

Westhampton, MA Finance Committee Meeting Minutes

January 17, 2024

Meeting called to order at 7:00pm

In attendance: Stephen Holt, Marilyn Witherell, Tad Weiss, Scott Stanton (taking notes), Carla Lussier, Jeremy Durrin, and Jennifer Milikowsky

Also in attendance: Doug Finn, John Shaw

Motion to accept meeting minutes as submitted by Durrin. Motion made by Witherell seconded by Durrin.

Approved 5-0-1

John Shaw is here presenting the Cemetery Salary. Current salary is a \$12,000 salary plus 50% of any services performed which averages out to between \$2,500 and \$2,900 per year. The position is listed as 665 hours per year, but actual hours worked are much closer to 700, which is the maximum before benefits. John is proposing that instead of the unpredictable fees being part of the salary, the town pays a flat \$15,000 salary and the fees go straight to the cemetery budget instead of 50%. John would also begin to combine the various funds attributed to the cemetery in order to earn more interest as intended and simplify the cemetery budget and prepare for future expenses. John also mentioned an addition to the cemetery which will add space for ~800 sites which will add work to the superintendent's purview. John's justification for the increase in funds for the cemetery has partly to do with the proposed increased size and that the current fees do not cover increased costs of materials. John is also looking into increasing the cemetery service fees based on data from surrounding towns and material expenses.

Discussion about Town Clerk Expenses - Scott and Jennifer questioned the difference between costs in previous years, both election and non-election years. Questions about election year expenses explained by Doug as a \$1000 increase from the last state election year. \$3,000 more than last year simply because it's an election year and \$1,000 increase over the last election year based on the necessity of 5 poll workers this year.

Discussion about counsel fees - Requesting level funding because there are no additional expected legal issues upcoming but because our legal counsel is increasing their fees by \$30/hr across the board.

Discussion about Con Com expenses - Requesting level funding at the amount we increased it to last year because commissioners can't get to all of the regular conferences in a single year and they need to be able to get to the rest over the next few years. Can lower it later if they don't continue to use it. There is a revolving set of Con Com conferences that occur one at a

time, one per year and in order to get all members the ability to attend all of them, this must be kept up for a few years at the least.

Planning Board Expenses - Asking to keep it the same as last year because this amount was used for ad expenses last year that they don't expect to need this year. Instead the money this year will be used for training that they had hoped to get to last year.

Zoning Board Expenses – also requested a level funding from previous year.

Town Offices Expenses - Decrease in elevator inspection because it is an off year and isn't going to happen this year. Increase in security for a cellular dialer system for fire and security systems, but overall a decrease in the expenses because the elevator inspection is a large expense and the security system increase is small.

Cultural Council - Level funded, rarely used, Doug may purchase some stamps this year for mailings from the council. The rest of the funding comes from the MA State Cultural Council.

Motion to adjourn by Stanton at 8:33pm seconded by Milikowsky. **Approved 7-0-0**