

## CHARLEMONT TOWN HALL

### Minutes of the Finance Committee Meeting – By Teleconference

March 3, 2021

Present: Finance Committee - Rich Filoramo, Amy Wales, Lynn Hathaway, Jay Healy

Also present: Marguerite Willis, Sarah Reynolds, Dana Johnson, Martha Thurber

1. The meeting was called to order at 3:30 p.m. by the Chair, Rich Filoramo.
2. Town Administrator Sarah Reynolds gave an update:
  - a. She is working with Gordon on the “truck research” and should have a report for the next meeting.
  - b. She sent out an email about the audit: because of Broadband, we need to do three years. They originally were going to do years 2020, 2021 and 2022, but after talking with David Eisenstat, it may be necessary to do a yearly audit. But that would be a financial burden for a small town like Charlemont. Sarah called around and found that a typical audit costs between \$10,000 and \$14,000. Sarah and David are looking into the options and will report back. We need to be certain to budget an appropriate amount in next year’s budget.
  - c. Gordon received a letter with our Chapter 90 amount. It’s \$178,590, and Sarah noted that the amount has been decreasing a “percent” each year.
  - d. Parks and Recreation had asked about a gift account, and Sarah said it had to be a revolving type of account. They have fees coming in, like from campers, and from the broadband guys storing supplies. They want to use the fees to pay for maintaining the facilities, and perhaps at some point the line items could be removed from the budget.
3. Dana Johnson joined the meeting to discuss the Ambulance budget, reading from a presented spread sheet. He said he increased the Radio Maintenance budget from \$1,200 to \$1,400, because even though they will soon be transferring to a new system, they still need to keep part of the old system up and running for a while, including the use of pagers. Vehicle Maintenance increased as the truck “is getting old” and will need new tires, etc. Training increased, as they had to hire an outside consultant. Supplies increased mainly because of Covid. New regulations now require yearly preventative maintenance on their major equipment, instead of the previous requirement of every two years. Amy asked where this “preventative maintenance” is in his budget request, and Dana said it’s not in it, as he just learned about the new requirements. It needs to be added in, but Marguerite said that the line should be called “State Required Inspections”, to separate it from regular vehicle and equipment maintenance. Sarah offered to communicate with Carlene about adding the new line. Marguerite said she would like to put in \$30,000 for on-call EMT salaries. She also mentioned that Dana has recruited and sworn in a new EMT. Dana mentioned that the call volume is back up and will probably continue to increase. Jay Healy asked if Dana knew of other towns where the private businesses contributed to the cost of ambulance services. Dana said he was not aware of any. Marguerite mentioned that they are in talks with FRCOG about the River concerns, and what options might be available to generate income.
4. Martha Thurber joined the meeting to discuss the MTRSD Capital Assessments. She referred to previously sent documents. A committee has been working for some time looking at the capital

needs for the school buildings, while working with engineering firms. Members did a walk-through of all the facilities to closely examine each request. They then prioritized the items, and finally recommended the items on page 12 of the submitted Capital Request document. She said the most critical item is the “Boiler Control System”. It’s running on an old Windows 98 system. The cost of the upgrade is about \$315,000, which is about half of the priority items total budget request. It was mentioned that if we borrowed for the items now, the interest rates are pretty low – under 2% - and therefore the cost now would be relatively low. So her question for the Committee is “do you think it would be better to acquire all of the items now, or just purchase some of them?” Marguerite asked if any of the CARES money was used to take care of some the capital needs. Martha replied that it was used for some ventilation needs, but most went for PPE’s needed for remote learning. Marguerite said that right now we cannot commit to anything until we have more information regarding our needs and costs for audits and the upcoming bond needed for our Broadband roll out. Martha indicated that it appears some of the towns have already indicated they are moving their ATM’s to a later date, which would give more time for the school budget requests to be finalized. Hopefully we’ll have more information about where we stand financially within 30 days. Rich asked Martha if she could make some cost projections for the borrowing at different rates.

5. Martha mentioned she was sorry for the confusion concerning the amount of the Operating Assessment, but the correct amount is \$795,430.
6. Tree Warden budget: there was discussion about whether we should leave \$10,000 in the budget. No tree work was done last year, meaning there might be some catch-up to do. Also, with new expensive broadband lines strung, we might want to be more vigilant with tree trimming. It was decided to leave the budget as is.
7. At the next meeting Fire and Broadband should be invited. The Human Resources discussion was moved to the March 31 meeting.
8. The meeting was adjourned at 4:35 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Ronald Smith

Documents viewed:

Ambulance Budget spreadsheet

MTRSD Capital Budget Requests worksheet

This document is a draft until approved by the Finance Committee.