

## MENDON BOARD OF SELECTMEN

MINUTES OF MEETING----- February 25, 2015  
APPROVED-----March 11, 2015

Chairman Goddard, Selectmen Schofield and Reil are present in the Upper Town Hall, Mendon.  
Chairman Goddard called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

Chairman Goddard addressed the Finance Committee informing them that the Selectmen met with Constellation Energy last week. The BOS wants to make a recommendation for a new contract with the provider. Chairman Goddard would recommend the contract with a term ending November 2017 because he likes the fixed cost over a long period. There is little variation. Ms. Newman was quoted \$.9844 per kWh for a contract that would take the Town through June of this fiscal year. Selectmen Schofield and Reil agreed. **Selectman Reil made and Selectman Schofield seconded a motion to authorize Michael Goddard to sign a 32-month contract with Constellation Energy effective March 25, 2015.** Selectman Goddard added that solar would create a net reduction to this as long as we provide a 120-day notice. **The motion carried unanimously.**

**Selectman Reil made and Selectman Schofield seconded a motion to approve renewal of the 2015 Common Victualler License for George N. LeFrancois dba George's Surf 'n Turf, 116 Uxbridge Road pending departmental approvals. The motion carried unanimously.**

Ms. Willoughby explained that an appraisal is needed for the Colonial Drive easement being requested by Algonquin Gas. Ms. Newman said it looks like we can cover the \$2,000 cost in the budget. **Selectman Reil made and Selectman Schofield seconded a motion to authorize an appraisal for a valuation in order to grant two easement areas on Colonial Drive to Algonquin Gas, pending passage of a vote at March 18 Special Town Meeting authorizing the BOS to grant said easements.** Chairman Goddard explained that this will allow us to negotiate the cost for the easement. **The motion carried unanimously.**

Ms. Newman said she has been working with the Finance Committee and department heads to put together the FY16 budget. There is deficit of \$144,000 with all department numbers in except for the Blackstone Valley Regional Vocational Technical High School. The increase is caused by fixed costs that are beyond our control. Worcester Regional Retirement System is at \$74,000. Health insurance has an estimated increase between eight and ten percent. We have incorporated a ten percent increase, \$31,000. Property and casualty insurance estimate is \$8500. Fuel and electric estimate is at \$34,000. Ms. Newman discussed a list of items that will potentially offset the deficit. She used an estimate of a 37 percent for utilities. There will still be an increase in utility delivery expenses. Selectman Reil doesn't see why we are still seeing an increase of \$34,000. *Action: Chairman Goddard wants Ms. Newman to look further into the estimate.* Ms. Newman continued saying if police trailers are removed, there will be potentially a \$4,000 savings in utility expenses. The increase for the Plumbing Inspector will be offset by permit fees. Town Hall New Equipment is budgeted at \$10,000 for new IT infrastructure to be funded annually. Chairman Goddard said this could be potentially funded through free cash at the end of the fiscal year. Selectman Schofield agreed. Chairman Burke suggested this could be funded from Capital Expenses. Chairman Goddard said it should be an operating budget expense but could be an IT infrastructure expense with a minimum of \$25,000. There is a request for \$50,000 in road materials which is a \$20,000 increase over FY15. The FY15 original budget was \$15,000 for Hired Equipment. There was a transfer made to that line item. This money is to have materials removed from culverts properly and tested. We have to look into using Chapter 90 funds for both of these Highway Department items. However, roads are going to be in need of repair. Chairman Goddard said the article that is on the Special Town Meeting warrant is critical as it will lay out a plan for repairing all roads. Selectman Schofield said the ambulance can wait another year according to the Chief. There is \$24,000 in the

## MENDON BOARD OF SELECTMEN

MINUTES OF MEETING----- February 25, 2015  
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reserve account for an ambulance. Selectman Schofield said he doesn't want to use that money for an offset because it is a one-time fund source and we need an ambulance next year. Selectman Schofield suggested talking with the Assessor to see how much is needed in the assessor's overlay. We may be able to reduce it from \$97,500 to \$85,000. This account is used for Veteran and Senior Abatement and other tax abatement. He also suggested getting an update for receipts.

Mr. Watson said he hopes Board of Selectmen and Finance Committee advocate for not using one-time money in the budget. Chairman Goddard agreed. Selectman Schofield does not think the money reserved for negotiations should be on the offset list.

Mr. Rudden joined the Selectman on behalf of the Council on Aging. The Council was asked to provide a level-service budget. If they are given the budget they requested, there will be a deficit. They have asked for increased hours, as their aging population is increasing. The Director has compensation time that the Council is encouraging her to take and to work towards her 35-hour week. Chairman Goddard said increasing Outreach Worker's and Director's hours is not off the table. Selectman Schofield suggested the level-service budget show the actual hours the Director has been working. Ms. Newman read what is on their 'ask list': Outreach worker hours' increase at \$6,800, the Director's increase of five hours, \$6387, and the building study. Ms. Newman mentioned there is a Compensation Study that will also address number of hours needed for the COA.

Ms. Newman mentioned the voting machine should be considered as part of this budget. Chairman Goddard would like to see it taken care of before the end of this fiscal year.

Mr. Watson, resident, asked if the current snow & ice deficit was mentioned before he came in to the meeting. Chairman Goddard said that it was not.

**Selectman Reil made and Selectman Schofield seconded a motion to sign a letter of appreciation to Shirley Smith. The motion carried unanimously.**

Chairman Goddard said he had distributed the draft of the Selectmen's Annual Town Report submission and is waiting for comments.

Mr. Watson approached the Board to tell them he plans to put a question on the May Town Meeting ballot to see if voters will approve foundation budgets for Town departments. He called the Secretary of State and was told there is nothing in the law that said it can't be done. It will take some more research. He needs ten signatures to get it on the ballot. He asked the Board if members thought it would have any negative impact. He feels it would be helpful for future boards and residents to know they will have a basic level of service across all departments inclusive of Public Safety response. Chairman Goddard said this may have override implications. Selectman Schofield wanted to be clear that Public Safety has been the number one recipient of improvements that have been made since 2012 when the department budgets were cut ten percent. Mr. Watson said this is for a long-term plan. *Action: Chairman Goddard suggested Mr. Watson put together an outline and schedule with Ms. Newman a time to come back to the Board. It could be ready for the May Annual Town Meeting or a Special Town Meeting.* Selectman Schofield said he needs to think through the unintended consequences and doesn't think it is necessary. Selectman Reil suggested if it is made a by-law, there should be a stipulation that Selectmen could override it.

**Selectman Reil made and Selectman Schofield seconded a motion to open the May 1 Annual Town Meeting Warrant. The motion carried unanimously.**

Members agreed to recess until the start of the Finance Committee meeting.

## MENDON BOARD OF SELECTMEN

MINUTES OF MEETING----- February 25, 2015  
APPROVED-----March 11, 2015

Finance Committee Meeting: Chairman Burke invited Highway Surveyor Alan Tetreault to join them. Mr. Tetreault reported that there is \$97,000 remaining from the amount of money allocated to deficit spend the Snow and Ice Funds. There is a shortfall of approximately \$26,000 in the 421 Road Machinery Account. A lot of that is fuel expenses. There is \$7,600 in outstanding fuel bills. One cannot deficit spend to purchase fuel. Repair costs earlier in the fiscal year used a lot of the money allocated in that account. Chairman Burke informed Mr. Tetreault that there is no mechanism to transfer funds as the Special Town Meeting warrant has closed. He feels the best strategy is to use Chapter 90 money. Mr. Tetreault doesn't think Chapter 90 funds can be used for fuel. He will have to do some research. Chapter 77 Transfers which are interdepartmental cannot be done until the last two months of the fiscal year. There is \$12,130 in the Finance Committee Reserve Account. Finance Committee unanimously voted to move \$12,000 from the Finance Committee Reserve Account to line item 421B Road Machinery Expenses. *Action: Ms. Newman to confirm options for funding the account.*

Discussed contract terms for Constellation Energy and pursuing other options. Mr. Scharnagle suggested getting quotes from other companies. The Finance Committee agrees with the concept of locking in a rate for a longer term. BOS Chairman Goddard said the concept of bring contracts to the Finance Committee is part of the Long Range Financial Plan process. He indicated that if rates come in higher from new companies, we will execute the contract with Constellation Energy. Selectman Reil said when the first contract was negotiated they had the lowest cost. The company has been vetted through MMA.

Mr. Watson brought his suggestion to the Finance Committee about wanting an article on the May Town Meeting Warrant to seek a level-service budget for town Departments. Finance Committee Chairman Chris Burke said he is willing to look at it but wants to understand the legalities. He is concerned it could force an override if the Town didn't have enough money. Mr. Watson suggested the article be non-binding.

Ms. Newman reviewed the articles on the warrant for the Finance Committee.

Article 1: \$1500 from Free Cash.-Assessors' classes that have already taken place and other that is needed to take place before the fee increases.

Article 2: \$48,000 from Free Cash to Town Counsel Expenses to takes us through March. It includes contract negotiation expenses which only need to be done every three years.

Article 3: Pass over.

Article 4: \$1900 from Free Cash to Town Hall Computer Expenses. This for a computer in the Treasurer/Collector's Office that is on loan and needs to be replaced.

Articles 5-7: We are waiting to get accounts from which money will be transferred within the Departments from Lt. Kurczy.

Article 8- \$6,000 from Free Cash to Building Inspector Account Wages-based on permits being issued and increased fees. The concept is the same for Gas, Plumbing and Electrical articles. Mr. Merolli doesn't advocate revolving accounts because this way Finance Committee can keep an eye on what goes in and out of them.

Article 10: \$1390 from Free Cash for Plumbing Inspector Account Wages

Article 11: \$720 from Free Cash to Electrical Inspector Account Wages

Article 14: \$20,000 from Free Cash to analyze road conditions to better allocate funding. Chairman Burke will like to know if Chapter 90 money can be used. Ms. Newman said it is hard to know at this point for what purpose Chapter 90 money can be used. Drainage work may need to be contracted out and cost more because his employees will be doing road repairs due to poor road conditions. Chapter 90 funds will be needed for that. Selectman Schofield said the one Fire Department Expense is Article 7 for

## MENDON BOARD OF SELECTMEN

MINUTES OF MEETING----- February 25, 2015  
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which they don't have money to fund. He suggested this article could be passed over. Chairman Goddard recommends using Stabilization because that planning is needed to get into a multi-year process. Chairman Burke said we will table this until we can confirm whether Chapter 90 funds can be used for the study. He would prefer doing that. *Action: Ms. Newman to confirm.*

Article 15: \$10,000 from Free Cash to Veteran's Benefits through the rest of FY 15

Article 16: \$600 from Free Cash to Long Term Disability due to premium adjustments based on FY15 salaries.

Article 17: \$83,000 for renovations- \$5250 for removal of trailers, \$40,000 is coming from Community Preservation funds. Furniture, partition and wiring for drops is not covered by CP funds. Mr. Angenent, Finance Committee Member, feels that more should be covered as the Upton Town Hall expenses were mostly paid for through their CPC.

Article 18: \$40,000 from CPC Historic to Town Hall Renovation project. The Finance Committee will support the CPC motion.

Article 19: Mr. Merolli, Finance Committee Member, does not feel trailers should be funded. A motion was passed to pass over the article. Chairman Goddard said the BOS will support this article if Articles 17 and 18 don't pass as the Police need a place in which to operate.

Article 20: -\$2500 from Free cash. This is funding for cost associated with the move and electronic drops to prepare for the renovation of the Town Hall hardwood flooring.

Article 23: Finance Committee will support \$2800 from CPC Budget Reserve Account

Article 24: Balance of \$62.60 remaining for closing to purchase Paddock property

Article 25: Finance Committee supports \$1,000 from CPA Historical Fund to remove paint on Joy Fountain

**Selectman Reil made and Selectman Schofield seconded a motion to adjourn at 8:53 p.m. The motion carried unanimously.**

Respectfully submitted,



Diane Willoughby  
Administrative Assistant

Documents Discussed located in 'Administrative Secretary's' Office:

Constellation Energy Pricing Data, February 25, 2015

Exelon Corporation: A National Energy Leader Package

Potential Offsets to FY16 Budget

March 18, 2015 Special Town Meeting Warrant

Letter dated February 25, 2015 to Shirley Smith from Selectmen

Letter dated February 20, 2015 from William H. King, MS, MRA