

CHARLEMONT FINANCE COMMITTEE MEETING – CHARLEMONT TOWN HALL

(Joint Meeting with the Charlemont Board of Selectmen)

March 11, 2016

Members Present: Finance Committee – Amy Wales (Chair), Rich Filoramo, Ron Smith;

Select Board - Toby Gould, Sarah Reynolds

1. The meeting was called to order at 8:31 a.m., by Chair Amy Wales, who announced for purposes of full disclosure, that she has taken a new position at the Four Rivers Charter School in Greenfield.
2. The minutes of the February 26, 2016 meeting were reviewed and corrected. (Corrected copies to be signed at next meeting).
3. Hawlemont School Budget Review: presenters – Superintendent Michael Buoniconti and Principal Wayne Kermenski; budget increase request is 1.5%. Been using more and more reserves, cannot keep doing so. This is an artificially low budget. This year's savings cannot be guaranteed next year. Superintendent has asked rural superintendents to come together and form an association to deal with common issues. The school system will be broke in 2-3 years if something isn't done, which could lead to program cuts and teacher layoffs. Much discussion about multiple use of school buildings. MSBA loans to schools might inhibit what can be done with school buildings, and Superintendent is seeking exemptions.
4. Pellet boiler: new bids should come in at or under budget. No more money should be needed. No longer looking for a third boiler. Energy efficiency will be greatly improved.
5. The Agriculture Program is self-sustaining - an income producer! The program has attracted new students. The educational component is outstanding – the school went up a level.
6. Recreational Tax and Rooms/Meal Tax: Amy has a subgroup meeting on this and has meetings scheduled for April 6 and 13.
7. Guest Karen Bloom appeared to talk about the Traffic Calming Committee. They will work with the Conway School of Landscape Design. Karen is looking for someone as a designated person in Town to go to public hearings and be a contact person for the students. Marguerite Willis was suggested. SelectBoard member Toby Gould moved that Marguerite act on behalf of the Town with the Conway School of Landscape Design in cooperation with the Traffic Calming Committee. SelectBoard Member Sarah Reynolds seconded. Motion passed.
8. Accounting Firm quote: Justin Cole submitted a letter explaining the reasons for his quote. Toby Gould recommended that the letter be reviewed before the next meeting.
9. Charter School Letter: Toby will draft a letter to go to the Legislature and email it to us for review.
10. Broadband Issue: Bob Handsaker will be invited to the April 1 Joint Meeting.
11. New Finance Committee members: the Committee is two members down. Lynn Hathaway was suggested as a possible member. She will be contacted.
12. Highway Budget: presented by Gordon Hathaway. The budget is just an operating budget. It does not allow for any projects. Would like to add \$40k for road projects. Gordy has approval to buy Government Surplus items, but he is wondering if that authorization could also be used to buy used items from private vendors. If so, he could get a pick-up truck, for instance, for around \$8k. SelectBoard Member Sarah Reynolds will check with the AG's Office to see how

restrictive the authorization is. Toby Gould suggested that perhaps it's time to look at making major purchases on loan instead of buying outright.

13. Bridge Issues: the bridge on Legate Hill Road is in danger of being closed. This would strand residents, as the road to Rowe is closed in mud season. This a dire safety issue. Sarah Reynolds suggested that perhaps we should declare a "state of emergency". None of the towns in Western Mass can afford to repair all of the bridges in need. Rich Filoramo suggested the State be invited to a Town Meeting. Toby Gould recommended that a letter be sent to the State Legislators. Toby and Marguerite Willis will meet to draft a letter, to be presented at the next meeting. Toby also suggested that the next move be a petition from the residents.
14. Corrections for the Highway Department were made to the CIP forms.
15. Police Budget: presented by Jared Bellows. Slight increase in a couple of items. Need to replace one police vehicle in each of the next few years. Toby Gould suggested keeping old vehicles for detail work. It is expected that there will be an increase in detail requests with the repaving of Route 2.
16. The meeting was adjourned at 10:40 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Ronald Smith

Documents distributed:

- Letter from Accountant Justin Cole
- Budget sheets from Hawlemont School Department, Highway Department, Police Department
- Capital Improvement Program Municipal Program Summary sheets

This document is a draft until approved and signed by the Finance Committee