

Finance Committee Minutes

March 13th 2014

The meeting was called to order at 7:00PM. Present with Mr. Edgar Zukauskas presiding, were Mr. David Herrick, Mr. Ira Yohalem, Mr. Burt Imberman, Mr. Mark Carson, Ms. Pat Mielke, and Mrs. Prudence Spaulding. Guests were Ms. Tara White, and Mrs. Michel Shalaby.

The minutes were accepted as read Ms. Mielke 1st, Mr. Imberman 2nd passed unanimously.

Mrs. Pshenishny had been asked to come before the board to explain the new account named **Assessors Cyclical Re-Inspection** for the amount of \$10,000. The committee has already put on hold the **Assessors Revaluation** [10142.00] for \$16,000, as it had been passed on January 16th 2014 for \$15,000! Ms. Pshenishny brought in a statement from the state regarding Cyclical Re-inspection:-

“Maintenance of current and accurate property inventory data is a critical element in the development of uniform, fair market values. Our last certification review indicated that the Board of Assessors should begin a cyclical re-inspection program of all descriptive property data over a specified time period, so that each parcel is inspected at least once in every nine year cycle. The residential, commercial/industrial and exempt properties should be recollected for the next certification, in FY2017. As part of the cyclical re-inspection program, an on-going data quality analysis would help identify recollection priorities for program planning. For further information on cyclical re-inspection programs and data quality analysis please refer to the ‘Certification Standards’.”

From the information that Mrs. Pshenishny shared with the committee it would appear that all the building in to town will have to be measured etc. and re-evaluated over the next three years, one third of the total being completed each year. That done the town would only be subjected to the re-value every three years...Mrs. Pshenishny then presented the committee with the latest bill from Paul Kapino (who provides the evaluations for the town) this bill was startling! The amount that would be charged for FY15 would include the reval/Interim \$16,000, plus the Cyclical Re-Inspection for \$10,000, plus the software Maintenance \$2,700 with a total of \$28,700. The same amount would be charged for FY 16 and FY 17 for a total of \$86,100. After that the town would simply have the three year “revals” to pay for! The Assessors Revaluation account was then put on hold, and the added amounts were also held. Mr. Zukauskas asked if the selectmen had been aware of this, and Ms. Pshenishny stated ‘NO’. She did add that Kapino’s would have staff members go to measure the houses and in some cases inspect their interiors. She also added that during this inspection some of the dwellings might have had building added on to them without building permits and this would be revealed upon the inspection.

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Mrs. Pshenishny left.

There was a request from the Highway Superintendent to transfer \$6,094.28 from the **Highway Garage Budget** [20425.00] from the **Reserve Fund** for the payment of repairing the overhead highway garage doors, since Mr. Loring stated that the doors were in danger of not working! These doors were 10 years old and needed proper service. Mr. Loring also attached an estimate for the repair of the frozen water line which will take place in April when the frost is out of the ground. The Highway Garage Account still has \$4,879.09 in it, however the committee assumed that there were other bills outstanding against that account or Mr. Loring would not have asked for the transfer. Ms. Mielke 1st, Mr. Yohalem 2nd passed unanimously.

A Memo was received from Mr. Loring stating that due to the severe winter weather the **Winter Roads** Budget has been fully expended and will require additional funding before the end of the fiscal year. He had also sent the **Winter Roads** budget for FY 2015 [20423.02] now requesting (\$1243,675). While he listed the estimated for the following items; contractors \$40,700 ; Repairs and Supplies \$19,000, salt \$126,425, sand \$27,000 and overtime \$43,209, these amounts were not connected to what was either proposed last year, or what was used last year, and there was no accounting for the proposed raises for the workers. The committee gave the proposed budget for these items for last year and returned the budget to Mr. Loring for his attention.

Berkshire Regional Planning Commission [6012.00],(\$1,037) now requesting {\$1,062} Mrs. Spaulding reminded the committee that she had circulated a brochure describing the functions of the Berkshire Regional Planning Commission. Mr. Zukauskas remembered that Mr. Herrick had had some questions about this Commission. Mr. Herrick stated that he had no further questions. Ms. Mielke 1st, Mrs. Spaulding 2nd passed unanimously.

Veterans' Benefit Chapter 115 Trust [90918.00](\$8,000) level funded {\$8,000} Mr. Imberman 1st, Mr. Herrick 2nd passed unanimously.

Town Counsel [10134.00] (\$8,000) now requesting {\$10,000} Mr. Imberman 1st, Mr. Harrick 2nd passed unanimously.

Insurance Expense [90914.11] (\$64,000) now requesting {\$65,000} Mr. Imberman 1st, Ms Mielke 2nd passed unanimously,

Transfer Station Expenses [70519.03] (\$61,000) now requesting {\$62,000}, when Mr. Zukauskas questioned Ms. White on the smallness of the increase, she stated that there was still some money in the repairs fund that would continue to pay for the repairs. Mrs. Spaulding 1st, Mr. Carson 2nd passed unanimously.

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Workman's Compensation [90912.00] (\$20,136) now requesting {\$22,000} this is an assessed amount, Mrs. Spaulding 1st, Ms. Mielke 2nd passed unanimously.

Berkshire Group Purchasing [70524.00] (\$600) level funded {\$600} Mr. Herrick 1st, Mr. Imberman 2nd passed unanimously.

Animal Control Officer Expenses [60293.78] (\$3,050) now requesting {\$3,411} Ms. Mielke 1st, Mr. Zukauskas 2nd passed unanimously.

Animal Control Officer {60293.00} (\$2,100) level funded {\$2,100} Edgar 1st, Ms Mielke 2nd passed unanimously.

Police Department Rental [60210.98] (\$12,000) level funded {\$12,000} this was designed to pay for both the vehicle as office space in the new fire house. The police vehicle is now housed (when off duty) in the old fire house for \$500 per month, but there is some discussion about perhaps reconfiguring the old fire house to have an office that would suit the police department. Should that occur the \$1,000 per month would be available to pay for it. Mr. Yohalem 1st, Mr. Carson 2nd passed unanimously.

Group Insurance [90914.70] (\$148,122) now requesting {\$137,000} Mr. Skorput had requested this particular sum to allow for an employee who might require this insurance in the future. This is a 75/25 breakdown for the recipients. Mr. Carson 1st, Ms. Mielke 2nd passed unanimously.

Building Inspector's Expenses [no number as yet as it is a new account] {\$7,400}. This account had been put on hold. Mr. Carson and Mrs. Spaulding went to the program that was designed to explain in some detail what the program can do. Mr. Carson reported that after he had attended this program he had talked to some local contractors with mixed reviews, he had also spoken with the town's head of the department of health who said that he would be interested in using the module that would fit his department should it become available. The only question that Mr. Carson had was whether the building inspector would be available to work with those applying for a permit should they experience difficulties. He added that if the applicant made a mistake entering inappropriate information he would have to start the permit process all over again. The building inspector can grant the permit as soon as he receives and reviews the application, and the process would probably be helpful for contractors that were from out of town. Mr. Carson also added that those on dial-up will experience difficulty filling the form. Mrs. Spaulding added that the permit process would provide the owner of the building with a lot of information that might become useful should the owner decide to sell the property. The program is designed so that someone in the town hall could be trained to help

applicants should the building inspector not be available. Mr. Zukauskas 1st, Mr. Yohalem 2nd passed unanimously.

Wired West [10192.80] (00.00) now requesting {\$1,000}. Ms. Shalaby reported that this money is basically a membership fee for being part of the Wired West group (of 42 towns). She had spoken with Mr. Tim Newman and had learned the same things that she had reported at the last meeting. There are, at present, only two towns who are “going this alone” Alford and Leveret. It is still hoped that a bond will be obtained that will fund the service and that the revenue from the service to the individual home owners will be enough to pay for it. The committee decided to stay with the group for another year. Mr. Herrick 1st, Mr. Carson 2nd passed unanimously.

Mr. Zukauskas gave everyone a copy of the school budget which is expected to be adopted next Wednesday March 19th; Ms. White stated that New Marlborough will see an increase of \$103,000. However \$40,000 of that will be a carryover from last year. When one of the members of the committee asked about the closing of the two smallest schools, Ms. White stated that it was too late to have a vote on that for this year, but that the towns in favor of closing these schools will begin to work towards that end early in the year.

The meeting adjourned at 8:35PM with the next meeting scheduled to meet on Thursday March 20th at 7:00PM

Respectfully submitted,

Prudence Spaulding, Secretary.