

Minutes of the Charlemont Finance Committee and Selectboard

February 9, 2022

Meeting was held via telephone conference

Present: Rich Filoramo, Amy Wales, Lynn Hathaway, Jay Healy, Marguerite Willis, Dan Girard, Bill Harker, Sarah Reynolds, Jared Bellows, and Dana Johnson

Chair Rich Filoramo opened the meeting at 4:05 pm

Administrator Reynolds gave a report on updated numbers – the state aid 2023 numbers are on the website now and it increases Charlemont's numbers over last year by \$4,654.00. The administrator also reported that she is researching telephone system cost due to the Town's not working properly and being too old to get parts. Will bring forward estimates next meeting. It was also reported that the Recreation Tax has been reported favorably by the committee it was in and will go forward to its next step.

The highway superintendent training cost sheet was discussed it was noted that there was three different pay rates, the administrator had looked up the rates in the wage and salary survey and based them on needing to be a little higher than a foreman's pay because of the nature of the job they are training for, this gives a cost idea for the expense. It was mentioned the expense could either come out of the reserve fund or a end of year transfer.

The Finance committee on a motion by Amy Wales and second by Rich Filoramo unanimously approved the minutes of January 26, 2022. The select board will vote on these in there February 14, 2022 meeting because they had not had a chance to review them yet.

Jared Bellows the town police chief joined the meeting to discuss his budget recommendations. Due to grant monies being received for the bridge academy, the police budget can be level funded. He explained that due to the new bridge academy it will be hard to maintain a part time department, personnel will be hard to find and by the end of the three years the town has been given to do the bridge academy he will be down to a handful of officers. Personnel also will be considered full-time certified after attending. The requirement that new officers attend the fulltime academy will make it so that small towns can not afford the training, it is roughly \$50,000.00 per officer.

Chief Bellows also mentioned that in the next couple of years there would be a need to replace one of the cruisers. Both of the current cruisers are adequate for our roads, and to get one that is similar is \$20-\$25,000 for a used one.

Dana Johnson, Ambulance Director gave his budget recommendations for the ambulance Department. He explained that the ambulance was a concern, due to its age and the condition of things like the strapping that holds the box on, he knows that the repair bills will be large. He also noted that due to the current time frames to get any vehicles it has been taking a year to a year and a half and if to get an ambulance. He noted that even though it has been voted down twice it may need to be brought forward. A new ambulance is about \$350,000.

Director Johnson also announced he has two new EMT's and a possibility for 2 more. He will need to get more radios to cover this and while the first ones he got were free with the Radio system switch over, he would need to purchase more the radios are \$2,127.90 apiece.

Daytime coverage, call volume and responses were discussed, there is a shortage in the whole county of personnel causing issues with mutual aid and response. In Charlemont they have 4-5 people doing a majority of the work. They had 165 calls last year and made roughly 90% of them.

The salary increase percentages were discussed. It was discussed that the 10 % increase is hard because of the cost associated with it and the affect on taxes, but with social security doing a 5.9% increase and inflation being what it is, the 6% seems low. It was also discussed that the current job market is tricky employers lose employees who go elsewhere because the pay is better.

On a motion by Rich Filoramo and second by Jay Healy the finance committee voted to recommend an 8% increase.

On a motion by Amy Wales and second by Jay Healy the meeting was adjourned at 5:14 pm