January 13, 2014

Town of West Bridgewater

Minutes of the Finance Committee Meeting

The meeting convened at 7:03 P.M. in the Selectmen’s Meeting Room in the Town Hall.

Committee Members Present: Chairman James Lang, Vice Chairman Meredith Anderson, Ms. Jeri Screnchi, Mr. Steve Currier, Ms. Maura Moroni, Mr. Peter Fredericksen, Ms. Jennifer Clark-Croes, Mr. Anthony Kinahan, and Ms. Cheryl Adams.

Non Committee Members also present were Mr. David Gagne, Administration and Bruce Holmquist, Board of Directors President for the Council on Aging, and J.P. Waller, Secretary.

The meeting started by discussing J.P. Waller, candidate for the open Finance committee secretarial position. His qualifications and his interest in contributing to the Town of West Bridgewater were discussed. Vice-Chairman Anderson asked if J.P. would be taking notes by hand or on a laptop. Jeri Screnchi advised that he would be taking notes via laptop. A motion to hire J.P. Waller as Part-time Secretary to the Finance Committee was made by Steve Currier and seconded by Cheryl Adams. The committee voted unanimously in favor of the motion.

J.P. Waller arrived at the meeting at 7:08PM, and set-up to take notes.

Vice-Chairman Anderson motioned to approve the November 4, 2013 minutes provided to the committee at the December 9, 2013 meeting. Mr. Currier seconded and the Committee voted unanimously in favor of this motion.

Vice-Chairman Anderson motioned to accept the December 9, 2013 minutes and approve at the next meeting. Mr. Currier seconded and the Committee voted unanimously in favor of this motion.

The Committee then began discussing the Request for Transfer Funding from the Finance Committee Reserve Fund submitted by the Council on Aging for a new copier machine at the December 9, 2013 meeting. Mr. Currier started the discussion by sharing his findings about the current machine after visiting the Council on Aging building. Several cost saving ideas came from this conversation such as,

1. Moving the newsletter to black and white print instead of color.
2. Outsourcing the mailing of the newsletter.
3. Looking into larger companies who offer closed end leases and its potential budget benefit for upfront cash flow reasons.
4. Departments in close proximity sharing resources, such as the library.
5. Selling ad space in the newsletter.
6. Extending support on the current machine until September 2014 at a cost of $968.
Chairman Lang then asked Bruce Holmquist, Board of Directors President for the Council on Aging to talk about what the newsletter is about, what the Council on Aging needs are and which parts of the West Bridgewater Community they support. There was also a discussion about what the Reserve fund is for and whether or not this purchase qualifies since their current machine is still working. It was decided that the budget sub-committee assigned to the Council on Aging should bring these cost savings measures to the Council on Aging attention during their upcoming budget meeting.

Ms. Scrementi then motioned to approve the request transfer fund request for $8333 for the new machine. Mr. Currier seconded and it was brought to a vote and passed 4 to 3. Mr. Kinahan, Ms. Adams, Ms. Scrementi and Mr. Currier voted in favor. Vice-Chairman Anderson, Ms. Moroni and Ms. Clark-Croes voted against. Mr. Fredericksen abstained.

Bruce Holmquist, Board of Directors President for the Council on Aging then left the meeting.

Chairman Lang then brought the discussion to the request last meeting for committee members to generate sample budget questions for the sub-committees to ask the department heads at their upcoming meetings. From this stemmed a conversation about the open meeting policy and the restrictions around that. Several conversations stemmed from this topic such as,

a. There was a discussion about sending department specific questions to the sub-committee members assigned to those departments rather than have generic questions asked to all departments.

b. Then there was a discussion about the value of generic questions for the newer committee members.

c. There was a discussion about departments' additional revenue streams and how those are handled as revolving accounts. Mr. Gagne explained how revolving accounts work and how they can only be used for sources that generated the revenue. He provided several examples of this.

d. Mr. Currier and Chairman Lang both stressed the suggestion of asking how each department operates and what they do on a day to day basis as the best source of questions and follow up questions flowing through there.

The committee member then presented some of the sample questions they generated. They were as follows,

1. Ms. Scrementi- Any new promotions or new FTE?
2. Mr. Fredericksen- What is your budget highlights?
3. Mr. Fredericksen- Talked about service level budgets and inflation.
4. Discussion about department promotions- how they can affect the budget process and how they can increase salaries for the same level of service.
5. Mr. Fredericksen- Extenuating circumstances for budget?
6. Mr. Fredericksen- Areas you could reduce your budget?
7. Mr. Kinahan- Any leases or contracts expiring that need to be renegotiated?
8. Mr. Kinahan- Any major variances in budget versus last year?
9. Mr. Kinahan- What is your dream purchase or dream new hire?

The questions were then taken by Chairman Lang and he will make a master list and send it out to the other committee members.

The next topic for conversation was the proposal to authorize the highway superintendent to over spend on snow and ice budget. The budget is always set to $66,000. There was a conversation as to why that is and Mr. Gagne explained the benefits to deficit spending on the snow and ice budget and how it affects federal grant status for the town. The Board of Selectmen have already approved this authorization and there is no dollar amount assigned to this authorization.

Vice-Chairman Anderson motioned to approve. Ms. Clark-Croes seconded and the motion passed unanimously. Mr. Gagne then passed around the authorization form for all committee members to sign as dictated by state law.

Chairman Lang then motioned to move the Capital Budget Process Evaluation to the agenda for the next meeting. There were no objections to this motion.

The meeting adjourned at 8:12 PM and the next meeting is scheduled for February 10, 2014 at 7 PM.

Approved by: [Signature]

Respectfully Submitted, Jeri Scrceni, Secretary

Meeting Documents:

1. Copy of Request for Transfer Funding from the Finance Committee Reserve Fund submitted by Council on Aging
2. Copy of Board of Selectman Memorandum to Finance Committee, re: Council on Aging Copier Request.
3. Copy of Signed Board of Selectman Memorandum, re: Snow and Ice Deficit Spending Authorization.