

Chairman Reil, Selectmen Schofield and Burke and Town Administrator Kimberly Newman are present in the Upper Town Hall, Mendon.

Chairman Reil called meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. There were no citizen statements or petitions.

Chairman Reil had a topic not anticipated 48 hours prior to the meeting. He received a request for overflow parking at 36 Milford for the Autism Resource Center Event scheduled for this Sunday. The person requesting the use has already spoken to the Police Department. Chief Horn said someone has to walk participants across the street. **Selectman Schofield made and Selectman Burke seconded a motion to allow the Autism Resource Center to use the town-owned land across from the Drive-In for an event Sunday, the 20<sup>th</sup> of March as long as a police detail is present until all cars are gone from the event.** The Chief said he couldn't guarantee someone would be there the whole time as he is short-handed. Selectman Reil noted a barrier blocking any cars from parking on that property would have to be removed and replaced. **The motion carried unanimously.**

Ms. Newman explained the departments have submitted their level-service, FY17 budgets. There is a deficit of approximately \$35,000. Ms. Newman detailed her recommended potential, weighted offsets within the operational budget. The Finance Committee Reserve was increased by \$10,000. Vehicle requests may be handled through the Capital Expenditure Account. The Street Lights Account has been consistently running under budget by \$4500. Selectman Schofield suggested adding a \$73,000 offset if the school district decreases their assessment. Ms. Newman explained they need to balance the budget now in order to present it to the Finance Committee at their meeting.

Ms. Newman recommended including \$10,000 for the tax abatement program. However, this may be able to be covered in the Assessor's Overlay. She also recommends having this amount in a separate line item to be able to track it more accurately. Selectman Schofield is concerned if it is done that way and not all the money is used for the program, it cannot be used for any other abatement. They agreed to discuss this with the Assessor's Office.

There is an increase of \$30,000 in the FY16 Public Water Expenses line. After a meeting with the Water Commission on March 30, they may have a better idea of what to budget for FY17 and how to resolve the discrepancy. Selectman Schofield believes replacing the old meters with electronic ones will result in more accurate and timely readings. The discrepancy may be between the time Hopedale reads their water output and when owners' meters are read. The Finance Committee may pass over the article for additional funds at the Special Town Meeting. Selectman Schofield explained that the amount of money billed to public water supply customers is less than what the Town is billed by \$30,000. He reviewed the budget spreadsheet with Ms. Newman. The Assessor cannot account for an increase without a letter from the Water Commission. There was an agreement to budget \$135,500 for the Public Water Supplies Expenses. Selectman Burke recommended using the money saved in the school debt dropping off to fund the \$30,000 bill or the new meters and can be paid as a bill of a prior year. Allan Kent, Water Commission Chairman, stated a town in New Jersey replaced their old meters and found 33 percent of the 25-year old meters were more than 50 percent inaccurate.

Ms. Newman noted the FY17 Casualty Insurance budget line is slightly elevated and could be reduced. However, there is a potential need to cover 350<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration events. The cost is unknown; therefore, she doesn't recommend reducing the budget by \$10,000 to have that money available. Outsourcing payroll could be another offset. There is an ad open for the Accountant position until March

21. It is budgeted to do the payroll function, part-time with benefits. If we find the right candidate, payroll would not have to be outsourced. Three union contracts have been settled. The amount that is needed to cover potential cost of living adjustments has already been built into the rates for next year. The only outstanding question is whether steps will be given. The cost of giving additional steps is \$16,000. The amount they would have needed for the unsettled union negotiations is in the Reserve for Salary Negotiations. She felt the odds of giving the step increases after just implementing the Compensation Plan is about 50 percent. She budgeted the maximum amount they may need. Selectman Schofield would like to discuss this with other Selectmen in executive session.

Ms. Newman reviewed the FY17 budget requests of additional items they may want added. One of the items is \$10,000 for building maintenance. This includes the elevator. Selectman Schofield said the return on investment needs to be considered. Another request is for additional training for the Assistant Treasurer Collector's certification. Ms. Newman explained she separated the requests into ones that should be within the operational budget and others that were capital expenses. A request was included for Mendon's portion to contribute an additional \$4,000 for a potential, new regional dog officer if someone were to be recruited. Ms. Newman recommended funding an additional five hours for the Senior Center Director as the first priority. This has been requested for the past few years. Selectman Burke would like to focus on funding the \$30,000 shortfall in the budget before considering the additional requests.

Discussion regarding shared vehicles between the Highway, Building and Assessors' Departments continued. Ms. Newman spoke with the Capital Planning Committee about considering a vehicle depreciation account if the vehicles are purchased. This would involve annual contributions of \$5,000 per vehicle based on their depreciation. They are considering two shared vehicles. Chief Horn recommended using his Department's Ford LTD that will be coming offline. Chairman Reil stated that vehicle cannot be used due to the Green Communities regulations; it cannot be recycled. Selectman Burke suggested delaying the depreciation account until FY18. Ms. Newman stated a vehicle replacement schedule needs to be established. She confirmed the request for the Police Department's 14<sup>th</sup> officer is on the list. Selectman Schofield recommended removing this \$10,000 expense to reduce the budget shortfall to \$20,000. The Finance Committee Reserve increase will be \$10,000. In FY 18 that amount may increase due an additional \$100,000 in revenue between the Route 16 and Providence Street solar projects.

All agreed to remove the \$10,000 expense for insurance for the 350<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration events as it is not a recurring expense, thus reducing the shortfall to \$5638.00. All agreed to reduce the Public Water Supply Expenses account by \$5,600 as the water usage issue will be resolved in FY16. This balances the budget. <Recess for five minutes to change DVD>

Selectmen joined their meeting with the Finance Committee at 7:04 p.m. Attendees reviewed the March 21 Special Town Meeting Warrant Articles. The Finance Committee voted on whether to support the articles. Chief Horn indicated the Fire Department may need Fire Department Overtime funds in addition to the \$10,000 due to another incident. All agreed that could be addressed after the Special Town Meeting. *Action: Ms. Newman to confirm adjustment for diesel fuel was made in FY17 budget.* Selectman Schofield stated he may be unable to attend the meeting on March 30 to discuss the Hopedale water supply issue. If there is consideration to change the users' rates, he wishes to be involved as the calculation is complex. Finance Committee Chairman Merolli stated that will not be done on March 30.

Selectman Schofield explained the large amount of money in Free Cash is due to an increase in receipts not to decreased expenses. Finance Committee Chairman Merolli added that there is a limit to the amount of money that can be transferred into the Stabilization and Capital Expenditure Accounts.

Selectman Schofield suggested he present Articles 17 and 18 on the Town Meeting floor. Chairman Reil and Selectman Burke agreed.

Selectman Schofield stated the Selectmen vote every year to move \$30,000 from ambulance receipts to a Special Revenue Account to pay for the ambulance lease. This is based on a five-year cycle. Ms. Newman confirmed the reduction was \$22,000. *Action: Lt. Kurczy will ask Chief Horn and the Fire Department to see if this is enough. Ms. Newman will confirm with the Assessor that the total is \$52,000.*

Ms. Newman recapped the Selectmen's meeting and explained the FY17 budget is level-service funded and balanced. The top priority, additional items total \$29,000. The balance of the items total \$246,000. The first item on the ask list is an additional eight hours for the Executive Assistant. The money to be requested at the Special Town Meeting is only for FY16. Selectman Schofield noted that the original level-funded budget gap was the \$30,000 cost for the water problem. Ms. Newman explained that the original budget included \$50,000 for the Finance Committee Reserve Account which is \$10,000 more than in FY16. The intent was to use this to start a depreciation account for purchasing new vehicles at the Annual Town Meeting. They decided to wait one year to begin this practice. The Street Lights Account has consistently had \$4500 more than what has been spent. She originally budgeted an additional \$10,000 for insurance in anticipation of additional events for the 350<sup>th</sup> Anniversary celebration. They decided to use one-time funds for this as the actual amount needed is unknown. The balance of \$5600 was taken from the increase they had included for the public water supply budget. Ms. Newman explained the list of additional operating budget requests. Outsourcing payroll would cost an additional \$25,000 under a regional agreement with Uxbridge. This, in addition to a hiring a part-time Accountant, would be less than we paid the full-time Accountant. It would cost approximately \$1700 per week to outsource all accounting functions. There is an active posting for a part-time Accountant with benefits that closes Monday. The Finance Committee's open budget hearing will be April 20 at 7:00 p.m.

Highway Surveyor Alan Tetreault requested via email to deficit spend the Snow and Ice Removal Account. His account is over budget by \$1200. Due to another pending storm, the Finance Committee voted to deficit spend up to \$30,000. **Selectman Schofield made a motion that the Board of Selectmen approve the deficit spending for the Highway Department up to \$30,000. The motion carried unanimously.**

**Selectman Schofield made and Selectman Burke seconded a motion to adjourn the meeting at approximately 7:50 p.m. The motion carried unanimously.**

Respectfully submitted,



Diane Willoughby  
Executive Assistant

Documents Discussed located in Selectmen's Office:

Pages from Fincom Book 031007 Control Copy from 31616 Meeting.xls (3)

    FY17 Offsets-Detailed Budget Tab

    FY17 Requests (2) Tab

    Input Data Tab

    Detailed Budget Tab

March 21, 2016 Special Town Meeting Warrant

STM March 2016 2 29 16.xls Article Summary Tab

Email dated March 16, 2016 from Alan Tetreault to Kimberly Newman