Rowe Finance Committee
All Boards Meeting
November 5, 2018
6:30 P.M. at Rowe Elementary School - Gymnasium

Present: Chair Wayne Zavotka, Christopher "Selmi" Hyytinen, Paul McLatchy III, Laurie Pike

Absent: Vice-Chair Loretta Dionne

Other Attendees: Jennifer Morse, *Selectboard Chair*; Dennis May, *Selectboard Vice-Chair*; David Dvore, *MLP Manager*; Rick Williams, *Assessors Chair*; Ellen Miller, *Assessor and School Committee Member*; Karen Soviecke, *Library Trustee*; Molly Lane, *Librarian*; Susie Zavota, *School Committee Chair*; Bill Knittle, *Principal*; Julie Shippee, *Police Chief*; Ramon Sanchez, *Conservation Commission Chair*; Brandon Sprague, *Fire Chief*; Lance Larned, *DPW Superintendent*; Danielle Larned, *Town Hall Custodian*; Sean Loomis, *Park Ranger*; Maggie Rice, *Board of Health Chair*; Joanne Semanie, *Treasurer and Board of Health Clerk*

Call to Order: Chair Zavotka called the meeting to order at 6:30 P.M., with a quorum of the committee present.

FY2020 Budget: Mr. McLatchy presented the updated budget calendar to the various department heads and committee chairs in attendance. Budgets will be due December 5th, one month from this meeting. Chair Zavotka asked that departments try and submit requests for capital expenditures for the next 2-5 years. Chair Morse informed everyone that the Board of Selectmen had voted to set the annual COLA for employees at 2.5%.

Assessors: Chair Williams reported that they are still waiting on the revaluation of the hydro generating facilities, as well as the new appraisals for the Transmission and Distribution (T&D) easements. It is his opinion that the T&D appraisal will result in either reducing the tax rate or increase the amount in new growth, and therefore, revenue. However, it is likely that the owners of the T&D easements will push back, so the Assessors are making sure they have "all their ducks in a row".

Board of Health: Chair Rice noted that there has been an issue at the transfer station with ice buildup around the compactor. Water is not draining properly, and then freezes in the winter. Sometimes the town has to bring in their equipment to get the compactor loose. The Finance Committee approved a reserve fund transfer to cover the cost of engineering new drainage, but the actual project will need to wait until next year for funding. The Board of Health will now be charging $25 for dump stickers, whereas they have always been free to taxpayers.

There have been rumors circulating around town about the status of the Gracy House, which is currently closed. The building was closed on the recommendation of the Health Department as an investigator from the Department of Public Health visited the building and found mold spores to be present. It will remain closed until a plan is developed.

Board of Selectmen: The selectmen have been updating job descriptions, and are nearly done.

Municipal Light Plant/Broadband: Per MLP Manager David Dvore the fiber design is finished, with new conduit being run on Davenport Road and new poles installed on Davis Mine Road. The make-ready work is almost complete, and the necessary permits have been applied for and granted. A central hut/hub is being built next to the Gracy House, and he estimates that the project should be up and running by March.

Sign-ups will be an upcoming project- the MLP needs to know how many people will actually commit to subscribing to the service. There will be a $99 activation fee for all new homes, though the town will cover the *installation* costs if a homeowner signs up before the network goes live. This could range from $500 to $1,000 if done after the initial sign-up.

The cost for a 25Mb connection will be $59/month, and $79/month for a 1Gb connection. Phone will be available for an additional $15 with either plan.

The cost of operating the network will be covered by subscriber fees. However, the town will need to find a way to provide for a depreciation reserve- approximately $100,000 worth of equipment will need to be replaced every ten years.

There was some discussion about the public's understanding of how this network would work. To some people in town, they are under the impression that once the network is built, homes would receive free internet. This is not the case. The town will own the network, but there will still be a cost to operate it (much like owning a vehicle but needing to pay for fuel, insurance, and maintenance).

Bridges: The Cyrus Stage bridge is being replaced by the state in 2020, and therefore will not cost the town anything. A grant was awarded to the town that will cover the replacement of the King's Highway bridge. Yankee Road has been engineered, and the Selectmen are waiting to hear back on the recommendations. The Ford Hill culvert still needs to be engineered.

Library: The library's primary task right now is working on increasing foot traffic through the facility.

Park: Park Ranger Sean Loomis announced that the new siding on the headquarters building is complete. Fitness Instructor Jodi Fontaine has resigned, and the commission is now looking at six-week fitness programs rather than hiring a new instructor. They are also looking at replacing the tennis courts, which are in bad condition, with a new court that will have one tennis court and a "mixed" court that could be used for a variety of activities. They estimate a new court would cost around $130,000. They may be able to get a grant for nearly 50% of the cost, but the town is required to have an open space plan, which we do not currently have. The commission will contact FRCOG about possibly helping with the process.

Conservation Commission: Chair Sanchez asked that all departments contact the Conservation Commission whenever new construction is being done, and whenever "a shovel goes into the ground". This would allow a member to go and observe the location of a project and determine if an RDA is required. He reported that through the Massachusetts Association of Conservation Commissions, the town's commission was able to attend some classes.

Bylaw Review Committee: Mr. McLatchy reported that the bylaw review committee has already finished its initial "pass" of the bylaws, and will continue to examine them to propose changes/updates. Once a final proposal is ready, it will go to the Selectmen for their review, who will send it on to town counsel. Once town counsel has reviewed it, a public hearing will be held prior to a town meeting for public feedback.

School: The school has a new superintendent- John Franzoni. Superintendent Jon Lev retired at the end of last year. Mr. Franzoni seems to be very enthusiastic about his role, and has been well received by the school. Principal Knittle explained that the new "Forest Fridays"- a program where the ¾ class has their classes at the park on Fridays, has been going quite well. Mohawk is negotiating new bus contracts, getting figures for a contract both including Rowe and without Rowe, in case Rowe should choose to contract elsewhere. Lastly, the school department is updating job descriptions, and is nearing completion.

Municipal Review: Chair Morse informed the officials that someone from the Department of Revenue's Municipal Financial Assistance Bureau will be coming to the town in January to conduct an analysis of town personnel. This is a feasibility study that will make recommendations about the current positions, and what the town might need. The auditor will be focusing on the *positions*, not the individuals currently holding those positions.

Next Meeting: The Finance Committee will meet with the Board of Selectmen and town attorney on November 14th to discuss insurance. As Ms. Pike is on town insurance and Mr. McLatchy has two relatives on town insurance, they will purposely not attend this meeting.

Adjourn: A motion was made and seconded to adjourn the meeting at 8:03 P.M. The vote was 4-0-0 in favor.

Respectfully Submitted,
Paul McLatchy III, Secretary

Approved: December 17, 2018

Wayne Zavotka
Wayne Zavotka, Chairman

Paul McLatchy III, Secretary

Christopher "Selmi" Hyytinen, Member

Laurie Pike, Member

Attachments:

- FY2020 Budget Calendar

Rowe FY20 Budget

When	Event/Task	Who
August-October	Certify Free Cash (used in coming FY20 revenue projections)	Town Accountant
September	Financial Roundtable	BAG- BoS, FinCom, Assessors, Treasurer, Accountant, School Committee
October 15-30	Free Cash Certified	Accountant
November 05	All-Boards Meeting	All Departments
October/November	Set Tax Rate	Assessors, BoS
November	Send out notices & meet with FinCom liaisons	All Departments
November	Begin Capital Planning Process- including 5 year projections	Finance Committee, Possibly BoS
December 05	Budget submissions due	All Departments
December 15	Prepare initial revenue/expenditures projections including capital expenditures	BoS, FinCom, Accountant
January 01	Release "House 1"- first indication of state aid	Governor
January/February	Meet with Department Heads to review budget recommendations	FinCom, BoS
March	Cherry Sheets Should be Issued	Legislature/DoR
March	Prepare final revenue/expenditure projections for FY20 in preparation for Annual Town Meeting	BoS, FinCom
March	Prepare Town Meeting Warrant recommendations	FinCom
April	Warrant is closed & signed	BoS
May	Annual Town Meeting	Town
May/June	Make any line-item & reserve fund transfers necessary	FinCom, BoS