

## CHARLEMONT TOWN HALL

### Minutes of the Finance Committee, SelectBoard and Capital Planning Committee Conference Call Joint Meeting

May 16, 2020

Present: Amy Wales, Rich Filoramo, Lynn Hathaway, Ron Smith, Marguerite Willis, Sarah Reynolds, Tracy Hall and Frank Mooney

1. The meeting was called to order at 8:17 a.m. by Rich Filoramo.
2. The minutes of the April 18 and April 25, 2020 meetings were reviewed and approved by the Finance Committee, SelectBoard and Capital Planning Committee.
3. Rich asked if Amy would report on her meeting of the ATTC - Association of Town Finance Committees. However, since some members needed to leave the meeting early, Amy and Rich instead asked the Capital Planning Committee to review Amy's provided list of "Funding Sources" for the capital items.
  - a. There was a question about the purchase price of the Fire Car, listed as \$55,000. Fire Chief Dennis Annear, who signed into the meeting, stated that based on bids he had received, the purchase price would be closer to \$50,000. Dennis also stated that there is a signed agreement with the Town of Rowe whereby they will contribute \$5,000/year for three years. Tracy Hall moved that the recommended amount for the Fire Vehicle be changed from \$55,000 to \$50,000. Frank Mooney seconded. The motion passed.
  - b. Radios: there was discussion about the radios needed by the Ambulance, Fire and Police Departments, which are needed for FY2021. Ambulance is fine with the "free" radios, with an estimated cost of \$2,000 for installation and programming. For the Police, if they purchase the free radios for vehicles and portables the cost would be \$2,000. Fire wanted to purchase the "non-free" radios, at an estimated cost of \$20,000: \$10,00 for the radios, and \$10,000 for programming and installation. According to Dennis Annear, a representative from Motorola stated that after 3 years, the Free radios will not be serviced by them, because it is not a standard Motorola radio and was made for this particular project only by a local Motorola dealer. But Marguerite's research seems to dispute that assertion. Dennis's concern is that if that vendor goes out of business, there is no guarantee they will be able to be serviced. He said the State Police and the Commonwealth are not purchasing those radios, only cities and towns are. Amy talked about the extremely bleak financial situation the Town will have in the next few years, and that we should take that into account when we consider new financing. After discussion, Tracy moved that the Town go with "free" radios for all departments – Ambulance, Fire and Police, at a total cost of \$14,000, as a one-time start-up cost. Frank Mooney seconded. The motion passed.
  - c. Amy mentioned that the latest information from Senator Hinds mentions that the State's reduction in funding could be as much as 30%, and so we need to be conservative in our budget proposal. Amy also said as for the school budgets, it is not necessarily a one-twelfth budget for them, or 1/12 of the budget they had for FY2020. Their amount will be negotiated with the State Department of Education. There was a

concern about less revenue coming in. Lynn reported that for now we are “stable”. But she suggested that for next year we could project a 20% drop in revenue.

4. Warrant Articles: how to fund. Amy said we have \$200,000 in Stabilization, and about \$200,000 in Free Cash. Committees decided to discuss all articles first and then vote on each one.
  - a. Article 6: \$270,000 for the ambulance. Rich suggested we borrow for that.
  - b. Article 7: Bridge repair: \$20,000 – Free cash was suggested to fund.
  - c. Article 8: \$100,000 to replace Highway Ford Truck. Suggested to borrow for 5 years.
  - d. Article 9: Infrastructure Repairs: \$40,000. Rich suggested we hold on this. Marguerite suggested we get information from Gordy on how he intends to use the funds.
  - e. Article 10: Website redesign - \$3,500. Suggested to fund by taxation.
  - f. Article 11: Light fixtures on bridge- \$10,000. No suggestion made for funding.
  - g. Article 12: \$500 for cemeteries. Taxation was suggested.
  - h. Article 7: Rich moved to fund Bridge Repairs for \$20,000 from Free Cash, and is recommended by the Finance Committee. Ron Smith seconded. Motion passed.
  - i. Article 8: Ford 550: Rich moved to fund \$100,000 by borrowing for 5 years. No second, general agreement to postpone this Article for now.
  - j. Article 6: Ambulance: Rich moved to borrow \$270,000. Amy seconded. Motion passed. It was suggested that the loan be for ten years.
  - k. Motion: Rich moved to fund Article 7 – Bridge Repairs for \$20,000, and Radios for \$14,000, from Free Cash. Amy seconded. Motion passed.
  - l. Rich said Ford Tahoe would be funded by a lease.
5. Operating Budget discussion: Rich recommended that we skip this for now and let the Finance Committee have a meeting among themselves to make recommendations.
6. Discussion about departments being asked to reduce spending: SelectBoard will send a memo to departments asking them to do that.
7. Broadband Funding: Amy said SelectBoard has items related to Enterprise funding before them, and other questions, and therefore Amy would like discussion on this tabled for now. Amy also feels Broadband Committee should be involved in these discussions.
8. Salary Freeze: Rich said the Librarian’s salary should be included in this discussion. Amy said she feels strongly that the Town of Hawley needs to step up and contribute to the cost of the Library operation. Marguerite stated that salary increases for the Town would amount to about \$7,000. Marguerite moved for the SelectBoard that salaries be frozen until further notice. Sarah Reynolds seconded. Motion passed. SelectBoard will draft a memo to Town employees explaining the situation, to be voted on at its next meeting.
9. Hiring Freeze: Rich said he feels Carlene is very overworked right now, and could use help. And that maybe a Grant Writer could be hired on an “as needed” basis. Sarah said they have a person in mind for Grant Writer, and perhaps she could start June 1, 2020, since there is still funds available in this FY budget. Amy warned that as of now, the proposed Operating Budget would lead to a \$4.00 increase in the tax rate, so we obviously are needing to cut somewhere, so keep that in mind when you consider new hires.
10. Next meeting: The Finance Committee agreed to have a separate meeting on Thursday, May 21 at 8:00 a.m. (Later moved to May 28). The next Joint Meeting was scheduled for June 13 at 8:15 a.m.
11. The meeting adjourned at 10:24 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Ronald Smith

Documents Reviewed:

FY 2021 ATM Finance Committee Recommended Sources Spreadsheet

Annual Town Meeting Articles

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