

Town of Rowe
Board of Selectmen – Minutes
Wednesday, March 27, 2019 – 6:30 pm
Rowe Town Hall - Hearing Room 1

Call to Order: The meeting was called to order by Chair Jennifer Morse at 6:32 p.m.

Present: Jennifer Morse, Chair, Dennis May, Vice Chair, Chuck Sokol – Member
Executive Secretary Janice Boudreau
Finance Committee: Loretta Dionne, Wayne Zavotka, Paul McLatchy III, Laurie Pike, Selmi Hyytinen

OPEN MEETING

Announcement of recording devices & noteworthy information: one recording device

Joint Meeting with Finance Committee Regarding FY20 Budget

Select Board Members met with the Finance Committee to review the line items of each department and Committee's budgets.

Chair Morse said that there would be a meeting with Parker Elmore of Odyssey Advisors to discuss the Other Post Employee Benefits (OPEB) report that was recently received in greater detail.

- Expansion of Administrative Assistant: Wayne Zavotka asked about the added new position of administrative assistant. Chair Morse said that she had discussed the possibility of sharing a position with the Town of Charlemont as their Town Administrator recently left her position and there was a need for a part-time employee to fill their needs. Chair Morse said she would like to see a Town Administrator to oversee personnel, write grants and work on special projects directed by the Select Board. She said she would send a Town Administrator job description that she acquired from another town and send it to the Chair of the Charlemont Select Board for review.

Chair Morse said the Technical Assistance Dept. of MA Dept. of Revenue (DOR) were going to send a person to perform a review of town personnel and make an assessment of their findings. There has been a delay of the DOR office visit due to their work schedule and had put off their visit until a later date.

It was agreed to complete a job description and be able to have a clear presentation for what tasks were not being met with the current personnel that the current job descriptions had to be reviewed as well as listing the tasks that could be performed by an additional person.

It was agreed that more assistance was needed and additional grants could be obtained and managed with more help. Since the current Select Board are employed outside of the Select Board, they cannot meet all of the needs of the town without more assistance. Vice-Chair May thought that if there was more help, people might be encouraged to run for office knowing that there was help available.

- Assessors' Budget Requests: Following review, it was agreed to speak further with the Assessors to discuss their operations and capital requests for clarification.

- Planning Board Request: The Planning Board requested a revolving fund for their legal fees and following research, it was learned that a revolving legal fund was not allowable. There was discussion that the current legal fees were not used and they could request funds, if needed, from the Reserve Fund.

Motion to for Planning Board in the Planning Board Legal and Consulting: Chair Morse made a motion to support maintain in the Planning Board Legal and Consulting line item to the \$5,000.00 level in FY2020. The motion, seconded by Member Sokol, was unanimously accepted. (3/0/0)

- FY2020 Stipends: There was discussion about the Planning Board request to add stipends for their board members for the amount of \$ 5,000.00.

Motion Regarding Stipends: Following discussion, Member Sokol made a motion support no changes in all town stipends until all the committees and board stipends are reviewed. The motion, seconded by Chair Morse, was unanimously accepted. (3/0/0)

- The Goal Post: The Goal Post was discussed and it was agreed to keep the stipend the same as well as the operations and put it under General Administration since the Planning Board voted to stop overseeing the printing of the Goal Post.
- Cost of Snow Removal: There was discussion about the costs involved with snow removal of town properties.
- Maintenance Costs: There was discussion about the costs of the Elevator maintenance and costs of the maintenance of the generators and the need to properly fund the annual maintenance as well as repairs.
- Accountant's Budget Request: Town Accountant requested a significant pay increase and there was discussion about whether it was justified. There was discussion about paying a fair wage compared with other area Accountants in the area. Finance Committee Chair Zavotka expressed the parity of similar positions in the area and check out the salaries to see how they measure against other towns before finalizing.
- Fire Dept.: There was discussion about the Fire Dept.'s budget and the costs of the emergency generators be put on a separate line item now that there are 5 generators in town.
- School Budget: FY20 School Budget is up \$36,700.00. There was discussion as to why the School Choice funds were not being utilized to reduce the school budget. School Choice funds go into a revolving account which can be used at the discretion of the school committee. Last year funds were released these School Choice funds to reduce their budget and leaving a determined amount in reserve. It was explained that this reserve acts as their stabilization fund to cover emergency repairs. The school committee makes the decision regarding School Choice funds. Upon investigation it was learned that \$60,000.00 from school choice funds were being utilized to reduce their budget. It was agreed to ask the School Committee to discuss the School Choice funds.

It was noted that the secondary school costs increased as there are a larger number of students attending this coming year. Paul McLatchy III raised the idea of creating a stabilization fund for tuition for the years when there are an increase in student enrollment in a given year.

Highway Dept. Budget: The Highway Dept. submitted their budget with a 2 ½ % increase.

Comp Time: There was discussion and review about the comp time that the DPW Superintendent takes due to the large amount of overtime he works.

Dirt Roads: There was discussion about the problems with the town dirt roads due to mud. There was discussion about whether ambulances can travel on the road and possible remedies to repair the mud problem due to the recent complaints from residents on Davis Mine and Davenport Roads. It was also noted that someone was deliberately driving in the mud and causing larger ruts.

Streetlights Budget: Chair Morse said the Board of Selectmen have taken on the task of reviewing each streetlight in town and reducing the streetlights wherever possible. In addition, there will be research as to how to reduce the light pollution.

MLP Budget: An increase in the Municipal Light Plant Budget (MLP) was due to adding a stipend for the MLP for the many hours of work Mr. Dvore is doing. It was noted that once the first year is over that the work Mr. Dvore is doing will be handled by WiredWest and his stipend could then be eliminated.

Gracy House: Chair Morse said that there has been requests to form a committee to study what needs to be done next due to the mold problem and investigation of the long term costs of operation.

At this point in the budget process a 5.73% increase in the budget was estimated. Special Projects were reviewed.

CIP Plan: Chair Morse reported that Phoebe Walker of Franklin Regional Council of Governments asked that the Board of Selectmen adopt the Capital Improvement Plan done by their Consultant Joe Markarian through the Best Practices Grant. It was noted that the CIP plan was lacking and the result was disappointing. It was noted that Mr. Markarian had recommended a town bylaw be put in place to indicate who was responsible for the plan.

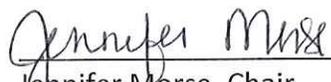
Next Meeting: It was agreed to meet next week with the Finance Committee to discuss FY20 budget only.

AJOURNMENT: Seeing no further business, Member Sokol made a motion to adjourn the Meeting at 9:31 p.m. The motion, seconded by Vice-Chair May, was unanimously accepted. (3/0/0)

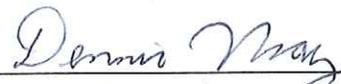
Respectfully Submitted
Janice Boudreau, Executive Secretary

Approval Date: May 1, 2019

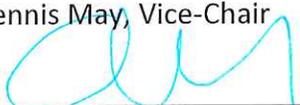
Approved:



Jennifer Morse, Chair



Dennis May, Vice-Chair



Chuck Sokol, Select Board Member

Documents:

- FY20 Budget Worksheet