

## Westhampton Finance Committee Meeting Minutes

3/4/2021

Meeting began at 7:00PM on Zoom.

Attending: Mary Cleary (Chair), Steve Holt, Pat Miller, Sarah Mulvehill, Andy Klyman, Barbara Pelissier, Jeremy Durrin, Tad Weiss, Jake Antosz (Secretary). Also attending, Tom Martin, Meghan Schwelm, David Blakesley, Mikki Nevins, Roberta Armenti, Anne Marie O'Reilly, Ginny Curtis.

Vote to accept meeting minutes from 2-28-2021: **VOTE** 8-0-1

Review Correspondence: Admin search committee wants a person from the finance committee.

Review of calendar, no meeting for March 11 unless we need a quick meeting with Dave White on the police budget.

- 1) **Library:** Meghan Schwelm: The main goal in the budget is for the youth service librarian salary to get closer to the standard of the state. There is a link to MBLC pay rates and ranges for reference.
  - Increase in supply budget line is for the continued standards of maintenance for the collection of books.
  - Not using as much lighting and other features created less money going toward electrical costs.
  - CW Mars cost of the service went up.
  - Equipment – There are some upgrades in software programs and a need for updating general windows software on computers.
  - Mandatory purchasing, must spend as part of getting state aid. More money into e-book program in response to pandemic.
  - There will be \$4,000.00 of state aid for next year.
  - Question: Other aid that may have come to the library? - Not currently aware of any grants for e-books etc.
  - Question: How much library activity is from Westhampton? - Quite high, estimate is probably 85% predominantly Westhampton residents. Over 900 Westhampton Library cards are issued.
  - Question: What is the status of the painting project for the library? - They would like to seek funds for painting but this year is probably not very feasible for what is needed. Hopefully strategize funds for other painting projects. Didn't feel it was the right year to ask for more funds for this project.
  - Question: Why is this not on the capital projects? - This is a bit of a gray area in part because of how the library was funded. Projects over \$10,000.00 and life expectancy over 5 years are for capital planning.  
Question: What is the life expectancy of the roof and furnace at the Library? - Currently fine for the next several years. The library can have a discussion about longer term things with roof etc. with capital planning.

Question: Where do grants show up in the budget? - State aid that is received by the town which gets used toward membership for CW Mars is like revenue that comes in on the town budget, that is why it doesn't show up on the library budget.

- 2) **Board of Health:** David Blakesley - HRMC - Assessment is a yearly fee for Westhampton's share of this membership. Anticipated \$5,600.00 in grants towards this.

- Board of Health: Purchased laptops with this money for this fiscal year. Budget remains the same.

**Foothills Health District:** Tom Martin - Shared health agent between four towns. Hiring extra personnel because of the pandemic, accepted \$110,000.00 from state and Cares Act funding. Cares Act will last for the first half of this year. Additional state funding will continue through the rest of the calendar year. Public Health Excellence grant can help take care of extra expenses that they will be applying for.

- Administrative supplies have a slight increase.
- Baseline costs for public health nurse - Will be paid for by Cares money up until the end of the calendar year.
- Question regarding funding of public health nurse for the second half of the year. If there are more funds available in the future how will this look in the budget? Grant money can be used for this if you had not budgeted for a public health nurse, however if one was budgeted the money can only be used for overtime or extra personnel not already budgeted.
- Budgeted \$8,000.00 for the next half of the year for the public health nurse.
- The goal of the public health nurse is to enhance preparedness for member towns Boards of Health.
- What will this budget look like after COVID? Expand this role of public health nurse and keep a budget similar to this in the future.
- This is a shared budget for towns, the Foothills Health District. Other towns use CTC Contact Tracing Collaborative as a backstop for public health initiatives, who don't have these public health nurses etc.

- 3) **Property Management Committee:** David Blakesley - Members of this committee are Chris Brooks, Art Pichette, Barbara Cook, and David Blakesley. Property Maintenance Committee and Energy Assessment Committee, which views and oversees any maintenance that needs to be done on town buildings. Has access to Green Community grant money.

- New objectives for the committee include re-finishing the flooring in the town hall. The low quote was \$7,500.00 for this project. The Property Maintenance Committee is giving the Finance Committee the price of up to \$8,500.00 to do this, however these are year old quotes. Appropriation of funds for these projects will be looked at later.
- There were also quotes for replacing the doors on the town hall. The amount of \$6,500.00 was allocated for this. The doors, especially the side door, needs to be done before the floor is done.

- 4) **Town Clerk Budget:** Should be roughly the same as last year.

- 5) **Police Budget:** Latest info is each officer will be required to attend additional training to be certified according to new regulations by the state. Hoping to have more info by next Thursday. This will be a change in the budget request.

6) **Reserve Request:** From Zoning Board of Appeals, requesting extra funds for ads for public hearings. There is a current balance of \$9,500.00 in Finance Committee reserve fund. Vote to transfer \$400.00 from reserve fund to the Zoning Board of Appeals: **VOTE:** 9-0-0

7) **Other Business/Points of Clarification:**

- Town needs to decide whether they will accept funds from the state, Westhampton would be allocated \$25,000.00. This is the Esser Fund money.
- The reserve fund is a fund under the finance committee's discretion for small budget tweaks to move funds into other budgets. This is so we can more easily take care of smaller budget issues. These are up to our discretion.
- Search for new administrative assistant – Town wants one person from the Finance Committee to be on the search committee. Jeremy Durrin put his name forward for this.
- Process for deliberations - There will be number checkers going through the amounts on the budgets, then everyone will look at the numbers and write notes and their thoughts on balancing the budget. Take a critical eye and share your input and thoughts after looking at these budgets. For example, what your ideas and thoughts are on what needs to be funded now and what can wait.
- Stabilization fund is like Westhampton's bank account, it can be used to help keep the tax rate level and to pay for smaller projects or vehicles. This fund can also be used to help pay for some of the larger capital projects that the town encounters.
- Some clarification on the Montague Rd solar project money - These payments go into the general fund. This money comes in at the same time as the public safety building may be built, so it is just associated with the project, even though it is not actually linked.
- Next meeting March 25. Going over budgets for Westhampton Elementary School and Hampshire Regional High School. Additional dates can be found in the Monster Excel Spreadsheet.

Vote to adjourn meeting 9:35 PM: **VOTE:** 9-0-0.

Respectfully,  
Jake Antosz