March 7, 2019

Town of West Bridgewater

Minutes of the Finance Committee Meeting

The meeting convened at 6:31 P.M. in the Selectmen’s Meeting Room in the West Bridgewater Town Hall.

Committee Members Present: Chairman Ms. Meredith Anderson, Vice Chairman Ms. Jeri Screnci, Ms. Janice Fox, Ms. Cheryl Adams, and Mr. Scott Weatherbee.

Committee Members Absent: Ms. Melissa Byrnes.

Also present was Town Administrator David Gagne.

Chairman Anderson advised that the first item on the agenda was to approve the meeting minutes of July 12, 2018. Ms. Fox made a motion to approve the minutes for the July 12, 2018 Finance Committee Meeting, Mr. Weatherbee seconded this motion, and the committee voted unanimously in favor of this motion.

Chairman Anderson advised that the next item on the agenda was to accept for review the meeting minutes of February 21, 2019. Mr. McCarthy made a motion to accept for review the minutes for the February 21, 2019 Finance Committee Meeting, Ms. Fox seconded this motion, and the committee voted unanimously in favor of this motion.

Mr. John Cruz, Chairman of the Board of Health entered the meeting to present budget 1950 (Wastewater Treatment Facilities). Mr. Cruz discussed this budget and the reasons for the increase. He noted that their was a problem with one of the pumps last year which contributed to the increase this year. He stated that they budgeted for a camera for the pipes which would help determine where the leaks are. Mr. Cruz also discussed the need for equipment repairs and maintenance as well as the increase in consultant services. He also noted that the valves in the field are more than ten years old, and they’d like to do some upgrading.

Chairman Anderson asked if anyone had questions regarding this budget.

Mr. Cruz then presented budget 5110 (Board of Health). Mr. Cruz stated the first increase was for the Elected Official. Mr. Cruz requested an increase for this line item based on the comparisons of what the other Elected Officials made on the other Boards in town. He stated that this increase was requested out of fairness to the board.

Mr. Cruz continued to discuss the increase in the rest of the budget and noted that the increase for the Health Agent was contractual.
Ms. Screnci commented that she did not believe that with everything the tax payers are responsible for, that they would appreciate the increase in salaries for the Elected Officials on the various boards.

Chairman Anderson noted that instead of increasing the pay for the Elected Official on the Board of Health, that they could review the pay in the other boards to try to make adjustments there.

Ms. Fox asked about the increase in line item 5784 (training). Mr. Cruz stated that there is more training needed by the health agent.

The committee discussed Line Item 5312 (Nursing Agent). Ms. Marilyn Mather (Director of Elder Services at the Council on Aging) stepped in and discussed the Nursing Agents role at the Council on Aging including what programs she facilitates and the testing she conducts.

Ms. Fox asked why the Nursing Agent was not on the Council on Aging budget. Mr. Cruz, stated that it has always been something the Board of Health has been responsible for, as it’s required by law.

Chairman Anderson asked if anyone had questions for Mr. Cruz.

The Committee thanked Mr. Cruz, and he exited the meeting.

Marilyn Mather, Director of Elder Services at the Council on Aging presented budget 5410 (Council on Aging.)

Chairman Anderson asked Ms. Mather to discuss the changes in the budget.

Ms. Mather discussed the increases in the Clerical Salaries which she noted were the same with the exception of the office clerk receiving a 3.5% raise. She stated that she hoped to give the Transportation Drivers a $1.00/hour raise based on comparisons of what drivers in the surrounding towns receive as pay.

Ms. Mather discussed the increase in the heating line and advised that this was due the Council on Aging being open 3 nights a week as well as on Saturday’s. Chairman Anderson asked if they were seeing more seniors attending in the extended hours, and Ms. Mather stated that they did.

Ms. Mather continued to discuss the budget and Ms. Anderson asked if anyone had additional questions.

The committee thanked Ms. Mather, and she exited the meeting.

Chairman Anderson advised that Ms. Srenci would be taking over the project of working with
the Committee to Appoint the Finance Committee with regards to changing the Finance Committee By Laws. The Committee thanked Ms. Screnci for taking the project on.

Mr. Gagne presented budget 1965 (Economic Development Commission). Mr. Gagne advised that this budget was level funded. He noted that this budget has not met in the last few years, and if they are not able to get the commission up and running that they will zero it out.

Chairman Anderson asked if anyone had any questions on this budget.

Mr. Gagne presented budget 1510 (Town Counsel). Mr. Gagne noted that this budget was level funded.

Chairman Anderson asked if anyone had any questions on this budget.

Mr. Gagne presented budget 5430 (Veterans) and stated that the only item not level funded in this budget is contractual.

Chairman Anderson asked if anyone had any questions on this budget.

Mr. Gagne presented budget 1560 (Cable TV Committee). He advised that this budget is level funded.

Chairman Anderson asked if anyone had any questions on this budget.

Mr. Gagne presented budget 1750 (Planning Board). Mr. Gagne stated that this budget is slightly down due to the secretary no longer being a member of the union, therefore there are no longevity benefits.

Chairman Anderson asked if anyone had any questions on this budget.

Mr. Gagne presented budget 1760 (Board of Appeals). He advised that this budget is level funded.

Chairman Anderson asked if anyone had any questions on this budget.

Mr. Gagne presented budget 1850 (Rent Control Board). Mr. Gagne stated that this budget has increased due to the mobile parks undergoing new rental agreements causing the board to meet more often.

Chairman Anderson asked if anyone had any questions on this budget.

Mr. Gagne presented budget 1920 (ADA Compliance Committee) and stated that this budget was level funded.
Chairman Anderson asked if anyone had any questions on this budget.

Mr. Gagne presented budget 1945 (Municipal Building Needs Committee), and stated that this budget was level funded.

Chairman Anderson asked if anyone had any questions on this budget.

Mr. Gagne presented budget 1350 (Town Accountant), and stated that the changes in this budget were contractual.

Chairman Anderson asked if anyone had any questions on this budget.

Mr. Wayne Parks, Superintendent of the Water Department and Mr. Richard Krugger, Chairman of Water Commissioners entered the meeting to discuss budget 4500 (Water Department).

Mr. Parks began discussing the changes in the budget and stated that the increase of 24% in labor is due to his hope to hire a 30 hour per week part time labor technician. Chairman Anderson asked the reason for 30 hours instead of 40 hours and Mr. Parks stated that he believed the 30 hours would be sufficient to help through peak times. The committee went on to discuss the need for the position, and Mr. Parks stated that it was needed so that he could use his time more efficiently, and to expand the man power.

Ms. Screnci asked about the Temporary Salary Line Item. Mr. Parks stated that they need to hire a GIS person.

Ms. Anderson asked about the increase in the Retirement Contribution, and Mr. Gagne noted that this was an item that the Water Department does not set.

Mr. Parks discussed the increase in Allowances and Stipends and noted that the new hire must be licensed and the increase was for a grade 2 license. He also discussed the increase in Vehicle Repairs and Maintenance and stated that the vehicles are not getting high in mileage, but they are getting old and need repairs.

Mr. Parks continued to discuss the changes in the budget and noted that for line item 5300 (Engineering Pump Testing), that they would be moving this towards an article in the search for water. He also stated that the increase for back flow testing was in an effort to stay ahead on this line item. He noted that the Tank Inspection line item increased because two tanks need to be inspected.

The committee discussed the Equipment Replacement line item and Mr. Parks discussed how this was due to a production anomaly that is now under control. He went on to discuss how there was a leak in the system, that was very difficult and took a lot of time to locate.
Chairman Anderson asked if anyone had any additional questions on this budget.

Chairman Anderson asked Mr. Parks to now discuss the Warrant Articles.

Mr. Parks stated that Article 3 was for the Water Departments request for additional funds for the current year budget due to the leak on Manley Street that was difficult to find. Mr. Parks noted that the water department had to hire outside firms to come out and assist in helping to look for the leak.

Ms. Fox asked what the cost of $115,000.00 was for. Mr. Parks stated that it was for Chemicals, Equipment and Supplies that kept the town running during this leak. He also noted that the Manley Street pump and the valves have reached their age.

Chairman Anderson asked Mr. Parks to explain Article 4 for a new replacement well for station 4. Mr. Parks stated that the cost of this article is $500,000.00 which is based on the price that the Engineer budgeted for. Mr. Krugger noted that the town would have to borrow this money.

Ms. Screni asked how the water surplus fits into the situation. Mr. Parks stated that the request for $115,000.00 would come from the water surplus, however water surplus has to be set aside to lower the rate, or for maintenance related to the the tank.

Ms. Anderson asked what changed in the Department to warrant the request to hire an additional person. Mr. Parks stated that the department has come under new OSHA Rules. Mr. Krugger noted that it takes a lot to run the Iron Removal Plant, and that there is a lot of Electrical Work and Controls. Ms. Screnci stated that she believes the department could definitely use a new hire.

Chairman Anderson asked if anyone has further questions.

The committee thanked Mr. Parks and Mr. Krugger, and they exited the meeting.

Library Director Ellen Snoeyenbos, Assistant Library Director Jed Phillips, and Chairman of the Library Board of Trustees Jerry Lawrence entered the meeting to discuss budget 6100 (Library).

Ms. Snoeyenbos presented a spreadsheet to the Finance Committee.

Ms. Snoeyenbos commented how the library is up in terms of how many people use the library, and how those visiting the library are branching out and using new library services. Ms. Snoeyenbos discussed how Mr. Phillips has brought a lot of new programs into the library and how successful the programs are.

Ms. Snoeynbos stated that the borrowing of books is slightly down and how that is a Nationwide trend. She mentioned how the overall borrowing at the library has gone up do to other services
available such as Hoopla, Overdrive and various online services that can be streamed.

Ms. Snoeyenbos mentioned that the library received a $5,000.00 donation from Bridgewater Savings Bank, which they would be using towards upgrading the library network. Ms. Snoeyenbos also discussed how the Library would not be asking for a Capital request from the town this year. She stated that they had funds left over from the upgrade of the roof, and that they would be requesting at Town Meeting to use those funds towards the upgrade of the library network as well as towards the installation of security cameras.

Ms. Fox asked how things were going with the afternoon programs. Ms. Snoeyenbos discussed how it was going well due to the support of the school administration.

Ms. Snoeyenbos continued to discuss the successful programs the Library is running including a program for Special needs adults as well as a project that the elementary students are working on with Library staff.

Ms. Snoeyenbos moved on to the budget and stated that the first four items on the budget were Contractual and Salary Based. Ms. Snoeyenbos continued to discuss the changes in the budget.

Ms. Snoeyenbos advised that the Library is now providing Passport processing and stated that this will add money to the budget.

Chairman Anderson asked if anyone had questions regarding the budget.

Ms. Snoeyenbos, Mr. Phillips, and Mr. Lawrence exited the meeting.

Principal Assessor John Donahue and Chairman Stephen McCarthy entered the meeting to discuss budget 1410 (Assessors).

Chairman Anderson asked Mr. Donahue to discuss the changes in the budget.

Mr. Donahue discussed how the increase for the Appointed Official looks like an increase of $15,000.00 however explained that the budget was cut at Town Meeting by $12,000.00 so the increase was actually $3,000.00 which was contractual.

Mr. Donahue discussed how he believes that the Clerical Position should move to full time. He stated that he is hoping to hire someone for 25 hours per week now and at Town Meeting request the position be moved to full time.

Mr. Donahue continued to discuss how much of the data analysis is done by himself and the Chairman, which is a saving the department and the town money.

The Committee asked Mr. Donahue to put together a generalization of the savings.
Chairman Anderson asked if anyone had questions regarding this budget.

Mr. Donahue and Mr. McCarthy exited the meeting.

Chairman Anderson stated that the next item on the agenda would be to review the Warrant Articles.

Chairman Anderson presented Article 1. The committee discussed this article and Chairman Anderson recommended the committee refer this article to voters. The committee voted unanimously to refer this article to voters.

Chairman Anderson presented Article 2. The committee discussed this article and Mr. McCarthy made a motion to recommend this article, Ms. Adams seconded this motion and the committee voted unanimously to recommend this article.

Chairman Anderson presented Article 3. The committee discussed this article and Mr. Weatherbee made a motion to recommend this article, Mr. McCarthy seconded the motion and the committee voted unanimously to recommend this article.

Chairman Anderson presented Article 4. The committee discussed this article and Ms. Screnci made a motion to recommend this article. Mr. McCarthy seconded the motion and the committee voted unanimously to recommend this article.

Chairman Anderson asked if anyone had any additional business to bring before the committee.

Ms. Screnci made a motion to adjourn the meeting, Mr. McCarthy seconded this motion and the committee voted unanimously in favor of this motion.

The meeting adjourned at 8:57 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Kristin E. Leahy, Secretary