

Town of Charlemont
Finance Committee / Selectboard Meeting Minutes
March 23, 2022
Via Telephone and at the Town Hall

People Present: Rich Filoramo, Lynn Hathaway, Amy Wales, Marguerite Willis, Bill Harker, Sarah Reynolds, Sue Vight, Star Atkeson

Absent: Jay Healy, Ron Smith

Guest: Bob Handsaker

Start time - 4:01 p.m.

Approval of the Minutes for 3/09/2022

1st Rich Filoramo, 2nd Lynn Hathaway

1st Marguerite Willis, 2nd Bill Harker

Report from the Administrator

- Sarah Reynolds spoke on Transfer Station items and had an update for the budget. The costs for trash removal will most likely go up (From \$82 per ton to \$100 per ton) because of bankruptcy of FCSW with 3 years left on contract. The cost will go up to \$28,430.00 next year.
- There is money coming in from The Recycling Revolving Fund up to \$1178.55 this month. Sarah wants to check in with Lynn about that account.
- Sarah would like to go over budget one more time next meeting.

School assessment

- Marguerite stated she will follow up with Town Council after discussion about the assessment of the school.
- Rich pointed out that there is an urgency for a decision/ amount to assess, in case a Warrant Article is needed.
- Marguerite mentioned she had contacted the Massachusetts Association of School Committees and had not yet received a response.

Guest Bob Handsaker of the Broadband Committee

- As preamble, Bob explained how the Enterprise Fund works. His question is “Are we building up a good cushion of retained earnings?”

Bob Handsaker went over the Broadband Commission’s 2023 Fiscal Year budget

- The Budget is based on 450 Subscribers, they have 455 subscribers and number is likely to climb.
- The net profit before debt allocation is 89,000.
- Currently the only debt is the interest on the statehouse notes at \$6650.
- There was discussion about take rates, and a time line for completion, the rate will remain stable with the option to raise at any time, although most likely won’t need to.
- ARPA funds were brought up by Sarah, Broadband is the only allowable expense to use it on. There is a conference in April, in time for May, another report needs to be done.
- The statehouse notes mature in November and at that point the borrowing amount will be 1.1 Million, which assumes/ includes the \$ 176,000 ARPA money.
- 1st repayment of principle and interest will be in August of 2023.
- Discussion of risk of interest rate rise. Bob states that they will maneuver and decide closer to November.
- It will take 18 years to repay the 1.1 mil.
- Sarah brought up True Up funds
- Bob brought up that there are small amounts of money here and there that are eligible for State “Make ready true up” and has gone up to \$10,000. Wants to take advantage of it this fiscal year.
- Marguerite added that a reasonable time frame would be the end of this Fiscal year.
- Bob, counting on Make Ready and True Up funds stated “that at the end of the day,” they need to borrow 1.1 mil (Instead of 1.7 mil.)
- Bob hopes for 70% take rate.
- Bob went over specifics in the budget, but there was no issue.
- Bob went over The Resilience Project which will provide savings (5 neighboring towns band together for redundancy.) Resilience is huge for future cost savings. They can help shoulder the cost of the \$43,000. “upstream connection,” and help each other out by providing redundancy. Charlemont is the last town being wired up in order to join this network. It costs \$50,000 per town, State grant covers 95% of this. The grant is part of the “Community Compact Program,” The application is in the works, and they will know before it is time to borrow.

Rich Filoramo started discussion on Capital Planning FY 2023

Sarah Reynolds presented on Capital Planning

Dirt Roads

- Gordy put \$ 40,000 aside to do mud roads.
- Sarah pointed out new ARPA funds for “Dirt Roads” and wants to apply. If grant program is good and sustainable, we can start to count on it and switch out in future.

Bridges

- State covers cost of bridges but town is responsible for engineering the easements.

Ambulance

- Rich pointed out If Ambulance is on ballot we need to notify Kathy, we need to put on debt exclusion.
- Marguerite pointed out either debt exclusion or ten year note. There was discussion about ten year note. Amy pointed out that the income generated by an ambulance is already slated to cover other costs and cannot be used to pay ten year note. Or if it does, the money for the other expenses have to be found elsewhere.
- Bill brought paperwork for \$173,000. ambulance quote from the fire chief, rather than the previously quoted \$350,000.
- Marguerite noted that a comparison of this new ambulance with the previously quoted ambulance needs to be done. Why is this one so much cheaper?
- Marguerite wants the ambulance to be on the agenda and to decide next meeting.

Repairs to town hall office-

- \$12,500. Pushed out for first floor woodwork and flooring. Decided will not push out again, as there is a hole in floor, so it was put before The Capital Improvement Committee

Important upcoming dates

- Ballot information is due on the April 19th
- Warrants close on April 23rd
- Town meetings and election on May 24th
- Hoping to make decisions next meeting on April 6th
- Amy cannot make April 20th meeting.

Closing Concerns

- Rich had concern about how to fund the budget, how to approve money for school if the assessment is turned down. Mentioned that using last year's number would put them behind. Need the town council to specify.
- Sarah gave number of \$1,220,040., with reduced services.
- Scheduling discussion about town meeting. The planning board wants to join in on the second night. Sarah and Marguerite agree that town meeting should be scheduled for 2 nights.

Finance committee

- Adjourned at 5:06 PM motioned by Rich Filoramo and seconded by Lynn Hathaway and agreed by the rest of the finance committee
- The Selectboard adjourned by Marguerite Willis and seconded by Bill Harker.

The next meeting is schedules for April 6, 2022 at 4:00 p.m.

Sincerely
Star Atkeson
Secretary to the Boards in training