

# WASHINGTON FINANCE COMMITTEE MINUTES

July 11, 2016

Meeting was called to order at 7:08 pm.

In Attendance: Kent Lew, Dick Spencer, and David Weissbrod

## OLD BUSINESS

1. Finance committee meeting minutes from June 13 and June 27 meetings were both approved as amended.

## NEW BUSINESS

### 1. Final approval of FY16 year-end transfers

The board reviewed and approved unanimously the following proposed FY16 year-end transfers.

(1) To transfer \$175.00 from Town Clerk Expenses Account to Accessible Voting Account.

(2) To transfer \$1,000.00 from Zoning Enforcement Officers Expense Account; \$1,200.00 from Town Clerk Expenses Account; and \$1,000.00 from Building Inspector Expense Account to Chapter 32B Medical/Life /Dental Account (\$1,400) and to Insurance Account (\$1,800.00).

(3) To transfer \$205.00 from Town Accountant Expense Account to Assessor Expenses Account (\$15.00); to Tax Collector Expenses Account (\$90.00); and to Assessors Computer Service Account (\$100.00).

(4) To transfer \$3,500.00 from Building/Town Prop Maintenance Account to Police Expenses Account.

(5) To transfer \$5,000.00 from Town Park Account to Town Building Repairs Account. Note, this account is still overdrawn by \$4,254.45 after the \$5k transfer. The remaining amount will have to be transferred from the Reserve Fund. The Finance Committee members noted their reluctance to have to resort to this, expressing its dismay and the need for better up-front communication from all concerned. The concern for the seemingly, on-going and open-ended funding for repair and upkeep of the old schoolhouse and old town hall, was also expressed and discussed. The need for long-term plans to address their repair and upkeep is needed. The Board recognized a general need to advocate for future discussions regarding this issue with the Selectboard, Historical Commission, Building Repairs Committee, and with the citizens of the town at large.

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## 1. Final approval of FY16 year-end transfers (Continued)

(6) To transfer \$15.00 from Veterans Service Expense to Veterans Benefits Account.

(7) To transfer \$175.00 from Student Vocational Education Account to Vocational Transportation Account.

(8) To transfer \$12,400.00 from Highway Fuel Account; \$20,000.00 from Road & Bridge Account; and \$7,900.00 from Winter Roads Overtime Account to Winter Roads Account (\$26,000.00); to Office/Shop Supplies (\$13,100.00); to Highway Wages Account (\$100.00); and to Highway Vacation/Holiday Account (\$1,00.00).

(9) To transfer \$100.00 from Board of Health Account to Berkshire Health Alliance Account.

## 2. Tax Collector's proposal for quarterly tax bills

(Joined by Sandy Cameron and Glenn Grogan.)

Advocating for a switch to quarterly tax bills, thereby improving the town's cash flow, Sandy and Glenn asked for the Board's opinions on the matter. Kent said that he basically didn't have an opinion yet, one way or the other, wanted to hear more on the subject, but that he knew that Dick had previously expressed an opinion on the issue. Dick then explained his position against the switch to quarterly payments. He said that he saw it as hidden tax (increase) for the tax payer, explaining that the sooner he had to pay taxes was less time for his money to work for him. He conceded that everyone might not agree. Dave said he didn't necessarily agree or disagree with a move to quarterly billing, and that they (Sandy and Glenn) would have to convince the town taxpayers that there was a real advantage to going to the quarterly payments, that is, to improve cash flow. Glenn said the two large school tax bills were the crux of the problem, given their close proximity, requiring him to dip into the town's Stabilization Account, requiring him to reimburse the account when funds became available. He noted that it was stressful and could be avoided by the switch to quarterly billing. The board asked if there were taxpayers who would benefit from the change. Sandy thought perhaps about 3% of the 10% responsible for the chronically unpaid bills might be able to pay the smaller quarterly payments. Sandy said we would need to consider having a transitioning period to a quarterly billing system, providing the opportunity for explanation and general information (via Tracks, town meetings, mailings, etc.),

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## 2. Tax Collector's proposal for quarterly tax bills (Continued)

reminding people to plan for the new billing system. She also noted that the switch to a quarterly system would not go into effect until FY 18 at the earliest. Although no decision was arrived at, a good exchange of ideas and opinions occurred. No doubt we have not seen the last of this issue.

## 3. Custodian wages

This agenda item will be carried over for discussion at next meeting.

Meeting was adjourned at 8:42 pm.

Kent and Dick headed out to meet with the Selectboard who were still in session.

Respectfully,  
David Weissbrod, Clerk