



Town of Adams Massachusetts 01220-2087

FINANCE COMMITTEE BOARD OF SELECTMEN

TOWN HALL BUILDING
8 PARK STREET

**Thursday, April 4, 2024, 6:00 p.m.
Adams Free Library,
1st Floor Annex Meeting Room
92 Park Street, Adams Ma**

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TOWN CLERK
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CLERK

CALL TO ORDER: On the above date, the Finance Committee and Board of Selectmen held a Joint Meeting at 6:00 PM at the Adams Free Library. Chairperson of the Finance Committee Jay Meczywor opened the Meeting for the Finance Committee. Present from the finance committee were Chairperson Jay Meczywor; Vice-Chair Tim Burdick, Members Carol Cushenette, Carrie Burnett, Jeff King, David Lennon, Rachel Tomkowicz, Erin Mucci, Bob Murray, Justin Duval and Sarah Kline.

Chairman Christine Hoyt of the Adams Selectboard called the meeting to order simultaneously. Present from the Adams Board of Selectmen were Chairman Christine Hoyt, Vice-Chair Howard Rosenberg and Members John Duval and Joe Nowak. *Member Rick Blanchard was absent.*

Also present were Jay Green, Town Administrator; Crystal Adelt, Town Finance Director; Eammon Coughlin, Community Development Director; Mike Wynn, Greylock Glen Outdoor Center Executive Director; Tammy Daniels of iBerkshires; Bri Hantman, Recording Secretary; Linda Cernik, Northern Berkshire Solid Waste Management District Director; and members of the Adams Community.

Chairman Christine Hoyt indicated that the meeting would not be recorded and asked for other individuals indicate if they wish to record. Tammy Daniels of iBerkshires indicated that she would be recording.

Crystal Adelt, Town Finance Director notified the room that there were updated spreadsheets and pages for the group. Finance Committee Member Bob Murray emailed Crystal Adelt questions regarding timing of actuals.

GREYLOCK GLEN OPERATING BUDGET:

Town Administrator Green directed the group to the Greylock Glen Operating Budget in the Town budget binder. The budget detail for the Greylock Glen shows that 20% of the salary for the executive director is paid on the Tax Levy. The rest of his salary is paid out of the economic development fund. The Superintendent of Buildings and grounds budget is paid out of the budget.

Ms. Adelt explained how to read the pay chart, including base rate of pay, step increase or COLA additions, and the cost of health insurance and benefits, being the total cost of having that employee on the books, not necessarily the salary that that person earns.

Mike Wynn, Greylock Glen Outdoor Center Executive Director introduced himself to the room. Director Wynn identified two line-items in the budget that could not be reduced in order to hit the goal of a level funded budget, being legal services and insurance.

Member Tomkowicz asked when the Outdoor Center would be opening and what type of programs would be in place. Director Wynn stated that the Outdoor Center is anticipated to Open in the Fall and that the Town of Adams has selected Mass Audubon as their educational provider for the space.

Member Nowak asked why Colliers OPM, (Owners Project Manager) for the Greylock Glen, hasn't presented to the Board yet. The individual goes up to the building twice a week to do testing (concrete testing, commissioning agent, etc.) as well as a weekly meeting. Town Administrator Green explained how the funds for the building are being used including how the federal funds were released. Member Nowak asked why he hasn't been updated on the project. Member Nowak was encouraged to ask the Town Administrator and Donna Cesan any questions he has.

Member Cushenette asked if there is an opportunity to defer the salary for the Superintendent of Buildings and Grounds until the opening date of the building. Director Wynn stated that it is more than just the building that needs attention. It is the trails and grounds as well.

Member Nowak asked why there was a discrepancy in the rate of pay that the Superintendent of Buildings and Grounds at the Greylock Glen was hired at versus what the position was advertised at. That item was added as a follow up item to be addressed at a future meeting.

A member of the gallery was recognized to ask a question. The individual stated that the Town Administrator responded to Member Nowak in a condescending way. A point of order was called for by Members Cushenette and Kline due to the lack of a question pertaining to the budget being asked. The member of the gallery was allowed to continue but again, did not ask a question pertaining to the budget. Member Cushenette called for a point of order. The point of order was recognized by Chairman Meczywor.

Member Kline asked where the equipment for the Greylock Glen would come from. Initially, there will be a lot of borrowing from the DPW. Then equipment will slowly be purchased as needed. The Superintendent will also be responsible for plowing the parking lots. There is a possibility that the Superintendent will be plowing Gould Road.

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Eammon Coughlin, Community Development Director introduced himself to the room. He has been with the Town of Adams for nearly three year. This budget is basically level funded, but the life insurance line item will be going up. There is also an increase in health insurance. You will notice that two position are in the budget, out of four positions in the office. The other two

positions are paid for out of the Community Development Block Grant.

There have been consolidations from individual boards, and consolidated to one budget. Legal services, postage, and others will still go to those individual costs, but they are consolidated to one singular line item. It simplifies it so that boards are not responsible for individual budgets.

Member Nowak asked how the number for legal services was decided on and where outside agencies and consultants would be paid from. Town Administrator Green directed Member Nowak's attention to Management Consultant line item.

Member Murray asked why there was an increase in the Engineering fund. Town Administrator Green clarified that that line item was consolidated with engineering funds from the Town Administrator's budget. Director Coughlin added that engineering is often critical to receiving grants. Contract oversight for several of the projects in town were named as places where those engineering funds would be included as well.

Director Coughlin discussed the grants that are being currently underway or about to be underway by the Community Development Department. There are currently two Community Development Block Grants underway that are being used on the future re-design of Howland Ave, Coal and Grain Park, and Bike Trail work. In total, the Community Development Department is currently managing roughly 18 million in grants.

From 2018 onward, there have been about 3 million dollars in projects completed.

Member Cushenette asked if there have been significant changes from previous years. Director Coughlin stated that there are some projects that have been completed and some small grants that have been added.

Vice-chair Rosenberg and Member Mucci offered gratitude for the Community Development Staff for bringing in so much grant funding.

Town Administrator Green stated that there is a great Community Development staff that is working to keep a number of projects moving forward. Keeping grantors happy with reporting guidelines is a challenging and time-consuming job.

Vice-chair Rosenberg asked if there are any grants that aren't being chased after due to lack of manpower. Director Coughlin stated that there are federal grants that require a significant amount of management that would require more people.

Director Coughlin stated that prioritization is key. It is hard to say "no" to a grant application that could move a project forward. For example, Director Coughlin is getting ready to hit send on a grant application to provide funds for a study on removal options for the Fisk Street Dam.

Member Mucci commended on their Community Development Department on their ability to manage over 30 grants and over 21 million dollars. Members Mucci, Kline, and Cushenette noted that it would be helpful to see a spreadsheet of all the grant funding that the Community Development Department receives and details regarding engineering costs, award dates, and project start and completion dates. This request was noted and will be followed up on at a future meeting.

Member Nowak asked if the Agricultural Commission was allotted any funds. Town Administrator Green stated that all of the listed boards and commissions have funds that have been rolled into the Community Development Board.

Member Nowak asked if there can be an individual assigned to do the minutes for the Agricultural Commission. Town Administrator Green stated that there is already a member of the Board who is taking minutes.

Department of Public Works

Tree warden budget was level funded. Member Nowak stated that he thinks that funds should be allocated for planting trees.

The Town Administrator is still the acting DPW Director. The DPW Administrative Assistant was previously shared by the facilities department. This year, the administrative assistant is just for the DPW with facilities and Inspectional Services responsibilities falling back into that department. There is no impact to the budget, just a shift of where those funds are coming from. There is a proposal for one additional laborer to be added to bring the total number of DPW employees in the DPW to 15.

The only change to the staff detail is to add an additional laborer to the Parks and Cemetery side of the DPW. The Board of Selectmen have discussed additional needs for maintenance, especially with the transfer of Bowe field back to the Town and the Greylock Glen.

DPW contract negotiations have been addressed and include an increase to DPW wages so that the Town of Adams is competitive, not the highest or lowest.

Vice-chair Rosenberg asked if a new DPW director can be recruited for now. Town Administrator Green stated that it is a matter of timing and cost. The timing isn't correct.

Chairman Meczywor asked if the majority of the overtime budget is used for plowing or other work. There was very little snow, but there are additional costs incurred during paving season and with after-hours sewer calls. Snow removal does not need Town Administrator authorization as it is necessary to get it done, however additional over time may be used on paving, tree and sewer calls, etc.

Great Barrington is looking at purchasing a paver as they have come to the same analysis as the Town of Adams. Richmond and West Stockbridge are sharing a paver. Pittsfield and Cheshire are both seeking to purchase pavers.

Snow and ice control budgets are level funded.

All trucks are equipped with mechanical calibration for the purposes of spreading salt and sand. Member Nowak stated that he would like to see the trucks equipped with electronic calibration. The State has such technology. No other municipalities have that technology because it is incredibly expensive. Town Administrator Green offer to make an appointment with Member Nowak to bring him to the DPW and show him how that equipment is calibrated.

Chairman Meczywor asked if liquid calcium is used. The Town does use liquid calcium. Salt is purchased on a bid price with regional planning.

Flood Control funding is level funded.

Garage and equipment maintenance has gone up due to the cost of vehicle parts and accessories as well as inspection costs. One mechanic is a certified Ford mechanic. He has purchased a diagnostic tool that allows him to diagnose issues without sending them to a dealership.

Waste Water Treatment Plant

It is likely that the Waste Water Treatment plant will see two retirements soon. The Town will be faced with an issue of recruitment and retention. The city of Danvers has a clear recruitment guideline for the Waste Water Treatment Plant.

Lab analysis costs have gone up because the Town must now test for PFAs. Member Nowak asked if any PFAs have been found. So far, none have been found.

Process chemical costs have also gone up, so the budget has been adjusted to accommodate that.

Waste Water Collection is part of the DPW as they are the ones going out on those calls. There is also a line item in the DPW budget for that same reason.

Cemetery, Parks, and Grounds is level funded this year. Those costs include the striping, restroom maintenance, etc.

Member Nowak stated that he has a hard time grasping all of the numbers in the budget.

Chairman Hoyt stated that this is why everyone was given nearly a month to review the budget. Town Administrator Green also stated that he is happy to meet and answer any questions as it is a lot to comprehend.

Transfer Station

The Northern Berkshire Solid Waste Management District (NBSWMD) cost has gone up. As such, Linda Cernik of the NBSWMD Program Director approached the Board.

Town Administrator Green Stated that in the past permit fees and bag costs have been insufficient in covering the costs of the Transfer Station. The cost of the permit fees and bag tags have gone up per the recommendation of staff, and those costs were approved by the Board of Selectmen.

Ms. Cernik stated that she is the only employee and has 14 Board members. She does all of the state reporting, grant writing, special collections, compliance, outreach and education. Ms. Cernik is certified as a third-party inspector. Ms. Cernik stated if a separate third-party engineer would be about \$1000 per town.

Casella wanted to increase the costs across the board by about 6.1%.

Casella provides all the hauling containers for the transfer station. Every time a container is pulled out, there is a fee, plus a hauling fee, plus a processing fee.

The cost for comingled waste is roughly \$150 a ton. The contract goes until 2025. Waste is ultimately hauled up to Twin Bridges New York.

The Town of Adams sold 649 permits, but the MSW was relatively low compared to other communities, which indicates that a lot of permit holders are using the transfer station for recycling.

Vice-chair Rosenberg asked if a lot of money could be saved by instituting a municipal composting program. Down the line, Mass DEP will likely enforce a waste ban for compost.

The budget for NBSWMD has gone up including an increase to Ms. Cernik's salary and in increase to retirement. If the Town didn't belong to NBSWMD, then the Town of Adams would not receive the group rate from Casella. Additionally, programs like hazardous waste days would be funded by the Town. Ms. Cernik suggests eventually purchasing a paper compactor. The Transfer Station attendant is paid for out of the revolving fund. If an additional transfer station attendant were to be added, it would come out of the revolving fund which would mean an increase in permit fees.

Member Nowak asked what capacity is left at the transfer station in Pownal, VT is. Ms. Cernik stated that the Pownal facility closed due to lack of volume. Member Nowak asked what the market is for cardboard. Ms. Cernik didn't know the answer as most transfer stations don't disclose their buyers.

Chairman Hoyt thanked Ms. Cernik for the calendar of collection events. Chairman Hoyt asked if there are any educational opportunities for the general public. Ms. Cernik stated that she does a number of educational events for the general public, including in local schools. Ms. Cernik stated that there is a guide available to the towns on their websites as well as events she does in the schools.

Next meeting is Tuesday, April 9th at 6:00pm in the library.

Member Burnett asked for a summary of budget changes each meeting,

ADJOURNMENT

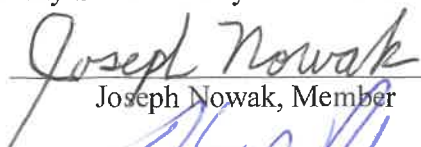
Vice-Chair Rosenberg made a motion to adjourn the Board of Selectmen workshop. Member Nowak seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously. The Board of Selectmen Workshop was adjourned at 8:12pm

Member Tomkowicz made a motion to adjourn the Finance Committee workshop. Member Kline Seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously. The Finance Committee workshop was adjourned at 8:12pm.

Documents Reference:

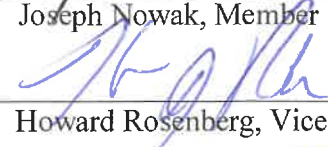
- Proposed Budget
- Active and Recently Completed Projects
- Organizational Chart

Respectfully Submitted by Bri Hantman, Recording Secretary.

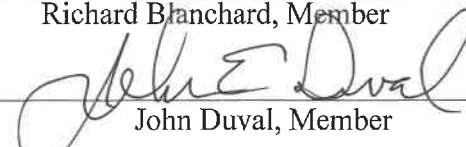


Joseph Nowak, Member


Richard Blanchard, Member



Howard Rosenberg, Vice Chairman



John Duval, Member



Christine Hoyt, Chairman