for 11 days of early voting); \$11,963 for 2019 Annual Town Election; \$3,514 for Annual Town Meeting; and \$1,654 reserved for a Special Town Meeting. Contract services are budgeted at \$100, which includes printing, advertising, binding, and advertisements for early voting. Miscellaneous contractual services are budgeted at \$7,650 for ballots, memory cards, and flashcards for HAVA (Help America Vote Act) compliant machines. \$200 is budgeted for the Constable who handles posting all warrants and any and all Attorney General decisions. Mr. Doherty asked how the voting machines are performing. Ms. George stated that they are functioning well, should last another five years, but is unsure if the manufacturer will still support them after that time. Mr. Hull stated they are scheduled to be replaced in the Capital Improvement Plan in 2023.

Board of Registrars

Ms. George stated that personnel services for the Board of Registrars consist of a \$750 stipend for the Town Clerk, and \$375 for each of three Registrars. Contractual services include: \$1,900 for the Annual Street Listing Book; \$1,600 for printing, advertising and binding; and \$4,000 for postage for the annual census, for which the Board receives a bulk rate discount.

Ms. George noted that in 2017, the Bylaw Study Committee was formed to review the Town's inhabitant bylaws. Ms. George will present the committee's findings at the Annual Town Meeting on May 5, 2018.

Goals for FY 2019 include: meeting with Town departments to discuss bylaws which pertain specifically to each department; continue to refurbish historical records books; and update birth, death, and marriage records.

Mr. Stokes asked if the Clerk's Office had received an increase in public records requests. Ms. George stated that since the public records law changed in 2017, they have received more records requests than

they ever had before. The average prior to the change was approximately 200 requests per year. In 2017, the Clerk's Office received approximately 500 requests.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Mr. Martinson departed prior to the approval of minutes and was not included in the vote.

The Finance Committee reviewed the Minutes from February 13, 2018. A motion was made by Mr. Doherty, seconded by Mr. Nally, and by the affirmative vote of all, it was:

VOTED: To approve the minutes from February 13, 2018.

The Finance Committee reviewed the Minutes from February 15, 2018. A motion was made by Ms. Gallezzo, seconded by Mr. Nally, and by the affirmative vote of all, with Mr. Doherty and Ms. Kincaid abstaining, and Mr. Martinson absent, it was:

VOTED: To approve the minutes from February 15, 2018.

NEW BUSINESS

Mr. Hull stated that the Tax Increment Finance (TIF) Team, consisting of himself, Assistant Town Manager, Dee Casey, Planning Director, Valerie Gingrich, and Principal Assessor, Karen Rassias, is scheduled to meet with representatives from Analog Devices on Friday, March 2, 2018 at 1:00 pm. At that meeting, the Town will offer a counterproposal to shorten the time frame from twenty years to ten years, and a total tax savings of \$4 million. He noted that Ms. Gingrich researched other TIFs granted throughout the state and the TIF Team believes this to be a fair compromise.

At the conclusion of the discussion, and there being no further business to come before the Committee, a motion was made by Mr. Couture, seconded by Mr. Eaton, and by the affirmative vote of all, it was

VOTED: That the Finance Committee adjourn.

Meeting adjourned at 9:37 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Recording Secretary