

Westhampton, MA Finance Committee Meeting Minutes
March 13, 2024

Meeting Called to order at 7:03pm

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

Also in attendance: Doug Finn, Susan Bronstein, Maureen Dempsey, Bill Jablonski, Meaghan Schwelm, Jackie Brodeur, Barbara Pelissier, Anne Marie O'Reilly

Motion to approve meeting minutes from February 28th, 2024 by Jeremy, seconded by Marilyn.

Approved: 5-0-1

Budget Items:

Highway Administration

Bill Jablonski – Increase of \$300 dollars proposed. Increases driven by increase in FRCOG costs. Weiss requested it be broken down into a few more categories for future years.

Highway Materials

Bill Jablonski – Request is 20% increase for a total of \$120,000, but actual need is \$137,830. Material costs have increased significantly in recent years. Bill completes all projects possible with materials he has funding for.

Snow Removal

Bill Jablonski – Level funded request. Materials were purchased, so inventory is good. Currently \$14,000 over budget and additional costs will only be overtime if necessary.

Road Machinery

Bill Jablonski – Request is \$1,000 (2%) increase to cover increase costs in parts. This budget covers normal maintenance and emergency repairs.

Road Machinery Fuel

Bill Jablonski – Fuel for all town vehicles and generators. Level funded requested because fuel costs have decreased.

Road Machinery Buildings

Bill Jablonski – Level funding request. Biggest expense is heating oil to heat the building. Also covers pumping the catch basin tank underneath the garage that DEP requires due to all the salt runoffs.

Transfer Station Expense

Bill Jablonski - Decrease of about \$10,000 requested due to use of state recycling grant funds to cover some expenses. Not a revolving fund so fees paid to transfer station go into general fund. Discussion of what type of fund this should be, but no change seems necessary at this time.

Landfill Maintenance Expense

Bill Jablonski – \$4000 increase due to new state PFAS testing requirements.

HRMC

Bill Jablonski – Calculation based on population and tonnage. This fee covers more in value than we pay – get us the best recycling rates, apply for grants and coordinate special recycling events.

Library Expenses

Meaghan Schweim – Overall increase requested of about 9%. Mandatory purchasing required for state certification to be 20% of total library expenses. Decrease in equipment and technology possible because recent year budgets have been used to get equipment up to date (4 staff computers; 3 public computers). CWMARS membership – interlibrary loan program, library internet system, library database system. Repair and maintenance lines going up 15% because of anticipated needs. Doug Finn is working to reduce service charges across the town for HVAC which has impacted the library as well. Discussion of electricity costs being net of credits received due to solar panels.

Library Salaries

Meaghan Schweim – Request to increase sub librarian hours from up from 7 hours a week to 12.5 hours per week. This would improve coverage issues that arise due to programs taking place and gaps in volunteer coverage. Sub librarian position has really enabled director and youth services librarian to improve programming for community which has been really well intended. Teen programming in particular has seen a significant increase in the past year. Slightly bigger than cola increase requested for salaries (sub librarian, Youth Svcs, Director) in order to continue the multi-year effort to get pay rates in line with similar communities.

Independent Audit

Doug Finn – Pay to have an audit each year in order to keep our bond rating. We have enough money carried over from FY22 to reduce budget request to \$10,000.

Tree Warden Salary

Just increased by cola.

Tree Warden Expense

Level funded.

Finance Committee Items:

Discussion about future dates for meetings re: discussion of school budgets. Elementary School budget won't be ready by our meeting date next week so we removed it from the schedule.

Weiss proposed warrant article to reduce membership of finance committee from 10 to 7. Committee discussed favorably and will make the suggestion to the Selectboard.

Motion to adjourn by Jeremy at 8:57pm, seconded by Scott.

Approved: 6-0-0