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Town of Adams Massachusetts 01220-2087

FINANCE COMMITTEE

TOWN CLERK
ADAMS MASS.

TOWN HALL BUILDING
8 PARK STREET

FINANCE COMMITTEE MINUTES

APRIL 3, 2018 - 6:00 P.M.

ADAMS TOWN HALL, 1ST FL. BOARD OF SELECTMEN MEETING ROOM

Call to Order: Meeting was called to order by Chairman Burdick at 6:00 p.m. Members Kleiner, Corrigan, Demastrie, Foster, Lefebvre, Tomkowicz and Cowie were present as well as Board of Selectmen Member Hoyt and Town Accountant Beverly.

Approval of Minutes: *Motion made by Member Lefebvre to approve the minutes for February 15, 2018 as written, second by Member Cowie. Vote: unanimous. Motion passed. Motion made by Member Lefebvre to approve the minutes for February 28, 2018 as written, second by Member Cowie. Vote: unanimous. Motion passed.*

FY2019 Budget Review: *Town Accountant Beverly* gave an overview of the budget and explained how the budget was comprised. Estimated expenditures and the Capital Outlay were reviewed. It was noted that the Police Cruiser is in the tax rate and the hope is to replace one annually. It was explained that the Wastewater Treatment Plant Mass DEP requirements and NPDES that need to be done. Free Cash items were outlined. The Agricultural Fair and Youth Center funds were explained. Registry of Motor Vehicle, water meter replacement and state Air Pollution charges were questioned and explained. State aid trends were reviewed. Perpetual care was noted as missing and its absence was explained. Local receipts were reviewed. It was noted that room tax receipts were more than expected. Investment income and the laws surrounding them for municipalities were discussed. Potential income from medical marijuana dispensaries will be a future discussion and the process of having a *Letter of Non-Opposition* was explained as was the bylaw regarding marijuana. It was noted there would be a 3% excise tax from sales of recreational marijuana but medical marijuana is not taxed. An explanation was given that the meals tax goes into the Economic Development fund. The status of the old Dugout Motel and the Church Manor rental housing were briefly discussed regarding contributions. The Town may be able to charge fees for Airbnbs if legislation passes and if the Town passes a responsible law. How excise taxes are collected and handling of tax payments in arrears were explained. Abatements were briefly touched on. Council on Aging Van Funds, the Technology Fund and the Parking Meter Fund were reviewed. The Free Cash certified number was explained and questions were answered about the 2017 amount before deductions. Town Accountant Beverly will provide these details. The Levy Limit calculations were reviewed. A tax rate comparison of local communities and assessments was explained. The Actual tax recap and estimated tax recap was reviewed, and it was noted the estimated tax rate of \$21.85 is lower than last year's tax rate. The Budget was then reviewed by line item and voted on individually. *Motion made by Member Lefebvre to review the Budget line items, second by Member Demastrie. Vote: unanimous.*

Town Accountant: The Personal Services budget was reviewed. Members inquired about the percentage increase being variable in worker's compensation. There are different classes of employees which causes the changes. MIIA increased significantly on worker's compensation costs. *Motion made by Member Lefebvre for the Finance Committee to RECOMMEND the Town Accountant Budget for approval, second by Member Demastrie. Vote: unanimous.*

Property and Liability Insurance: There were no questions or discussion on this budget line item. *Motion made by Member Tomkowicz for the Finance Committee to RECOMMEND the Property and Liability Insurance for approval, second by Member Lefebvre. Vote: unanimous.*

Employee/Retiree Benefits: Signing up for Medicare is a state requirement and penalties for not signing up were discussed. The Section 18 penalty was explained. The Town versus Retiree split was noted as being 70/30 percent. All three unions agreed to go on 70/30 for insurance in 2019. The statement made by the former Town Administrator about changing carriers for health insurance was questioned and Town Accountant Beverly was unaware of that intention. The Town is still with Berkshire Health Group, which is a joint purchasing group that is getting a very good rate. Compensated absences were explained and sick time buyout for retirees was reviewed. *Motion made by Member Demastrie for the Finance Committee to RECOMMEND the Employee/Retiree Benefits budget line for approval, second by Member Cowie. Vote: Unanimous.*

Technology – Personal Services: There were no questions or discussion on this budget line item. *Motion made by Member Demastrie for the Finance Committee to RECOMMEND the Technology – Personal Services budget for approval, second by Member Lefebvre. Vote: unanimous.*

Technology – Operating Expenses: Rob Wnuk was commended for doing a wonderful job. Antivirus options and internet service were discussed. Consolidated telephone systems were noted for convenience and savings. Maintenance Consulting was explained as being support for all different computer systems used. The quantity of computers used in the Town was questioned and the amount of usage on each computer. It was explained that all are up to date and usable, and some staff have computers but don't do regular desk work. A software upgrade to Windows 10 was briefly discussed. *Motion made by Member Lefebvre for the Finance Committee to RECOMMEND the Technology – Operating Expenses budget for approval, second by Member Cowie. Vote: unanimous.*

Technology - Capital Expenses: It was explained this amount would not be on the tax rate. *Motion made by Member Tomkowicz for the Finance Committee to RECOMMEND the Technology – Capital Expenses budget for approval, second by Member Cowie. Vote: unanimous.*

Assessors - Personal Services: The addition of a temporary employee was explained. A state required change of assessing software will take place and funds were set aside for additional payroll to help with the conversion process. The software will make sure everything is current. Data must be kept for a certain number of years. Discussion took place regarding the past transition from full time to part time staff. Assessments and Slum and Blight were inquired about. It was noted there are a lot of neighborhood questions regarding certain groups selling below and others selling above assessment. *Motion made by Member Lefebvre for the Finance Committee to RECOMMEND the assessors – Personal Services budget for approval, second by Member Cowie. Vote: unanimous.*

Assessors - Operating Expenses: It was noted that the former Town Administrator had cut \$4,000 from the budget and it fell short, so it is being put back into the budget accordingly. *Motion made by Member Tomkowicz for the Finance Committee to RECOMMEND the Assessors – Operating Expenses budget for approval, second by Member Cowie. Vote: unanimous.*

Town Clerk – Personal Services: Health insurance expenses increased due to an employee signing up on insurance. *Motion made by Member Lefebvre for the Finance Committee to RECOMMEND the Town Clerk – Personal Services budget for approval, second by Member Cowie. Vote: unanimous.*

Town Clerk - Operating Expenses: The cost of making copies of permits and binding record books was discussed. It was noted that the Historical Commission has a budget for restoration of records. Other documents have bindings that are coming apart and there has not been money spent on it in a couple years. Birth certificates are online, generated through the hospital and then come through the system. Death certificates are now online and can be printed off the computer. Marriage certificates have changed with same sex marriages to distinguish Party A and Party B instead of Bride and Groom. There are going to be three elections this year. *Motion made by Member Lefebvre for the Finance Committee to RECOMMEND the Town Clerk Operating Expenses budget for approval, second by Member Cowie. Vote: unanimous.*

Elections: There were no questions or discussion on this budget line item. *Motion made by Member Cowie for the Finance Committee to RECOMMEND the Elections budget for approval, second by Member Corrigan. Vote: unanimous.*

Registrations: There were no questions or discussion on this budget line item. *Motion made by Member Demastrie for the Finance Committee to RECOMMEND the Registrations budget for approval, second by Member Cowie. Vote: unanimous.*

Codification: There were no questions or discussion on this budget line item. *Motion made by Member Tomkowicz for the Finance Committee to RECOMMEND the Codification budget for approval, second by Member Cowie. Vote: unanimous.*

Treasurer – Personal Services: There were no questions or discussion on this budget line item. *Motion made by Member Cowie for the Finance Committee to RECOMMEND the Treasurer – Personal Services budget for approval, second by Member Corrigan. Vote: unanimous.*

Treasurer - Operating Expenses: There were no questions or discussion on this budget line item. *Motion made by Member Lefebvre for the Finance Committee to RECOMMEND the Treasurer – Operating Expenses budget for approval, second by Member Cowie. Vote: unanimous.*

Debt Service: Additional capital outlay was noted as being in the budget from last year, and will be stricken. Debt payoff of the Wastewater Treatment Plant is 2025 and the combined Town Hall, Police Station and Library payoff is 2028. *Motion made by Member Lefebvre for the Finance Committee to RECOMMEND the Debt Service budget for approval, second by Member Cowie. Vote: unanimous.*

Emergency Management – Personal Services: Emergency Management Director, Richard Kleiner explained he is in charge of the Fire, Police, EMS, and Town Hall in the event of an emergency, and may utilize Amateur Radio and the Forest Wardens as volunteers for Emergency Management in times of need. *Motion made by Member Lefebvre for the Finance Committee to RECOMMEND the Emergency Management Personal Services budget for approval, second by Member Cowie. Abstention by Member Kleiner. Voted in favor were Chairman Burdick and Members Corrigan, Demastrie, Foster, Lefebvre, Tomkowicz and Cowie. Motion passed.*

Emergency Management - Operating Expenses: An explanation was given that all communication equipment funnels the Emergency Management in the event of an emergency. Other agencies have their own channels but are coordinated ultimately by the Emergency Management Director. Adams Memorial Building is slated as the Emergency Management building. The elevator still needs inspection, which has been put off three times by the State inspectors. Poor radio communications were discussed and alternative communications were outlined. *Motion made by Member Lefebvre for the Finance Committee to RECOMMEND the Emergency Management Operating Expenses budget for approval, second by Member Cowie. Abstention by Member Kleiner. Voted in favor were Chairman Burdick and Members Corrigan, Demastrie, Foster, Lefebvre, Tomkowicz and Cowie. Motion passed.*

Forest Wardens - Personal Services: There were no questions or discussion on this budget line item. *Motion made by Member Lefebvre for the Finance Committee to RECOMMEND the Forest Wardens Personal Services budget for approval, second by Member Cowie. Abstention by Member Kleiner. Voted in favor were Chairman Burdick and Members Corrigan, Demastrie, Foster, Lefebvre, Tomkowicz and Cowie. Motion passed.*

Forest Wardens - Operating Expenses: - There were no questions or discussion on this budget line item. *Motion made by Member Lefebvre for the Finance Committee to RECOMMEND the Forest Wardens Operating Expenses budget for approval, second by Member Cowie. Abstention by Member Kleiner. Voted in opposition was Member Corrigan. Voted in favor were Chairman Burdick and Members Demastrie, Foster, Lefebvre, Tomkowicz and Cowie. Motion passed.*

Forest Wardens - Capital Expenses: A brief explanation was given about the request to replace two garage doors at the Forest Warden Garage. *Motion made by Member Tomkowicz to RECOMMEND the Forest Wardens Capital Expenses budget for approval, second by Member Cowie. Abstention by Member Kleiner. Voted in favor were Chairman Burdick and Members Corrigan, Demastrie, Foster, Lefebvre, Tomkowicz and Cowie. Motion passed.*

Member Kleiner left the Finance Committee Meeting at 7:28 p.m.

Veterans Services: Personal Services: There were no questions or discussion on this budget line item. *Motion made by Member Tomkowicz to RECOMMEND the Veterans Services, Personal Services budget for approval, second by Member Cowie. Vote: unanimous. Motion passed.*

Veterans Services - Operating Expenses: The operating expenses budget was explained, and is variable due to veterans returning from overseas regularly. *Motion made by Member Lefebvre for the Finance Committee to RECOMMEND the Veterans Services Operating Expenses budget for approval, second by Member Cowie. Vote: unanimous. Motion passed.*

Memorial Day Remembrance: There were no questions or discussion on this budget line item. *Motion made by Member Lefebvre for the Finance Committee to RECOMMEND the Memorial Day Remembrance budget for approval, second by Member Cowie. Vote: unanimous. Motion passed.*

Board of Selectmen – Personal Services: The Temporary line item and a former court judgement were explained. *Motion made by Member Tomkowicz for the Finance Committee to RECOMMEND the Board of Selectmen Personal Services budget for approval, second by Member Cowie. Vote: unanimous. Motion passed.*

Board of Selectmen - Operating Expenses: There were no questions or discussion on this budget line item. *Motion made by Member Tomkowicz for the Finance Committee to RECOMMEND the Board of Selectmen Operating Expenses budget for approval, second by Member Cowie. Vote: unanimous. Motion passed.*

Board of Selectmen - Capital Expense for Slum & Blight: The costs of building demolition and fund sources were outlined. Discussion took place about suggested blight to be removed. It was noted that engineering costs were spent from the Community Development budget for the last building removed and there was an encumbrance from last year to cover the total costs. *Motion made by Member Lefebvre to RECOMMEND the Board of Selectmen Capital Expense for Slum & Blight budget for approval, second by Member Cowie. Vote: unanimous. Motion passed.*

Town Administrator - Personal Services: Discussion took place regarding the increase in this budget and concerns about it. It was noted this amount was \$6,000 above the past Town Administrator's salary. A suggestion was made to have the Board of Selectmen consider reducing this to \$80,000. It was noted that the Town needs to have the amount in the budget to have the flexibility to pay for experience. It was pointed out that if there is \$95,000 in the budget the Town will end up paying that amount. It was expressed that \$95,000 was excessive, and that the Town has not paid less than what was in the budget. Qualifications for the Town Administrator position were listed and it was pointed out that this amount would be the high end. Starting with a lower base pay and having an additional amount for incentive was discussed as a possibility and having additional funds available for negotiating was a good idea. The Charter's outline for required experience was reviewed. If the amount is reduced and an offer was made that was above that amount a transfer would be required from the Reserve Fund for a one time transfer of funds, but the Reserve Fund is for unforeseen situations and it would not be recommended. *Motion made by Member Demastrie to table the Town Administrator Personal Services budget for the Board of Selectmen to revisit the \$95,000 salary budget line to consider for reduction, second by Member Lefebvre. Voted in opposition was Member Tomkowicz. Voted in favor were Chairman Burdick and Members Corrigan, Demastrie, Foster, Lefebvre and Cowie. Motion carried.*

Town Administrator - Operating Expenses: There were no questions or discussion on this budget line item. *Motion made by Member Tomkowicz for the Finance Committee to RECOMMEND the Town Administrator Operating Expenses budget for approval, second by Member Cowie. Vote: unanimous. Motion passed.*

Town Administrator – Capital Expenses, Agricultural Fair: Past expense receipts were turned in. A request was made for the Agricultural Fair to outline what they plan on using the funds for prior to the budget being created. *Motion made by Member Corrigan for the Finance Committee to RECOMMEND the Town Administrator Capital Expense for the Agricultural Fair budget for approval, second by Member Lefebvre. Vote: unanimous. Motion passed.*

Town Counsel – Personal Services: A 3% increase was explained, and it was noted the Town has gotten value from Town Counsel services. *Motion made by Member Tomkowicz for the Finance Committee to RECOMMEND the Town Administrator Operating Expenses budget for approval, second by Member Cowie. Vote: unanimous. Motion passed.*

Town Report: It was noted that the past budget had been reduced and there were not enough Town Reports created in the last couple years. *Motion made by Member Lefebvre for the Finance Committee to RECOMMEND the Town Report budget for approval, second by Member Cowie. Vote: unanimous. Motion passed.*

Moderator – Personal Services: There were no questions or discussion on this budget line item. *Motion made by Member Lefebvre for the Finance Committee to RECOMMEND the Moderator Personal Services budget for approval, second by Member Cowie. Vote: unanimous. Motion passed.*

Moderator - Operating Expenses: There were no questions or discussion on this budget line item. *Motion made by Member Lefebvre for the Finance Committee to RECOMMEND the Moderator Operating Expenses budget for approval, second by Member Cowie. Vote: unanimous. Motion passed.*

Finance Committee – Personal Services: It was explained that the Workman's Compensation and Unemployment Insurance for the volunteer committee was for the minute taker. *Motion made by Member Lefebvre for the Finance Committee to RECOMMEND the Finance Committee Personal Services budget for approval, second by Member Cowie. Vote: unanimous. Motion passed.*

Finance Committee – Operating Expenses: It was noted that the budget had been stripped by the former Town Administrator and that there had not been enough in the last two years, so it had been increased. Discussion ensued regarding having a Charter change to reduce the number of Town Meeting Members since rarely over one hundred of the one hundred fifty Town Meeting Members come to Town Meeting, thereby reducing the printing costs by a third. A request was made to get a couple copies of the Municipal Tax Law Summary books for the Finance Committee. *Motion made by Member Lefebvre for the Finance Committee to RECOMMEND the Finance Committee Operating Expenses budget for approval, second by Member Cowie. Vote: unanimous. Motion passed.*

Reserve Fund: The Reserve Fund transfer process was briefly reviewed. Strategy for increasing the Stabilization Fund and use of the Reserve Fund was offered. A request was made to the Town Accountant and Board of Selectmen to make an effort to use the Reserve Fund only for truly unforeseen expenses and to bring general housekeeping items to Town Meeting. An example was given of the solar panel installation which was explained should have gone to Town Meeting instead of being a Reserve Fund Transfer. An explanation was given why this particular situation unfolded in a way that excluded it from the Town Meeting process. Past emergency needs were outlined and it was noted that in the past couple years the Town used the Reserve Fund to spend money. A draft form to request unexpected Reserve Fund requests had been given to the former Town Administrator it was noted that it went no further. It will be resubmitted to the Finance Committee. Snow Removal expenses for the year were estimated and it was noted the Town is approximately \$50,000 over now plus personnel services because salt had to be purchased. Funds could be transferred to minimize overtime costs. *Motion made by Member Cowie for the Finance Committee to RECOMMEND the Reserve Fund budget for approval, second by Member Corrigan. Vote: unanimous. Motion passed.*


Parking Management – Personal Expenses: There were no questions or discussion on this budget line item. *Motion made by Member Tomkowicz for the Finance Committee to RECOMMEND the Parking Management Personal Expenses budget for approval, second by Member Cowie. Vote: unanimous. Motion passed.*

Parking Management - Operating Expenses: There were no questions or discussion on this budget line item. *Motion made by Member Cowie for the Finance Committee to RECOMMEND the Parking Management Operating Expenses budget for approval, second by Member Lefebvre. Vote: unanimous. Motion passed.*

Adjournment: *Motion made by Member Cowie to adjourn the meeting, second by Member Tomkowicz. Vote: unanimous.*

The meeting adjourned at 8:05 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted by Deborah J. Dunlap,
Recording Secretary



Timothy Burdick, Chairman