

LANESBOROUGH FINANCE COMMITTEE

MEETING MINUTES

October 21, 2013

Lanesborough Town Hall, Selectmen's Office

Members Present: W. Stevens, A. Terranova, R. Tinkham

Guests: Paul Sieloff, Carrie Greene, Lynn Bassett, Bob Ericson, Bob Barton, and others.

Meeting called to order at 6:00 PM by Chairman Stevens

**Landfill Monitoring:** The formal document for the transfer of \$24,400 to the Landfill Monitoring account was signed by Chairman Stevens. Al Terranova asked Paul Sieloff to investigate to see if there was any insurances available to cover the Town for the mistake made in issuing the building permit.

**Lanesborough School Lunch:** Chairman Stevens requested Bob Barton to work with the Lanesborough School Committee and the School Administration to generate the budget for the School Lunch program for the FY-2015 budget. Ron Tinkham stated that the original concept for the separate line item for School Lunch was to cover some capital costs not associated with the school directly, it was not designed to cover personnel costs and other costs which are in the control of the School.

**FY-2105 Budget:** Bob Barton reviewed his summary of the position of Lanesborough in relation to the 10 nearby towns, and stressed that our rate has increased much faster than any others, and we are #2 in tax rate in the County. He stressed the need to communicate the need to keep the increases down to allow us to maintain some control over the future tax rate increases. Ron Tinkham stated that the Mall Abatement cost the taxpayers \$1.00 on the tax rate, the town roads need serious work and will require additional monies, and the benefits to employees should be more in line with what businesses are doing. Bob Barton commented that it is easier to sell a financial 'squeeze' on departments if other departments are being 'squeezed' as well. In effect, don't try to make up cost cuts on one or two departments. It was agreed by those present that we need to look closely at the budgets for FY-2015 to attempt to keep the tax increase under 2.5%.

**MGRHS Building Needs Committee:** Carrie Greene presented an update on the progress of the MGRHS Building Committee in obtaining MSBA Eligibility. The Eligibility period begins with the Initial Compliance Certification, followed by the appointment of the School Building Committee. The next steps are the Maintenance Documents and Enrollment Certification, followed by the Local Authorization of funding, which would be done at the Annual Town Meeting in June 2014. There was discussion as to how best to communicate the program and needs to the public and if the vote should be done at a Special Town Meeting or the Annual Town meeting. The vote would be to authorize the Town of Lanesborough to raise the necessary funds to complete the Feasibility Study. Carrie estimated that the feasibility study

could be about \$750,000 and would take 18-24 months. The share to Lanesborough would be about 40% of the cost, noting that Williams College has offered to donate \$25,000 to defray some these costs. As is presently projected, the State will reimburse the towns about 54% of the cost as the expenses are incurred. Upon completion of the Feasibility Study, the construction can begin with funding from the two towns. There was no estimate provided for the Construction cost, as that will be determined in the Feasibility stage. It was estimated that the Town of Lanesborough would need to obtain a bond for about \$300,000 for the feasibility study.

Ron Tinkham stated that he was against any further 'studies' since there have been feasibility studies done earlier and another study is un-necessary. The \$750,000 estimated for the study could be better utilized to fix problems existing at the school now. Also, with the declining enrollments in the area, spending big money on a huge renovation or a new school is not the direction we should be going.

**Town Administrator:** Paul Sieloff advised that there was an over-run on the Out of District Placement line item. It had been voted at \$10,000 at Town Meeting, and he has one pupil transferred to Pittsfield for a cost of \$16,000. He noted that the Voc-Ed students at Taconic are not using the bus, so we are not spending the transportation monies appropriated, and we can make a Chapter 33B transfer from the Out of District Transportation into the Out of District Placement at the year end.

He also advised that due to recent law suits, the Law Account took a \$6,000 hit this month which increased the normal monthly charge from \$3,000 to \$9,000.

**Meeting Minutes:** The minutes of the Finance Committee of June 18, 2013 and September 16, 2013 were approved as noted.

**Other Business:**

**Revolving Accounts:** Ron Tinkham advised that he has spoken to Paul Sieloff about the State requirement that all departments with revolving accounts (Chapter 53 1//2) are to submit a summary of income and expenses to the Town each year. This is not being done by most departments at this time. Paul has agreed to address the issue

**Community Access Cable:** Ron Tinkham is working to provide streaming of the televised events for viewing by non-cable subscribers on their computers. There will be some costs associated with this effort, but he does not have actual numbers yet.

**Next Meetings:**The next meeting of the Finance Committee will be Monday, November 4 at 6:00 PM in the Selectmen's office. The following meeting will be Monday, December 2, at 6:00 PM in the Selectmen's office.

**Adjournment:** the meeting was adjourned at 8:55 PM

Respectively submitted:

William V. Stevens, Chairman