Rowe Finance Committee
Regular Meeting and Joint Budget Hearing with the Board of Selectmen
January 23, 2019
6:00 P.M. at Rowe Town Hall – Meeting Room 1

Present: Chair Wayne Zavotka, Christopher “Selmi” Hyytinen, Paul McLatchy III
Absent: Vice-Chair Loretta Dionne, Laurie Pike
Board of Selectmen*: Chair Jennifer Morse, Vice-Chair Dennis May, Selectman Chuck Sokol
Executive Secretary*: Janice Boudreau
Other Attendees*: Daniel Poplawski, Board of Health; Margaret Rice, Board of Health; Joanne Semanie, Board of Health Clerk & Town Treasurer; Katherine Sprague, Town Clerk

*During the budget hearings which began at 6:30.

Call to Order: Chair Zavotka called the meeting to order at 6:06 p.m., with a quorum of the committee present.

Minutes: The minutes of December 17, 2018, November 5, 2018, and January 16, 2019 were submitted for review. With no corrections, the minutes of December 17th were approved and signed. The minutes of January 16th were approved with one change (attachment list). Mr. McLatchy will fix the last page and return to the next meeting for signatures. The set of minutes from November 5, 2018 had already been approved at a previous meeting and just needed to be signed.

Stipends: Chair Zavotka reported on his research into stipends in surrounding towns. The definition he received from Heath was that a stipend was to cover costs, such as for mileage, copying, etc... Heath determines stipends based on the number of meetings a committee has per year. Colrain only gives stipends to two boards- Board of Selectmen and Board of Assessors. Ashfield gives stipends to their Board of Health, Board of Selectmen, Assessors, and School Committee members. He is still waiting to hear back from Charlemont and Buckland.

Chair Zavotka felt that the stipends need to be reviewed and determine how each body should (or shouldn’t) be paid. There appears to be no precedent, other than “they’ve always been this way”. There is no clear practice for when stipends have been increased.

Mr. Hyytinen asked about whether a pay scale could be used for officials, as more experienced officials might be more efficient with their work. Mr. McLatchy opined that for elected officials, the amount is set by town meeting, and not likely something that can be varied based on the individual elected to the position. This would be possible with appointed positions.
**Budget Hearing:** The Board of Selectmen joined the Finance Committee and called their meeting to order at 6:30.

**Conservation Commission Budget:** Due to the weather conditions, Conservation Commission Chair Ramon Sanchez did not attend. They have also not yet submitted a written budget. Their hearing will be postponed to February 20th.

**Town Clerk Budget:** Town Clerk Kathy Sprague attended the meeting to discuss her budget. The stipend has been increased by the COLA of 2.5%. She requested an increase from $350 to $450 for registrar stipends, going up from $75 to $100 per person. This is because the need to certify signatures can be quite numerous. Ms. Sprague said that sometimes she gets thirty or so documents that need certifying, and three members have to sign each one. Her overall budget is down 3.6%, but this is due to one less election in the upcoming year.

In regards to elections, Chair Zavotka’s term is up, and as both Ms. Pike and Mr. Hyytinen were appointed to fill vacancies, they will have to run for their seats at the annual election as well. This will mean that there will be three open seats.

**Accountant Budget:** Town Accountant Tracey Baronas was not present to discuss her budget. She has requested an 8% increase in her salary on top of the COLA as she has had to deal with the broadband accounting, which wasn’t in her job description and has added additional time each week. She also feels that the accountant’s salary should be more in line with the treasurer’s salary. There is a question about whether joining Wired West will take away much of the accounting responsibilities of the town. If so, perhaps a permanent increase to her salary is not warranted, but a one-time extra payment to cover her additional time could be sought. Some concern about whether this position’s line should be comparable to the treasurer’s line was raised. More research is needed.

**Board of Health:** As they had been waiting patiently, the Selectboard recognized the Board of Health members. They requested that a third member be appointed to the board to fill a vacancy, and also wanted to update the Selectmen on a matter with a resident that has a “crowded” yard. Apparently there are legal avenues that the town can take to compel the resident to clean up certain items from his yard (old tires, oil drums, etc…) that pose a public health risk. In the absence of a blight bylaw, nothing can be done about items that don’t pose any risk.

**Treasurer Budget:** Treasurer Semanie presented her budget. In general, the costs of most things are going up, which has been reflected in her budget. She also realized that she did not budget anything last year for borrowing fees, which have now been added to the proposal. As this is the first year she has had a budget, there is still some “trial and error” in figuring out numbers.

Discussion ensued about ways that the town might save money in the payroll department. A suggestion was made that all employees be required to sign up with direct deposit, and perhaps pay stubs would no longer be mailed, but available online. This idea seemed to be supported, but ultimately it will be the Selectmen who make the final decision on if and when this change would be implemented. The two boards also discussed PO boxes and
whether it might make sense to purchase a large inside box and have one person sort the mail rather than rent ten or so boxes each year.

**OBRA/Social Security:** Treasurer Semanie updated the Selectmen and Finance Committee that her research into the OBRA vs. Social Security matter was still ongoing. Apparently there is no clear answer about whether or not part-time employees can choose to have deductions go into either Social Security or OBRA, or if they must go into OBRA. While the town matches the employee’s contribution to Social Security, they do not match OBRA contributions. The school committee may also have made it policy that the part-time school employees need to contribute to OBRA, which brought up a question of whether payroll matters for those employees falls to the School Committee or the Board of Selectmen.

**Stipends Revisited:** Chair Zavotka repeated his findings to the Selectmen on stipends. A brief conversation ensued about salaries vs. stipends and how stipends for elected officials should be calculated.

**Next Meeting:** The Finance Committee will meet on Wednesday, January 30th for the next budget hearing. They will meet at 6:00 and go over a few things before the budget hearing at 6:30.

**Adjourn:** A motion was made and seconded to adjourn the meeting at 8:15 P.M. The vote was 3-0-0 in favor.

*Respectfully Submitted,*

*Paul McLatchy III, Secretary*

Approved: 1/30/19

Wayne Zavotka, Chairman

Paul McLatchy III, Secretary

Christopher “Selmi” Hyttinen, Member

Attachments:

- Stipend Email
- Stipend Findings
- Town Clerk Budget
- Town Accountant Budget
- Treasurer Budget
Stipends

Wayne Zavotka
Wed 1/23/2019, 11:23 AM
To: Wayne Zavotka <wzavotka@hotmail.com>; loretta.dionne7@gmail.com <loretta.dionne7@gmail.com>; Paul McLatchy <pmclatchy@hotmail.com>; Chris Hyytinen <chrishyytinen@gmail.com>; Laurie Pike <ljeanpike@gmail.com>; Chuck Sokol <chucksokol@chucksokol.com>; Dennis May <dmay11@verizon.net>; Jennifer Morse <jennm.bos@gmail.com>

Heath: have offered stipends for long period of time.
Stipends are intended to cover expenses such as travel, etc.
Amount is based on number of meetings generally attended/year.
less than 9 meetings/year: no stipend
9-12: chair, $375/member, $250 per year
12-25: chair, $750/member, $500 per year
more than 25: chair $1500/member $1000 per year
last year was first year for planning board and since budgets were tight they received half of the 9-12 and this year the full amount of 375/250 per year.

Colrain: Select Board: $3232/year
Board of Assessors: $3200/year
No others

Charlemont: waiting to hear
Buckland: waiting to hear

Ashfield: checking
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Town</th>
<th>Rowe</th>
<th>Charlemont</th>
<th>Heath</th>
<th>Colrain</th>
<th>Ashfield</th>
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# Town Clerk Proposed Budget 2020

**Operations** - Postage (census, dog license, copies, absentee ballots) Office Supplies $1,500.00

| Registrars | 4 @ $100.00 | $400.00 |
| Census | $50.00 |

**Election Expenses**

**Presidential Primary March 2020**

| 4 Tellers | 15 hours @$13.00 | $780.00 |
| 1 Constable | 15 hours @$13.00 | $195.00 |
| 1 Clerk | 15 hours @$14.00 | $210.00 |
| 1 Warden | 15 hours @$14.00 | $210.00 |
| Mileage and Food Reimbursement | $200 | $200.00 |
| **Total Presidential Primary March 2020** | | $1,595.00 |

**Annual Town Election May 2020**

| 4 Tellers | 10 hours @$13.00 | $520.00 |
| 1 Constable | 10 hours @$13.00 | $130.00 |
| 1 Clerk | 10 hours @$14.00 | $140.00 |
| 1 Warden | 10 hours @$14.00 | $140.00 |
| Mileage and Food Reimbursement | $200 | $200.00 |
| **Total Annual Town Election May 2020** | | $1,130.00 |

**Total Clerk Ops** $1,500.00

**Total Registrars & Census** $450.00

**Total Estimated Election Costs** $2,725.00

**Total Town Clerk Proposed Budget** $4,675.00
Note 3 - At some point in the future (possibly more than 9 years from now), the

Note 2 - These are still some older issues that require resolution, from prior accounts payable systems.

Note 1 - This is for the annual software license increase, 2.5% annually.

$163.88/5.10% = $17.90 and one third to have (50, 51, 54%, plus 50, otherwise.

action. This funding will allow for 4 hours and one quarter to have (56, 71, 74% plus 75, otherwise.

helpful to discuss those findings with a more seasoned consultant to determine course of

Each year I have been researching and performing "the diligence" on the balances. It is

Note 2 - These are still some older issues that require resolution, from prior accounts payable systems.

Salary - I am receiving a 2.5% increase on the salary, plus a 2.5% COLA. This broadband accounting

Stabilization Fund

Accountant Software Replacement

Capital Request

1000

1214.38

2019.38

1841.8

1920

490

1225

400

1811.98

FY 20 Request

Tours

Town Accountant Consultant
Software Acquisition/License
Town Accountant Exp
Town Accountant Salary
Account Name

Town Accountant Budget Request FY20
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>VOTED 2017</th>
<th>VOTED 2018</th>
<th>VOTED 2019</th>
<th>VOTED 2020</th>
<th>REQUESTED 2020</th>
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<td>$2,115</td>
<td>$2,050</td>
<td>$</td>
<td>$2,075</td>
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**Totals:**
- $2,530
- $2,115
- $2,050
- $2,075

**Actual Increase (decrease):**
- $ -
- $(415)
- $(65)
- $(25)

**Percentage Change:**
- -16.40%
- -16.40%
- -3.07%
- 1.22%

**Explanation:**

01-5-135-430
Account Number
App'd by Selectmen
Finance Committee

$2,050
Voted FY19

Requested Amount

Amount of Increase

Budget History
Departmental Capital Expenditure Request Form

Department: __Accountant_____________ Date: 11/27/18

Contact: Tracey Baronas Tel # 339-5520 x12

Purchase/Project: ___Software__________

Estimated Total Cost: _____10K or more_______ Fiscal Year of expenditure: ___FY2028___

Source of Estimate: ___prior purchase in another town________________

Departmental Ranking: No. ___1___ of ___1___ capital requests

Priority category: Very High ___ High ___ Medium X Low ___

Criteria: Emergency ___ Public safety issue ___

Court ordered ___ To maintain service X___

Asset preservation ___ Matching funds ___

Multiple deferrals ___ Continuation of prior funding ___

Purchase/Project Description: At some point in the future (hopefully after I retire) the software will require replacement or upgrade. It would be prudent to begin saving a bit at a time for this eventuality. You could open a designated stabilization account and place a bit there each year, which will help mitigate the eventual cost. These funds are still available for emergency use by vote at town meeting if need be.

Explain Impact on Future Operating Budgets

Useful life ___10___ years

Reduce cost _______ Cost unchanged _______ Increase cost ___perhaps___X____

Attach other data, photographs, quote sheets or information as warranted

TO BE COMPLETED BY SELECTBOARD & FINANCE COMMITTEE:

Funding Source: General Fund $________

Free Cash $________ Stabilization $________

Borrowing $________ Rate revenue $________

State/Federal $________ Chapter 90 $________

Other: $________
### Treasurer

#### Budget History

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<td>2015</td>
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<td>2016</td>
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<tr>
<td>2017</td>
<td>$7,355</td>
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<td>2018</td>
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#### Account Number
- 01-5-145-410

####App'd by Selectmen
- Finance Committee

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<td>Fees</td>
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<td>$1,000</td>
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#### Totals:
- VOTED 2017: $ -
- VOTED 2018: $ -
- VOTED 2019: $7,355
- REQUESTED 2020: $10,590

#### Actual Increase (decrease):
- $7,355

#### Percentage Change:
- #DIV/0! #DIV/0! #DIV/0! 43.98%

#### Explanation:
Treasurer did not have her own ops line prior to 2018
### Treasurer

#### Budget History

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<td>$20,722</td>
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#### Description

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<th>Description</th>
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<th>VOTED 2020</th>
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<td>$20,722</td>
<td>$20,722</td>
<td>$21,240</td>
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#### Totals

- **Actual Increase (decrease):**
  - $300
  - $406
  - $0
  - $518

- **Percentage Change:**
  - 1.50%
  - 2.00%
  - 0.00%
  - 2.50%

### Explanation:

1/22/2019