Rowe Finance Committee
February 27, 2020
6:30 P.M. at Rowe Town Hall –Meeting Room 1

Present: Chair Wayne Zavotka, Christopher "Selmi" Hyytinen, Paul McLatchy III, Laurie Pike
Absent: Vice-Chair Loretta Dionne
Audience of Citizens: Susan Zavotka, School Committee Chair

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

School Budget: School Committee Chair Susan Zavotka joined the committee to review capital projects for FY21:

Fire Pump Controller: The fire pump controller in the pump house is now shot due to lack of protection. Moneys appropriated at a special town meeting paid for the surge protection to be in place, now the controller needs to be replaced. An estimate of $7,000 was provided.

Dishwasher: The school's dishwasher is failing, with an expected "death" within six months. Members expressed concern over the longevity of the machine, as the school is only six years old. Mr. Hyytinen asked if the school could research whether buying a better/more expensive model would expand the lifespan of the next purchase.

Tractor: The school currently has a tractor that was purchased with the new building in 2014. It has been limping along. The request is for a more expensive tractor than what is currently used, as it is not appropriate for the hills by the school. A suggestion was made by Mr. Hyytinen to look into combining equipment with another department. Mr. McLatchy asked for more information about the actual uses/capabilities of the machine.

Security Upgrades: There are currently no outdoor security cameras. This has been recommended by the state police lockdown teams.

Paving: The town has already appropriated $5,000. This would add an additional 4-5 spots, but the cost to prepare the site has caused the original estimate to be low. Not a lot of parking is available during morning drop-off and afternoon pick-up.

Garage for Tractor: No real details were given on this, but the idea is to build a permanent structure to house the tractor, rather than the canvass-type housing that is there now.

Chair Zavotka was thanked for attending the meeting.

Board of Health: The Board of Health is seeking funding for either a paper shredder or paper compactor- there is some confusion as to what the project is. The total cost would be $24,000, of which $14,000 will be paid for using state grants. This is expected to pay for itself in five years as it would reduce the number of hauling trips by about 2/3.

Yankee Road: Currently Yankee Road is in dire need of replacement, estimated to cost around $800,000. There is an effort to get funding from the state, though a recent Mass Works grant was denied as there were other more pressing projects that involved public safety. Legislation is being filed by Representative Paul Mark as part of the transportation bond bill to help- the town may still have to contribute some funds.

Administration: This budget still needs to be reviewed with the Board of Selectmen.

Planning Board: Mr. McLatchy recused himself from discussion as he is a member of the Planning Board. Chair Zavotka gave his opinion that he does not want to increase any stipends without a study. Mr. Hyytinen and Ms. Pike agreed. A motion was made by Mr. Hyytinen and seconded by Ms. Pike to recommend that the Planning Board not receive a stipend at this time. The vote was 3-0-1 in favor, with Mr. McLatchy abstaining.

Town Clerk: Mr. McLatchy recused himself again as he is also town clerk. A request has been made for a stipend for an assistant town clerk at $1,200. The biggest increase in the budget is due to the presence of an additional state election. While the stipend proposed is less than the current amount, it was agreed at a previous meeting to level-fund the town clerk stipend for FY21. After discussion, a motion was made by Chair Zavotka and seconded by Mr. Hyytinen to recommend that the town clerk receive the 2.5% COLA for FY21. The vote was 3-0-1 in favor, with Mr. McLatchy abstaining.

Accounting: This line has increased significantly over last year. This is due mostly to the town attempting to hire a shared employee with the towns of Heath and Monroe. While the cost is higher, it would mean the town would have a long-term employee in an area where finding qualified people is difficult. However Heath has withdrawn from the negotiations. Charlemont may be interested, which may impact the total Rowe is responsible for.

IT Consultant: Questions arose about the cost of the IT budget going up considerably- approximately $10,000. Mr. McLatchy recommended that the committee speak with Executive Secretary Janice Boudreau to get a full picture on what the proposed amount includes.

Fire Department: The Fire Department has requested funding for an 18-19 hour per week part-time shift worker. Chair Zavotka questioned whether adding this additional person will actually improve the safety of the town. Mr. McLatchy felt that people need to consider the character of the town- this is a rural town that will not have all the services of a larger community. After continued discussion, a motion was made by Ms. Pike and seconded by Chair Zavotka to not recommend the part-time position at this time. The vote was 3-0-1 in favor, with Mr. Hyytinen abstaining as he is involved with public safety.

Police Department: Mr. McLatchy has concerns about the number of hours being worked by the chief, who has requested an increase from 18 to 20 hours per week. Based on a recent study of time sheets, the chief has been putting in only an average of 13 hours a week. He would like to see a response from the Board of Selectmen before making any recommendations. A motion was made by Chair Zavotka and seconded by Ms. Pike to express concern to the Board of Selectmen about the requested amount for the police chief's stipend. The vote was 3-0-1 in favor, with Mr. Hyytinen recusing himself as he works for the police department.

Minimum Wage: The Finance Committee continued to discuss whether or not a minimum wage should be paid to youth workers, though no consensus was reached.

Minutes: The following minutes were addressed:

January 16, 2020: A motion was made by Mr. McLatchy and seconded by Ms. Pike to approve the minutes with changes. The vote was 2-0-2 in favor with Chair Zavotka and Mr. Hyytinen abstaining as they were not present at the meeting.

January 30, 2020: A motion was made by Mr. McLatchy and seconded by Chair Zavotka to approve the minutes as written. The vote was 4-0-0 in favor.

February 6, 2020: A motion was made by Ms. Pike and seconded by Mr. Hyytinen to approve the minutes as written. The vote was 4-0-0 in favor.

February 13, 2020: A motion was made by Mr. Hyytinen and seconded by Mr. McLatchy to accept the minutes as amended. The vote was 4-0-0 in favor.

Next Meeting: The committee will meet Thursday, March 5th at 6:30 to continue budget discussions, which may or may not be with the Board of Selectmen.

Adjourn: A motion was made by Ms. Pike and seconded by Mr. Hyytinen to adjourn the meeting at 8:07 P.M. The vote was 4-0-0 in favor.

Respectfully Submitted,
Paul McLatchy III, Secretary

Approved: March 31, 2020

Paul McLatchy III, Secretary

Unable to be signed by entire committee due to COVID-19 pandemic.

Attachments:

- Meeting Notice
- Note from Maggie Rice re: Compactor/Shredder
- List of Capital Expenditures from School

Meeting Notice

Public Body: Rowe Finance Committee
Date/Time: Thursday, February 27, 2020 at 6:30 PM
Location: Rowe Town Hall, Meeting Room 1
Officer: Paul McLatchy III, Secretary

Agenda:

1. Call to Order
2. FY2021 Budget Review
    - Board of Selectmen/Administration
    - COLA vs. Minimum Wage Increase Review
    - Other FY2021 Departmental Budgets
    - General FY2021 Budgeting Matters
3. Other Town Financial Matters
4. Minutes
5. Other Business
6. Adjourn

From Maggie Rice: Board of Health
Re: Paper Shreader
Consultant: Jen Amean, FrCog

Monies to be received:
8000 grant (state)320
2800 grant (state)
3200 grant (state July 1)

Total: 14,000

Cost: 24,000

We're getting the grant because we have Pay to Throw

Need $10,000. From town

Last Thursday at BOS they were asked to sign for the grants
Must be signed by 4/1

The concrete 10' pad is placed to run power from the compactor so no additional housing or electricity is needed.

Capital Expenditure Estimates Updated- 2/16/20
*indicates will/may need RFP

Capital Requests

*Fire Pump Controller - $7,000
*Dishwasher - $3,500
*Tractor - $35,000
*Security Upgrades - additional cameras(3), outdoor strobes, temperature alarms-$7,833-11,872 ($9,000)
    Cameras - $4,348-6,368
    Strobes - $1,150-1,217
    Temperature alarms - $2,285-4,287
*Paving - complete project - extension of existing parking area - $8,225-12,600 (less $5,000 already approved)
    Preparation - $2,600-6,000
    Paving - $5,625-6,600

*Garage for tractor - Wooden structure to house tractor and all outdoor equipment - $20,000-$40,000