Town of Rowe
Finance Committee
February 11, 2021
6:00 PM

Budget Hearings for Fiscal '22
This was an Online Zoom Meeting due to the ongoing Pandemic

Present: Chair Wayne Zavotka, Vice- Chair Loretta Dionne, Christopher Hyytinen, Paul McLatchy III, Laurie Pike

Other Attendees: Executive Secretary Janice Boudreau, BOS Edward Silva, BOS Vice-Chair Joanne Semanie, BOS Chair Charles Sokol, Town Treasurer Terry Green

The Finance Committee Meeting was called to order at 6:02 PM.

The first budget hearing was for the **Tax Collector and Town Treasurer**. These positions will be filled by the same person, Terry Green, next fiscal year '22 and were therefore submitted as a combined/dual budget. Ms. Green was in attendance to defend her budget proposal.
An accounting error was fixed as two of the line items were inadvertently added twice.
The Tax Collector stipend will continue to be based on 6 hours a week for a total of $8,528.
Ms. Green made a request for an increase in hours for the Town Treasurer's position for the fiscal year '22 due to the amount of extra hours she has had to put in to reconcile the books from the previous Treasurer. It has required a great deal of extra time for which Ms. Green has not been paid as it is a salaried position. Ms. Green would like to see the hours increased to 27 hours from 20 hours for the upcoming fiscal year to get "caught up" and trained and have everything organized and efficient once again. The increased hours would bring the total compensation for the position of Town Treasurer (27 hours at $27.23 per hour for 52 weeks) to $38, 231. The new combined total of compensation for the two positions would be $46, 727.

A conversation ensued about the extra hours Ms. Green has been putting in without pay. The Town Administrator verified that Ms. Green has been putting many more than 20 hours a week since starting the position without additional pay. The BOS would like to see her submit her extra hours this fiscal year' 21 for compensation and would look into how to fund extra pay. A motion was made by the Finance Committee and seconded to fund overtime for the Treasurer for this fiscal year '21 with either a Reserve Fund Transfer or a Special Town Meeting. By roll call vote -Laurie Pike yes, Selmi Hyytinen-yes, Wayne Zakotka-yes, Loretta Dione-yes, and Paul McClatchey -abstained. Mr. McClatchy pointed out later in the meeting that additional pay may not be possible as the position is salaried. The matter will be left with the BOS.

The Accountant's budget hearing was put off until the accountant could meet with the town of Monroe. This is a shared position with Monroe and the accountant's budget is still being constructed. It was projected that it should not change much.

The Town Administrator presented the General Government budget (Emergency Management Budgets had been previously submitted and defended). It was noted that there would be no big changes this fiscal year '22. Electricity has seen a slight increase. The line for legal fees has increased to provide for adequate funds based on this year's usage. FRCOG's fee went down by 10%. IT had many changes last year with new software and computer purchases so that this line item will be stable.

Discussion of General Government Special Projects includes the purchasing of new windows for the Town Hall. During a previous meeting a discussion about updating the locks at the Town Hall in keeping with the same keyless system that the Fire Department has installed it was noted that several of the old town hall windows do not locked. A request was made for estimates to replace the windows at the town hall. Estimates are currently being requested. Replacement will enable the windows to be locked and be more efficient. It was decided to put off purchasing a keyless lock system for approximately $10,000 such as the fire station has until more time has been allowed to ascertain how well the system is working at the fire station and how it will be maintained. In the meantime, a new lock can be installed on the front door of the Town Hall if needed for around $200.

A look at the insurance coverage breakdown revealed that there is an $8,393 charge for Inland Marine Department Insurance and some questions were raised about what that is for. BOS will look into finding out what that charge is for.

There was more discussion about the shared vehicle for the fire chief. A copy of the agreement between Charlemont and Rowe showed that the Town of Charlemont was to buy a new shared vehicle and Rowe would reimburse the Town for half of the cost of the purchase and future maintenance. The Town of Charlemont decided not to buy a new shared vehicle. The agreement as written does not allow for Rowe to purchase a new shared vehicle and request Charlemont reimburse Rowe for half of the cost. Rowe is currently budgeting $5, 500 per year for the maintenance of said vehicle but does not seem to be spending the full amount. This will require further discussion between the Fire Chief and the BOS.

Next Thursday the budget meeting will be with the School Committee. They will likely present a preliminary budget as they will not have all the information they need from the state as yet.

A motion was made to adjourn at 7:04 and seconded. Roll call vote was taken: Laurie Pike-yes, Selmi Hyytinen-yes, Loretta Dione-yes, and Wayne Zakotka-yes. Paul McClatchy had left the meeting at this point to participate in another meeting around 7PM.

Respectfully Submitted,
Laurie Pike
Finance Committee Member

Approved: Date: April 20, 2021