FINANCE COMMITTEE

TOWN HALL BUILDING
8 PARK STREET

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Thursday, May 7, 2020 at 5:30 p.m.

Meeting Minutes

CALL TO ORDER: CALL TO ORDER: On the above date the Board of Selectmen and Finance Committee held a meeting on the first floor of Adams Town Hall. It was announced that Board of Selectmen Vice Chairman Bush, Members Nowak, Blanchard and Duval, Finance Committee Vice Chairman Cowie and Members Butler, Corrigan, Cushenette, Foster, Johnson, Kline, Kupiec, Meczywor, and Tomkowicz were attending the meeting remotely for COVID-19 emergency purposes under 9410 CMR 29.10(5). The meeting was called to order at 5:30 p.m. by Board of Selectmen Chairman Hoyt and Finance Committee Chairman Burdick. Present were Town Administrator Green, Council on Aging Director Girgenti, Wastewater Treatment Plant Superintendent Rumbolt, Department of Public Works Director Tober and Operations Supervisor Cota.

Chairman Hoyt advised that "pursuant to Governor Baker's March 12, 2020 *Order Suspending Certain Provisions of the Open Meeting Law, G.L. c. 30A, §18*, and the Governor's March 15, 2020 Order imposing strict limitations on the number of people that may gather in one place, this meeting of the Town of Adams Board of Selectmen is being conducted via remote participation. No in-person attendance of members of the public will be permitted, but every effort will be made to ensure that the public can adequately access the proceedings as provided for in the Order. A reminder that persons who would like to view this meeting while in progress may do so by tuning into Channel 1303, thank you to Northern Berkshire Community Television OR by calling *(888) 788-0099.*

Call In Connection:

Video: https://zoom.us/j/91524845130?pwd=akN0Y1ZadlVYa0NvaTJLaDRJMDBvZz09, *Meeting ID:* 915-2484-5130, *Password:* TOAFY21

Phone: 1-929-436-2866, *Meeting ID:* 915-2484-5130, *Password:* 828951

FY2020 Budget Review

Council on Aging: *Town Administrator Green* advised the Council on Aging budget shows a 6% budget increase. He gave a brief review of the Personal Services and Operations budgets. It was pointed out that grants augment the funding for services. *Council on Aging Director Girgenti* gave an overview of the essential department funds and the grant funding. She reviewed the current activities and offerings of the Council on Aging including the Mobile Food Bank and the Grab and Go Lunch program. A brown bag delivery of non-perishable foods is taking place for older adults. SNAP applications, fuel assistance and emergency grants for community members are still taking place. Transportation is currently being provided for prescription and grocery pickup. A request was made for the actual expended costs to date. It was explained that the Elder Fund budget offsets the costs of municipal staff. Receipts were reviewed briefly. It was noted that van ridership is down as a result of Covid-19 and donations are down. There is $7,000 in the Elder Fund budget currently and it is anticipated that it still will make the $25,000 allocation to municipal services out of that account.

State funding through the Executive Office of Elder Affairs through the Formula Grant was reviewed and was explained to be put toward the Outreach Worker's insurance costs, which is not reflected in the budget. $5,000 was noted as going toward client transportation, equipment and furniture, licenses and dues, conference and educational events, the volunteer appreciation and recognition event and other senior programming. Other state funding was reviewed. The Gift Account for donations was explained. She explained that the Senior Center has concerns regarding not enough room for programming, and that events in the building require breakdown and limit the window for programming. There is a demand for more space.

Adams Visitors Center: Elevator maintenance was explained as being part of the new Otis Contract and parts are included. Electric costs are funded by the solar field by the Transfer Station. The thermal heating system was explained and a background on the problems with the system was given.

Wastewater Treatment: *Town Administrator Green* gave an overview of the budget and the department. Significant increases of budget were noted. A capital budget request of $75,000 was explained as being to replace control system of the plant. A reminder was given of the $50,000 that will be removed from the budget for an engineering study due to a grant received from the Community Compact. Labor costs were reviewed and it was explained that staffing is not a flexible number, but is mandated by the state for seven licensed staff. Chemical treatment and process chemicals were briefly explained. Escalated costs are noted as being due to more people being at home due to Covid-19. The Town is doing its best to get additional costs covered under Emergency Provisions due to Covid-19. It was explained that the flow increased by 1.2 million gallons since the start of the pandemic restrictions, costing almost a quarter more in chemicals and other supplies. Increases in chemical costs were pointed out as well, due to supply and demand. The sludge contract has used $127,000 of the total $130,000 for sludge removal already. Lab analysis testing for the NPDES permit has increased. An automatic external defibrillator service agreement for $79 per month was explained. The current state of the control system was given, and it was noted has having broken down three times in last few months. It was described as being antiquated and difficult to find parts, and if it fails the plant cannot run. It was explained that it will take approximately six or more weeks to build. It was clarified that there is no indication of price gouging. Potential for additional use of the capacity of the Wastewater Treatment Plant was discussed as a possibility to make money. Tighe & Bond is assessing this currently, and an enterprise model is being looked at. Funding options for the control system were considered. It was noted that there would be additional costs with installation of the Control System. Removal of wipes in the system has more than doubled because of the increase in people being home during the pandemic. Use of the Reserve Fund for emergencies was briefly reviewed. Lighting costs will be worked on with DPW Director Tober. The contract for sludge removal was clarified as being based on wet tons and the charges for wet tons of disposal were outlined. The current multi-year contract expires January 1, 2022. All Board of Selectmen and Finance Committee Members were invited to tour the plant, which was noted as having been built in 1971 and still has a lot of original equipment.

Department of Public Works: *Town Administrator Green* gave an overview of the budget. Fees for transfer station were reviewed and data receipts of the revolving fund were given. It was noted as being funded by permit and sticker receipts, bag tag sales and metal scrap. A three-year snapshot was given on the charges made to the revolving fund. $60,000 was saved on the tax rate and money was spent from the revolving fund. The three-year sticker and bag tag sales funds were reviewed. Wastewater collection was explained as being the pipes and system. The capital budget requests were explained as being for a brush mower, weed whippers, and the Russell Field remodel and repainting.

The total Russell Field building reconstruction was quoted as $100,000, and not viable for this year. Banners for Park Street were level funded. Seasonal Laborers that take care of cemetery mowing were reviewed and due to Covid-19 it is being taken one day at a time. $225,000 is in the fund for perpetual care and discussion took place regarding whether Seasonal Laborers could be hired through that funding. The Tree Warden and Flood Control budgets were reviewed. It was noted that the Army Corps of Engineers are difficult to work with and that Seasonal Laborers are utilized to weed whack the banks of the Flood Control. A request was made to put native plants on the banks to cut back on the need for so much work to be done. Discussion took place on the use of road salt. It was noted as being a big budget item and depending on the severity of winter it is not known how much road salt will be used. The effect of road salt on water bodies, wetlands, and personal drinking water in wells was noted. A request was made to work together as a community to limit salt use on the roads. The funds appropriated for road salt were spent but there is a reserve in the salt shed currently. It was reported that the Department of Public Works staff attended seminars on the use of road salt and are paying attention to this issue. The increase in the personal services budget for the Transfer Station was noted as being Workman's Compensation and insurance for the full-time employee. An inquiry was made about the $25,000 rental for a brush tub grinder for the transfer station and about collecting money for brush being brought in to cover costs. It was pointed out that North Adams charges $6 per load, and it is unclear whether commercial businesses are dumping brush there. Discussion took place about whether to accept brush any longer or not. Logistical concerns with collecting funds on site were noted. The $25,000 was noted as being a one-time tub grinder rental because there is not a good way to get rid of it. Once ground, the brush is left in place to decompose into loam. Total costs to run the transfer station were outlined as being operating costs, personal services and fees to remove recycling from transfer station through the agreement with NBSWMD which negotiates the price. Funds used from the revolving fund were reviewed. It was noted that the Transfer Station would possibly pay for itself with an increase in permit fee. It was explained that the Town is at the end of the existing contract for waste removal and will have to look at it again. Prevailing wage for the hauler was noted as increasing annually. It was noted that the Town of Adams and City of North Adams were duplicating services by having services in both towns.

Public Buildings/Property Maintenance: *Town Administrator Green* advised that this year there are not any large purchase requests. Staff was thanked for taking care of the vehicles. The Registry of Deeds building is owned by the Town and the Police Station is built on the back of the building. An accessibility lift was looked at for the building as required by law, among other guidelines and regulations. If the tenant leaves the building must be in a good state of repair. It was noted that the project was being worked on but Covid-19 and construction costs have hampered it from moving forward. Repairs to the building's roof are still in progress due to ongoing leaks. The Town Hall budget was noted as being level funded. It was noted that the Full-Time Custodian and Transfer Station/Custodian are partially funded out of this budget. The Budget for electrical accounts was reviewed and there is no current figure on what was spent but because of solar field applied credits which offset the Town expenses. It was explained that the Youth Center has left the Community Center Building. The building has been secured and is not heated but has fire protection. Adams Memorial building has been level funded. The current HVAC project is in progress and should be completing. It was explained that the heating system currently in place will only be needed to stabilize the environment in the classroom wing. The possible relocation of the Council on Aging to this building was discussed. It was noted that the Town intends to retain ownership of the auditorium and privatize the classroom area. A successful walk-through took place with interested contractors. It was explained that due to the pandemic, the Town was asked to extend the RFP out further.

If a contractor wishes to privatize the whole building the Board of Selectmen will need to have a conversation. It was explained that the cafeteria is valuable and needs upgrades but could be utilized by the Council on Aging for meals. Access on the Columbia Street side of the building was discussed. Elevator maintenance was clarified as being in the merged contract. The new contract did not increase any costs and got better coverage.

ADJOURNMENT: ***Motion made by Board of Selectmen Vice Chairman Bush to adjourn the meeting, second by Member Blanchard. Roll Call Vote: Chairman Hoyt, Vice Chairman Bush, Members Blanchard, Duval and Nowak. Motion passed. Meeting adjourned at 7:39 pm***

Motion made by Finance Committee Member Tomkowicz to adjourn the meeting, second by Member Cushenette. Roll Call Vote: Chairman Burdick, Vice Chairman Cowie, Members Corrigan, Foster, Johnson, Cushenette, Tomkowicz, Kupiec, Meczywor, Butler and Kline. Motion passed. Meeting adjourned at 7:40 pm

Respectfully Submitted by Deborah J. Dunlap,
Recording Secretary

Timothy Burdick, Chairman