

Budget - Joint Committee meeting February 26, 2016

Goodnow Town Hall, 1pm meeting

Select Board: Beth Bandy, Toby Gould

Finance Committee: Tom Campbell, Ron Smith, Amy Wales, Rich Filoramo

Others in attendance: Marguerite Willis, Peg Dean

Amy Wales described how revenue estimates impact tax rate.

The Finance Committee is down two members since Toby Gould moved to Select Board and Tom Campbell will resign following this meeting. There is need for new Fin Com members.

The Finance Committee discussed the principle of using the Bureau of Labor Statistics figures for 2017 cost of living adjustment. Social Security increases are based on this figure. This is a zero percent increase for 2017 fiscal year.

Rich Filoramo moved that we stay that the COLA percent increases. Tom Campbell seconded Discussion: This is consistent with the way the Town has approached it the last 5 years. This decision was passed unanimously.

The Select Board will vote on this item on March 7. Supervisors will be asked if any employees have increased responsibility which would increase their pay rates.

Review of the proposed budget was continued. Ron Smith reported on the Hawlemont pellet stove installation. This item is being rebid. The Hawlemont committee is considering a three wood boiler system. They are also considering keeping a backup oil system.

The Town Clerk has asked us to discuss the possibility of splitting the dates of the Annual Town Meeting and the town elections. A later date allows for state aid numbers to be received by the town thereby clarifying the effect on the tax rate. Current Town Bylaws state both elections and Annual Town meeting will be held on the fourth Tuesday in May.

It was moved, seconded and passed unanimously that the Finance Committee recommend to the Select Board that the Annual Town Meeting and the town elections be held on the first Tuesday in June.

An email from the Highway Superintendent asks if the Finance Committee and Select Board want to consider increasing the highway operating budget to include more for road repair for next year

The Finance Committee would recommend a capital article that includes funds for road repair that year. Such a capital article would allow carrying a balance to the next year allowing work to continue. A capital article also puts this expenditure before the Town to be considered at Annual Town Meeting. Select Board will meet with the Highway Superintendent to discuss this item.

A proposal for accounting services has been received from our present accounting firm. This proposal offers an option of a one- or three-year contract. Select Board will discuss the proposal with the accountant. Select Board will report to the next joint meeting.

Amy Wales moved Tom Campbell's letter of resignation. This was seconded and passed unanimously, if reluctantly.

Amy asked that Carlene invite Hawlemont School Committee to discuss their budget and possible capital requests at the March 11th meeting.

A discussion of the need to repair or replace bridges in the town that the state has found deficient. We need to know what it will cost to repair and replace each deficient bridge. Engineering bids are being received to get cost details. There is need to confirm the count of smaller bridges in town inventory.

In a discussion of the possibility of temporary bridges, it was stated that engineering is needed for either temporary or permanent bridges. The town needs to learn how long a temporary bridge could remain in place before proceeding.

The towns on western Mass facing this bridge crisis need to work together to secure more funding. How can a cooperative effort be achieved?

Further discussion:

Could the Select Board and the Fin Com send a letter to our legislators concerning the impact of charter schools on regional school budgets. Toby Gould will draft a letter for the next meeting.

It was further suggested that the Boards (Finance Committee, Select Board, and School Committee members) have an informational meeting prior to Town Meeting?

Joint Meeting Adjourned 2:55PM.

The Select Board meeting continued.

Petitions to Verizon for improved cell service were delivered to the Select Board.

It was moved, seconded and passed unanimously that the town apply for a Community Compact IT Grant. Possible uses to this grant would be fuel/security; upgrades of computer hardware.

Select Board Meeting Adjourned at 3:38PM.

Respectfully Submitted by Peg Dean

Documents distributed:

* FY17 Omnibus draft 1

- * Capital Planning spreadsheet
- * Capital Improvement Program spreadsheet
- * Mohawk Trail Regional School Assessment FY17 School Committee Voted

2/17/16 p.9 of 44