

CHARLEMONT TOWN HALL

Minutes of the Finance Committee Meeting – By Teleconference

March 31, 2021

Present: Finance Committee - Rich Filoramo, Amy Wales, Lynn Hathaway, Jay Healy, Ron Smith

Also present: Marguerite Willis, Elizabeth Van Iderstine, Sarah Reynolds

1. The meeting was called to order at 3:31 p.m. by the Chair, Rich Filoramo.
2. The minutes of the February 17, 2021 and March 17, 2021 meetings were reviewed and approved.
3. Town Administrator Sarah Reynolds gave a report:
 - a. On grants, she has not heard a decision on the Ambulance Grant, but expects a decision soon, as the latest projected decision date was by the beginning of April. She had filed for two Community Best Practices Grants. One was for Succession and Retirement planning, which was approved and is up and running. This could include an establishment of a Public Works Department. Also a grant was approved for IT at Town Hall, and to revise our email system. Sarah is doing more research into the IT/Email grant, as a revision of emails could cost the Town \$1,000/month. She is applying for a \$20,000 grant for police training, and is also looking at the possibility of an Insurance Grant (MIAA) of \$10,000.
 - b. Sarah sent to us a new sheet on the analysis of new truck costs. She is gathering maintenance costs for the present vehicles, and will send that information to us. Sarah did quote the costs verbally at the meeting, reading from the sheet being sent to us. It was agreed that only major repair costs would be considered, such as those that would be covered under warranty.
 - c. Sarah mentioned that we still owe Mohawk an answer on the capital improvement items they submitted.
4. Personnel Issues: Marguerite stated that she had heard that one of the overwhelming issues for the boards and committees was that they did not want to take minutes, and that is why the SelectBoard sought out more secretarial help. Sarah sent out a sheet with two options for the Secretary to the Boards position - one for 8 hours/week and one for 12 hours/week. Carlene Hayden has suggested to Sarah that based on her experience, 8 hours is not enough to get the job done, so Sarah is recommending the 12 hours. The proposal is to also increase the Tax Collector's hours from 12 to 15 hours/week due to additional workload, and the Treasurer's hours by 3-6 to be paid by Broadband. The hours for the Secretary will probably be varied, so it makes sense to set a monthly maximum of 48 hours. This was the consensus of the group.
5. COLA's: Employees are getting a 3% COLA increase. No increase was given last year, so the 3% includes this year plus a small amount extra to make up for last year.
6. Broadband Borrowing: a question arose as to the best way to provide Broadband with more needed funds before the next borrowing happens. It was proposed that an amount of perhaps \$300,000 be temporarily borrowed from the Stabilization Account, for approximately one month. But the concern was that it would leave only \$13,000 left in Stabilization. But Amy explained that the loan would be paid back to Stabilization by

Broadband before the next ATM. This would save a little bit of interest Broadband would need to pay. Also it was explained that \$300,000 may not be needed, and that the plan would be to borrow in \$100,000 increments. Marguerite said the borrowing from Stabilization question would be on the agenda for the next SelectBoard meeting. Amy moved that the Finance Committee recommend approval of borrowing from Stabilization for Broadband expenses until the Broadband borrowing proceeds are received in early May. Jay Healy seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

7. Omnibus Budget Review: since we do not have updated figures for Hawlemont, it was agreed to wait until the next meeting.
8. The meeting was adjourned at 4:24 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Ronald Smith

Documents viewed:

Analysis of Highway Department's new trucks' projected costs

Job Description for proposed Secretary to the Boards

Town Personnel Proposal

Spreadsheet for Fiscal 2022 COLA'S

Spreadsheet of Assessors Staff Salaries for FY 2020 from various towns

This document is a draft until approved by the Finance Committee.