

## Finance Committee Meeting Tuesday, February 9, 2016

Chairman Theresa M. Manganelli called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. Members present were John F. Doherty, Marianne Gallezzo, Michele Kincaid, Robert P. Palmer, Bernard P. Nally, Jonathan R. Eaton, Kevin Stokes, Leigh Martinson. Excused: None

PRESENT IN INTEREST: Jeff Hull, Town Manager, Kendra Amaral, Assistant Town Manager

### **Dept. of Public Works, including Water & Sewer:**

Person of Interest: Michael Woods, Director of Public Works, Joseph Lobao, Utility & Business Manager

Mr. Woods – Explained Department of Public Works budget and provide handout with details regarding the budget. Mr. Hull – Reminded the Committee of the footnote relative to salary comparison for FY2016 and FY2017.

Mr. Woods – Explained the decrease in cost of oil and gasoline. Reads through page 4 of handout. Brief discussion on the grass around High school tennis courts and architect designed to put grass. Brief discussion on why sports lighting is not LED.

The department is looking to add two part-time Parks & Grounds employees. Brief discussion on the prospect of finding part-time employees and the need to keep the hours under the threshold for benefit eligibility.

Rubbish automation this year worked out well. In one year recycling has gone up 20%, 2016 is up to 27%.

Mr. Doherty – Recycle bin you can buy one, trash bin you have to purchase. Asked if a trash bin purchased at Home Depot would be emptied. Mr. Woods – The contract is not supposed to pick up non-town authorized barrels.

Mr. Nally – Asked if residents should be informed that they should not try to purchase their own barrel. Mr. Woods – Reviewed the various methods that information about the trash program has gone out to the public. Brief discussion on the positive increase in recycling, and decrease in trash since automated trash/recycle was instituted.

Mr. Woods – Reviewed capital requests. The Intersection Master Plan will study existing major and heavily traveled intersections for future improvements/upgrades. Brief discussion on difficult intersections in town. Brief discussion on Route 38 traffic flow. This road is State controlled. They have redone light timing and are looking at changing striping.

The Route 38 Main Street Transportation Improvement Plan (TIP) project which will go from Route 62 to the Woburn town line. It will address the roadway, beautify sidewalks and provide a better pedestrian connection from Yentile Farms to Town Park and Middlesex Canal area. The

project will also look at unsafe conditions at intersections like Cross Street, Butters Row, and the intersection of Lowell St. The town will hire a contractor to design the project to 25% and then MassDOT will pay for other 75% of engineering and for construction. Brief discussion on how long it would take to complete.

#### **Water:**

Mr. Woods – Review Water budget. Contractual costs are increased 36.6%. Two wells went down this year. The town had to purchase twice the amount of MWRA water than normal, and therefore the town expects the assessment to double.

Mr. Hull – Explained the transfer in water rates are paid by residents and businesses. A portion of government administrative costs are charged off to water.

Mr. Doherty – Asked what the free cash is for the Water Department. Mr. Hull – It is approximately \$200,000. Mr. Woods – Noted the town has not raised water rates since 2008. The town has been spending down the funds.

Mr. Woods – Reviewed Capital requests for Water Department. In-house water main replacement program is \$100,000. All work is done in-house, and is between 30 to 35% less than what a contractor would charge. Capital request includes design for replacement of Nassau Ave Water Tank Rehabilitation. The tank was designed in 1927, built 1930's, and painted in 1991-92. Funding is being sought for hydrogeological study at Barrow's Wellfield. It would take three years before it can be brought up to speed. It was designed for 700 gal/minute but currently produces 150 gal/minute. There are constant problems.

#### **Sewer:**

Mr. Woods – Reviewed Sewer budget. The department plans to identify and remove inflow and infiltration in the system. Explains community is forced by MWRA to do this, but they offer a funding program. Next year should come up with new II grant loan program that's 75/25, 75% grant, 25% loan from MWRA, helps reduce our assessment from MWRA about \$2M/year currently.

Mr. Doherty – Asked if some residents have a permit for their sump pump to go into a drain. Mr. Woods – Yes. There is a permit process to tie in to storm water drain not sewer drain.

Mr. Nally – Asked if the sewer pump at the Public Safety building is only 12 years old. Mr. Woods – It is approximately 16 years old; we usually get 15 to 20 years.

#### **Public Buildings:**

Person of interest: George Hooper, Superintendent of Public Buildings

Mr. Hooper – Reviewed budget. The budget includes one new custodian for High school. It is a full-time position. The seasonal increase is due to minimum wage increase. Brief discussion on the Building Systems Manager position which was added two years ago. Position is working out well. Utilities are decreased in fuel heating due to conversion to natural gas and energy efficiency

efforts. Electricity is level funded despite RMLD increasing rates by 9%. The town's KWH is down which is offsetting the rate increase. HVAC repairs are increased to \$160,000 mainly due to new HS having more chillers and hundreds of filters needing to be changed.

Mr. Martinson – Asked, if due to new equipment, will routine maintenance remain flat. Mr. Hooper – Believed the costs will stay flat, but will know better after the first year is complete.

Mr. Hooper –Town Buildings line item is increased \$27,000 demolish the building on the Saint Dorothy property purchased by the town.

Mr. Hooper – Reviewed capital projects. Proposing \$750,000 to continue town's roof projects. Brief discussion on why the town is making these investments before the building study is complete.

Brief discussion on Butters Farm property. The identified Real Estate Agent was not interested the project. The town is working with Historic New England (non-profit) on a deed restriction and a rehabilitation plan that will be part of the sale. Town expects to have the property on market beginning of summer. The goal is to get approximately \$40,000 for the property. The historical restrictions bring the value down considerably.

**Other business:**

Next meeting at library tour starts at 6:30.

There being no further business, a motion was made by John Doherty, seconded by Jonathan Eaton and by the affirmative vote of all, the Finance Committee meeting was adjourned.

Meeting adjourned at 8:30 p.m. The next meeting of the Finance Committee is scheduled for Thursday, February 11, 2016.

Respectfully submitted,

Recording secretary