

WASHINGTON FINANCE COMMITTEE MINUTES

January 12, 2015

Meeting was called to order at 7:07 p.m.

In attendance: Kent Lew, Dick Spencer, Mike Burke, Sean Connor and Dave Weissbrod

OLD BUSINESS

1. Minutes of December 8, 2014 meeting were approved.

2. Highway Dept Accounts, Clarification & Possible Transfers

Concern was expressed regarding potential overruns in some Highway Dept accounts. Confusion regarding correct charging of accounts may be partly a result of newly organized FY15 Highway Dept line items, as well as a perceived need for expediency. We need to review this with Dave Fish. Example: Unpaid summer overtime issue discussed at December's Finance Comm Mtg, while turning out to be somewhat of a false alarm based on incomplete inputs provided to the committee; nevertheless, charging additional straight-time hours to compensate for unbudgeted summer overtime hours is problematic.

The committee members expressed concern with road salt procurements and associated mounting costs. At present rate we will exceed budget winter roads maintenance budget. Once "free cash" is certified we could move funds to accommodate need for winter road maintenance needs. We will meet with Dave Fish and selectmen later in the evening to address concerns. We agree that Dave has kept selectmen and this committee informed but want to encourage even more heads-up communication so as to avoid our 're-acting' to problems. While we agreed we're not here to micromanage Dave and his crew, we need to help define and resolve charging issues and help Highway Dept deal with budget issues.

At 7:40 p.m., the finance committee moved to meet with Selectmen and Dave Fish.

Selectmen Mike Case and Sean Lennon were present.

Discussed charging one Highway Dept account based on availability of funds in lieu of charging another account that may be depleted - or about-to-be depleted. The recent bridge failure on Old Middlefield Rd., where DOT's threats were misinterpreted that bridge was unsafe vs. 'just' structurally deficient contributed to current budget problem. Bridgework was started before budgets for effort were clearly defined. We all agreed... lesson learned!

Discussed Winter Road Maintenance expenditures, in particular, high expenditures for road salt. Dave Fish defined the crew's strategy, involving growing reliance on road salt, its rising price since Morton became provider, and gave instances of complaints from increasingly demanding drivers of Washington roads, including the bus company. In addition, the growing expense of costly ice removal vs. less expensive snow removal was cited as a reason for increase costs this winter.

Finance Committee encouraged Dave to forewarn Finance Committee of need to charge depleted budget so board can take appropriate action. We agreed to work together to resolve issues.

The Finance Committee returned to its own meeting at 8:05 p.m.

3. FY16 Budgeting Process

Dick said he would send out budget request/justification material to all concerned. We will request latest FY15 actuals from Dan when we make our FY16 recommendations. Sean reminded committee that the assessors may be entering full evaluation rating for town and could impact their budget by \$30-40K. We need to find out where they are in this cycle.

4. Wired West Meeting

Kent and Dick attended a Wired West informational meeting last month and because of potential cost impact on town and various scenarios regarding structuring of payment, Kent set up meeting for Jan 23, 1-4 p.m. for us to learn more. Steve Nelson will also attend. Perhaps others.

5. Long Range Financial Planning Discussion

Dick discussed changes made to draft plan... He added a paragraph addressing a Reserve Fund to provide for urgent or unforeseen expenses. We will review and continue to discuss further.

NEW BUSINESS

Finance Committee Meeting Agendas will be posted via Jodi at town website under Finance Committee entry.

Meeting adjourned at 8:39 p.m.

Respectfully,

David Weissbrod, Secretary