

Spencer Finance Committee
Joint Meeting with Board of Selectmen
March 10, 2020 7 PM
Spencer Town Hall, McCourt Social Hall
157 Main Street, Spencer, MA 01562

Minutes

- 1) The Finance Committee meeting was called to order by Chair Mary Braney at 7:03 PM. Members present: Mary Braney, Paul McLaughlin, Vice Chair, Ed Sproul, Tom Parker, Dennis O'Leary, Nancy Tame, Chris Woodbury, Paul Bouvier

The Board of Selectmen did not have a quorum at that time. Members present: Gary Woodbury, Ralph Hicks. Several attempts were made to reach Tony Pepe by phone but he texted he had been called away. He became available at approximately 7:25 PM and participated remotely until the Selectmen adjourned.

- 2) Announcement: Any members that are participating remotely in accordance with Regulation 940, CMR 29.10 of the Open Meeting Law – Tony Pepe, Board of Selectmen
- 3) Minutes of February 18, 2020 meeting – Motion to approve by Chris Woodbury, 2nd Tom Parker. Approved unanimously.
- 4) FY 2021 Budget Presentations – Details furnished by all department heads were distributed. All department Heads reviewed their budget requests and explained changes. They responded to questions by both boards.

a. ODIS – Paul Dell'Aquila, Town Planner. Mr. Dell'Aquila noted that the only change was that there is a \$10,000.00 salary offset transferred from the Wetlands Protection Fund that formerly appeared in the town-wide *Pro Forma* budget. He stated that the mosquito control funding, \$10,000.00, formerly in the Board of Health budget, would be addressed in a separate article on the FY21 warrant. In response to a question he said membership in CMRPC provides financial advantages to the town in the form of consulting services and grant funds.

b. COA – Pam Woodbury, COA Director, Christine Mancini, Chair of COS. Gary Woodbury and Chris Woodbury recused themselves from their respective committees during the COA presentation, Ms. Woodbury said that she was withdrawing her request for \$2,500.00 to fund the senior transportation account because over the past 2 years no drivers were interested in participating. Although not in the spreadsheet for approved budget increase, Ms. Mancini requested an increase of 2.5 hour per week for the Director. Ms. Woodbury will be retiring shortly and Ms. Mancini is concerned that due to requirements for a senior center director, including a bachelor's degree, that qualified candidates will not apply for the position as it stands. She also quoted minutes from an April 2, 2019 Board of Selectmen's meeting that stated the Selectmen would add the hours in FY21.

c. Library – Cheryl Donahue, Library Director, Lynn Dobson, Chair of Richard Sugden Library Board of Trustees. Ms. Donahue read a prepared statement regarding the services provided to the community by the library, the needs of the building, particularly the ongoing HVAC issues, and the requirements that must be met to reinstate Saturday hours.

(\$44,000.00 annually) The library is currently open 32 hours per week. That state standard for a town of Spencer's population is 40 hours.

d. Fire Department – Chief Bob Parsons. The largest increase in expenses is in the account that pays for software. The software currently in use will no longer be supported therefore a new program must be acquired. He also reminded the boards that he has been requesting increases in his vehicle maintenance budget for several years. The \$10,000.00 currently allocated is not sufficient because maintenance costs have gone up and vehicles are aging.

BOARD OF SELECTMEN ADJOURNED

5) Correspondence

6) Liaison Reports

- a) Financial Management Planning Committee - Paul McLaughlin, Tom Parker - nothing
- b) SEBRSC – Paul Bouvier – Paul attended the first hour of the March 10, 2020 School Committee meeting prior to coming to this Finance Committee meeting. Knox Trail students presented a robotics demonstration. In honor of the East Brookfield centennial the Massachusetts Senate Ways and Means Committee will hold a meeting in East Brookfield. The administration would be presenting their budget at a public hearing beginning at 7 PM which he could not attend.
- c) DPHS Building Committee – Mary Braney. Phase I is complete. The documentation allowing the project to move to phase II will be presented to the MA School Building Authority at their regular meeting on April 15, 2020. The first action in Phase II will be to select and Owner's Project Manager (OPM) who will oversee the next steps.
- d) Economic Development Committee – Chris Woodbury. The committee met on a Saturday and Chris was unable to attend.
- e) Capital Committee – Chris Woodbury. The committee met just prior to the Finance Committee meeting and heard presentations from the COA, the library, and the Fire Chief.

7) Town Administrator Report

- a) The architect working on the Senior Center fire suppression project is finalizing construction bid documents. Bids will be due prior to ATM.
- b) The town has entered into an agreement with Leicester to share Town Accountant services 30 hours per month. The accountant will start in April in order to work with Alain Boucher before she retires in June.
- c) Spencer has received a Green Communities 1 time "designation grant" of \$162,000.00 for meeting the requirements and becoming a green community. It will be used for energy improvements. The town will be eligible to apply for competitive grants in the future.

8) Any other -In answer to a question by Nancy Tame the Town Administrator explained how the reporting of the budget requests were submitted to the finance committee, including the level of detail in the current line item spreadsheet.

9) Adjourn 9:18 PM

Upcoming Finance Committee Meetings:

Mar. 31, 2020: Finance Committee - Joint with SelectBoard: Budget Presentations from Parks & Rec, Public Works (Sewer, Water, Highway, Transfer Station and U&F)

Apr. 14, 2020: Finance Committee: Public Hearing on FY2021 Budget and Vote Recommendations on Annual Town Meeting Warrant (*Place ad in New Leader)

May 7, 2020: **Annual Town Meeting**

May 12, 2020: **Annual Town Election**