

Town of Adams Massachusetts 01220-2087

FINANCE COMMITTEE

TOWN HALL BUILDING
8 PARK STREET

MEETING MINUTES ✓

TUESDAY, MARCH 21, 2017 – 6:00 PM

Adams Visitors Center, 3 Hoosac Street, 1st Floor Meeting Room, Adams, MA 01220

On the above date the *Finance Committee* held a joint workshop meeting with the Board of Selectmen at the Adams Visitors Center at 6:00 p.m. Chairman Timothy Burdick presided the meeting. Present were Finance Committee Chairman Timothy Burdick, Vice Chairman Leon Parrott, and Members Jeffrey Lefebvre, John Cowie, Charles Foster, Joan Smigel, Amy Giroux, Mark Chittenden and Craig Corrigan. *Finance Committee Members Sandra Kleiner, Paul Demastrie, Brian Johnson, Matthew Pitoniak, and Rachel Tomkowicz were absent.* Also in attendance were Board of Selectmen Chairman Jeffrey Snoonian and Members Joseph Nowak, and Richard Blanchard. *Board of Selectmen Member John Duval was absent.* Also in attendance were Town Administrator Tony Mazzucco and Council on Aging Director, Erica Girgenti.

The Finance Committee Workshop was called to order at 6:00 p.m.

Approval of July 7, 2016 Minutes

Motion made by Member Lefebvre to table the approval of the minutes for July 7, 2017

Second by Member Giroux

Abstention by Member Cowie

Voted in favor were Chairman Burdick, Vice Chairman Parrott, and Members Lefebvre, Foster, Joan Smigel, Giroux, Chittenden and Corrigan

Motion passed

The Select Board Workshop was called to order at 6:00 p.m.

BUDGET OVERVIEW

PUBLIC SERVICE BUDGET

Town Administrator Mazzucco introduced Council on Aging Director Erica Girgenti, who gave a presentation on the Council on Aging (COA) budget.

Director Girgenti gave statistics and explained services provided at the Council on Aging. There is a one-time emergency grant from the Salvation Army that provides assistance to area citizens. Volunteer services and in-kind services were outlined. Donations received into the Gift Account cover costs to entertainers, the printer and socials. Grant funding covers transportation, outreach, postage, dues and licenses, the cost of printing the newsletter, conferences, education, the volunteer recognition, wellness programs, personnel and benefits. Education is in the grant budget. In-kind donations included cable, internet, Aladco linens, Berkshire Tents, the Lions Club dinner, printing expenses and miscellaneous office items. She briefly reviewed transportation, revenue sources, ADA riders, van receipts, and the Berkshire Regional Transit Authority formula grant funding. She advised she is hoping for a \$27,000 return to the Town. A grant will provide vans outside of the community at a reimbursement rate of over .50 per mile for the cost of the driver, which could generate income through the end of the fiscal year. Out of state transportation requests would have to go through BRTA prior to approval due to insurance.

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COA expects the loss of a full-time driver due to retirement. The shift will create one part-time driver and one part-time administrative assistant. Currently there are 71 hours of coverage and Fiscal Year 2018 is projecting 68 hours of coverage. She briefly reviewed the number of requests daily for transportation and the need for an administrative assistant to manage the federal paperwork and dispatch drivers. She briefly reviewed the Visitors Center operations budget and it was noted that the building did not have much maintenance except with the HVAC system.

Finance Committee Members asked about ownership of the two vehicles on the road and whether they were wheelchair lift vehicles. BRTA has federal regulations requiring random drug testing, paper recording, billing and training. The Town could apply for grant funding but if received could only transport older adults. BRTA currently leases to eight towns, and about four towns have two vehicles. BRTA is currently a blend of federal and state funds.

PUBLIC BUILDINGS BUDGET

The Police Station budget outlined a need for carpeting and safety glass. The cost of natural has been reduced because the pricing has been locked in, as well as better heat management. Small repair costs are going up with the windows and roof. Custodial services will be eliminated next year as the Town gets rid of the cleaning contract and brings on additional staff.

The Registry of Deeds building has unfinished painting and very little repair or maintenance. The state pays a rental fee and the rear of the building has space for offices which could have future use.

Town Hall has a reduction in natural gas fees, and has been reducing heating and cooling hours with the four-day work week. Trash removal costs are down and the elevator contracts have been renegotiated to a lower cost. There are a lot of capital projects in the building with the roof, windows, front and rear porticos, carpeting and the need for a permanent dehumidifier for the school district offices to be put in the basement.

Public Buildings will need property maintenance. Electricity has been reduced due to locked in rates for the Wastewater Treatment Plant and the solar array. The Wastewater Treatment Plant has replacement LED bulbs. Net metering credits from Oxford are helping by utilizing surpluses in accounts and locking them in for three to four years on energy rates. Capital projects include an ADA lift repair for the auditorium at C.T. Plunkett School and ADA compliance for the Old Town Hall building for the Registry of Deeds. Grant funding is being investigated. Adams Memorial School has a relatively small budget and is being kept functioning until the Town can find another use for it. The Visitors Center is in good shape for maintenance but may need a Reserve Fund transfer for the HVAC system. Security cameras are needed in the building. \$6,000 that used to be allocated for summer staff is now funded through a grant.

Finance Committee Members inquired if the efficiency of the solar array will go down as it ages, if there is any grant funding for Memorial School and if the Town could more aggressively market the building. It was explained that the efficiency of the solar array will reduce with age, and if it is snow covered. The next big market is for solar field remediation. It was noted that there was some interest in the Memorial School by private parties. The Town Administrator would sell it for \$1.00 or \$.50.

PUBLIC WORKS BUDGET

Tree Warden budget shows a reduction in the pest care line, and is now only for taking down Town trees.

DPW Administration has eliminated the Deputy DPW position last year. Having an engineer for the Director position would be preferred, and the Town Administrator is looking to merge with another town if they have an engineer. There is an increase in advertising costs.

Highways temporary line item is for Seasonal Laborer positions. The overtime budget was explained. The clothing allowance has been reduced. Health Insurance has reduced some. The operating expenses were reviewed. Engineering costs are down, there is a reduction in signs, the asphalt budget has been cut, and resources are being cut but the Town is being as efficient as it can be. The net decrease is \$10,000.

Snow & Ice Control budget showed a move in the sand line to the salt line because DEP has cracked down on sand.

Flood Control is flat funded, and there is a concern about the overall flood network. The Town can get grant and federal funding for repairs and maintenance.

Finance Committee Members inquired about whether it was possible to encumber money every year to reduce the future costs for flood control. It could not be done in this budget due to the increase in the McCann budget.

DPW Garage/Equipment Maintenance showed an increase in vehicle maintenance and parts lines because the older, larger trucks are beginning to require more attention and maintenance. The Town is three years from having a couple replaced because the larger trucks have not been kept up to date. There is a jaw bucket replacement and a one-ton truck in the budget for this year. The lease payment for the street sweeper is to be completed.

Recycling Center increases were due to an increase in minimum wage. Solid waste will be accepted beginning July 1st, or September or October on a pay-as-you-throw program. Citizens will need to purchase bags from local businesses. Currently up to 350 people use the Recycle Center each week, and this would increase if we advertise it. A brief trash overview was given, including the reasoning behind the change, permitting, DEP site assessment, and the desire to be more sustainable. The cost would be to lease a compactor. McCann School built the shed, and electricity is taken care of. This should generate revenue to offset costs in a rolling fund and also pick up tires. The Solid Waste Report can be emailed out to any board member interested.

Wastewater Treatment budget is reducing the amount of chemicals. Sludge is expecting a 20% increase with Synagro, so options are being explored. Bid documents are being prepared to go out. A sludge explanation was given, and Synagro gave an offer to split the costs over a couple years. The Town is looking to take septic waste at the sewer plant which should show a reasonable return in investment. Capital projects include replacement of VFD motors at the Harmony Street Pump Station.

Wastewater Collection includes sewer repairs.

Cemeteries, Parks & Grounds budgets showed an increase in electric costs, and reflect the annual purchase of mowers, trimmers, nets, and soil testing to make sure it is the correct grade for sports.

Recreation was funded in full by Free Cash. Town meeting will decide whether to fund this or not.

Finance Committee Members suggested reimbursing this the same way as is being done with the Agricultural Fair, or putting it on a separate warrant. An inquiry was made as to whether high school students would be hired for this. The question was raised whether the Town should pay for this or an outside entity, and that it would be on a separate warrant. The Youth Center has done this in the past.

Celebrations-Seasonal is increased to update holiday decorations.

A recess too place at 7:41 p.m., and the meeting reconvened at 7:44 p.m.

PERFORMANCE METRICS

Police statistics are still being worked on.

Inspections are now able to be tracked for permits issued, and permit fees. The Town Administrator is now able to track when permits are requested and when they are issued by logging into the system himself.

Finance Committee Members inquired who notifies the Plumbing Inspector of inspections to be done, and whether there were occupancy permit metrics. An inquiry was made about how often fees are reassessed. There is an automatic email that goes to the Plumbing Inspector when an inspection is needed and there is no payment to the Inspector until the work is completed. Permit fees were increased, and plumbing permit fees are lower than gas permits. There are new Certificates of Occupancy for substantial work being done but none for new houses sold. Fees were just upgraded in January 2017 to be comparable to other communities in Berkshire County. Permit fees almost cover the cost of the Building Commissioner's salary.

Library statistics were reviewed briefly.

Town Assessor statistics for property values were examined and explained. Non-arms-length and arms-length sales, short sales, foreclosures, bank and tax-taking properties were explained. A chart of values was explained to the Finance Committee and Board of Selectmen.

Finance Committee Members requested more metrics, including a square footage metric on properties to be added for tracking. Tracking abatements is more complicated.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion made by Member Nowak to adjourn the Board of Selectmen Workshop

Second by Member Blanchard

Unanimous Vote

Motion passed

Motion made by Member Lefebvre to adjourn the Finance Committee Workshop

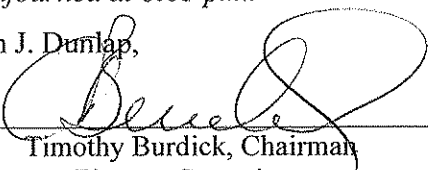
Second by Member Cowie

Unanimous vote

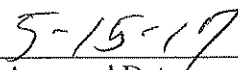
Motion passed

The Board of Selectmen Meeting adjourned at 8:05 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted by Deborah J. Dunlap,
Recording Secretary



Timothy Burdick, Chairman
Finance Committee



Approval Date