

LANESBOROUGH FINANCE COMMITTEE
MINUTES FEBRUARY 29, 2016
Respectfully submitted by Sherri Thompson

Attendees: Mr. Al Terranova, Chair; Ms. Chris Galib; Mr. Stephen Wentworth; Mr. Ron Tinkham; Mr. Ray Jones; Mr. Paul Sieloff, Town Manager

Meeting called to order: 6:00 p.m.

Motion to accept Minutes of February 1 meeting: Mr. Tinkham indicated that changes were not made in the Minutes from January 4, February 1, or February 16. Mr. Tinkham suggested two ways to modify the Minutes; one way is to make the notations in the next month's meeting Minutes of the changes in the previous Minutes and the second way is to correct the Minutes and mark them as "final" and resend. Mr. Sieloff voiced his preference as correcting the Minutes and resending them with marked "final".

A motion was made by, Mr. Wentworth made a motion to not approve the Minutes until modifications and status of the Minutes is clear. Motion was seconded by Mr. Jones. All in favor to move approval of the January 4, February 1, and February 16 Minutes to the March 21 meeting.

Public Comment: None

Budget: Mr. Tinkham indicated that he had just received the budget document 10 minutes prior to the meeting and did not have time to review them. Mr. Sieloff said that changes had been made since they were made available so Mr. Tinkham had the most recent. Mr. Tinkham questioned the format of the document that had been challenged by Cohen and questioned if the format would be changed. Mr. Sieloff said the problem is that he could only 'guesstimate' because he did not have the school budget available yet. Mr. Sieloff was also cautious about making changes to the format because he did not want to change historical documents. Mr. Sieloff did say the budget columns do match the Department Head's numbers.

Mr. Tinkham's interpretation of Mr. Cohen's challenge is that there is no item that talks about the Selectman and no item for the proposed budget. Mr. Tinkham said Mr. Cohen believes the columns used are 'bogus' and should not be used. Mr. Wentworth said he believes Mr. Cohen meant the columns do not match the Bylaws.

Ms. Galib asked that this conversation be tabled so the Department Heads could come in and discuss their items.

Public Works: Mr. Decelles from the Highway Department joined the meeting to discuss his proposed budget. Mr. Jones thanked Mr. Decelles for coming.

Mr. Terranova asked if there are any questions for Mr. Decelles. Mr. Wentworth said he had a question for Mr. Sieloff. Mr. Wentworth asked why the expended YTD is November 30 vs. December 31 and why there are only six months of actuals. Mr. Sieloff answered that November 30 is when it was first created and was never updated since. Mr. Wentworth asked if this is only five months (July, August, September, October, and November) and Mr. Sieloff indicated that it is actually only four months because the November numbers are not available until December.

Mr. Sieloff agreed that a half-year number would be nice but that would require additional manual data entry. Mr. Sieloff will work with the Town Accountant. Mr. Wentworth asked if the system is updated through

December 30 and Mr. Sieloff indicated the system is up-to-date as of February 28 but the report was run earlier. Mr. Sieloff informed the Committee that this budget document is an excel spreadsheet that does not get automatically updated by the system, that it is a manual process. Ms. Galib said that should be an easy fix. Mr. Sieloff talked about linking the software to the excel spreadsheet but was not sure how that can be done.

Mr. Sieloff asked if the Committee is getting the expenditure report which is up-to-date. Most indicated the last report they received was December. Mr. Sieloff will discuss this with the Town Accountant.

Ms. Galib asked Mr. Decelles why for account "Tight Tank Pump" and the line under "Infiltration Tank Cleaning" both show no expenditure YTD yet there is a request for \$2,000 and \$3,000. Mr. Decelles said they tried to do the infiltration tank cleaning in-house but there are too many gases so they need to call in a professional to pull them out, do the clean air stuff, pump air back in. This is for the systems on National St. and Profile St. Ms. Galib asked if this is an annual procedure. Mr. Decelles said they are going to try to do it every two years but the Tight Tank needs to be done every year.

Ms. Galib asked about Beaver Control Expense. The budget shows \$4,000 but only \$500 YTD has been spent. Mr. Decelles said the actual number as of February 29 is \$1,548 for a trapper. In the spring, more money will need to be expensed for trapping.

Ms. Galib questioned the drainage supplies request of \$10,000 but YTD only \$2,605 and only \$5,000 in FY15. Mr. Decelles explained that last year a water line was installed on Orebed Rd. and spent the summer there so he is now earmarking for drainage issues for spring. Mr. Terranova pointed out that we are under budget and questioned what will happen with that money. Mr. Decelles said we are not done yet, still paving to do. Mr. Sieloff said to repave we will need money from Chapter 90.

Mr. Galib asked about the Winter Road Salary line item request of \$16,000 but expenditure YTD is \$0. Mr. Decelles said he does not have that number available. Mr. Sieloff increased the request to \$20,000. Mr. Sieloff said it used to be \$80,000 but he would like to see it increased to \$120,000 and eventually \$200,000. Mr. Terranova asked if we would pocket any money this year. Mr. Sieloff reminded that money is still needed for salt and sand. Mr. Decelles indicated they started the year with no salt so had to fill.

Mr. Tinkham asked how we stand with trucks. Mr. Decelles said the big truck is in good shape but we need to replace the medium truck. Mr. Sieloff said they will ask for \$80,000 to replace that truck.

Mr. Tinkham asked Mr. Decelles to explain the agreement of road costs of \$106,080 with the Road Commission. Mr. Decelles said he gets a budget out of that and the Town gets the remainder. Mr. Sieloff said that amount is around \$30,000 which pays for legal fees, overtime, etc. Mr. Tinkham asked how long this agreement is and Mr. Decelles said it is good for three years and we are in the second year. Mr. Tinkham asked if the stabilization fund is included. Mr. Decelles said it is not.

Mr. Terranova asked about recycling. Who runs it? Mr. Sieloff said it is run by a volunteer group called Northern Berkshire Recycling. Mr. Decelles does the time sheets. Mr. Terranova asked if this program is still cost effective. Mr. Sieloff said he believes the state mandates the Town have some kind of recycling program.

Mr. Terranova asked about the Cemetery fund. Mr. Decelles said that they mow the lawn, do the burials, dig for the headstones, and pour the foundations, but they are not 'responsible' for the cemetery. The Cemetery Committee is responsible for the costs. Mr. Terranova asked why we don't bill them. Mr. Sieloff asked Mr. Decelles if they charge the Cemetery Commission for their time.

Mr. Terranova asked what Storm Water Management is. Mr. Sieloff said that we should estimate \$5,000 to \$25,000 for that account based on Federal Regulations regarding rain water run-off.

Mr. Tinkham asked about the Buildings Component. Mr. Sieloff said that is for Capital projects. Mr. Decelles manages those projects.

Mr. Terranova asked how many people work for Mr. Decelles. Mr. Decelles said there are 4 plus 1 full time seasonal.

Mr. Terranova asked if there are any more questions. None were asked.

Fire Department: Mr. Terranova asked if there are any questions for Mr. Durfee.

Ms. Galib asked about equipment testing. Already spent \$4,600+ through November 30 but only budgeted \$3,300. Mr. Durfee said it was because he needed to have the air bottles tested. Ms. Galib asked if \$3,300 will do the job. Mr. Durfee said it will.

Mr. Wentworth asked about equipment repair and maintenance and the age of the fleet. Mr. Durfee said he has one truck that is brand new and another one that is 20 years old. Said half the fleet is old and the other half is new. Mr. Sieloff said the Capital project report from 2015 lists all the equipment. It was asked how we bought the truck and Mr. Sieloff explained that half was bonds and the other half was from free cash.

Mr. Terranova asked why officer stipend went from \$2,650 to \$19,000. Mr. Sieloff said it is due to a new request by department for a salary of \$15,000 for the Fire Chief. Mr. Sieloff said he responded to that by putting in \$5,000 and reducing the stipends of other officers so the net is about \$3,000 over the current year budget.

Mr. Wentworth asked about the Association vs. Fire Department. Mr. Durfee said the Fire Department is the building and land and the Association is private consisting of the 38 members of the Fire Department. Mr. Durfee said the town owns the equipment and fund raising is done for maintenance. The Fireman's Association bought the building and land back in the 1970's.

Mr. Terranova asked about Fire Inspectors. Mr. Durfee said they are needed for: smoke and CO detector inspections when there is a residential sale; school inspections; and annual inspections for liquor licensing; and mall inspections quarterly as required by the State.

Mr. Terranova asked if there are any more questions for Mr. Durfee. Mr. Tinkham asked about the agreement with the Berkshire Mall. Mr. Sieloff explained the Baker Hill Road District offsets the costs of the Fire Department and Ambulance service. The money comes in and goes into the Capital Fund for the Fire Department. Mr. Tinkham asked about the ambulance and Mr. Durfee said that is funded by billing. Mr. Durfee said he does not have the budget numbers yet. Mr. Tinkham asked if there is sustainability for the Ambulance. Mr. Durfee said he believes it is close. The current ambulance is 4 years old and was bought as a demo with 5,000 miles but a new one would cost upwards of \$200,000. The ambulance is garaged at the Fire Station.

Mr. Terranova asked if there are any more questions for Mr. Durfee. Not more questions were asked.

Police Department: Mr. Wentworth asked about salary. 5 months; \$120,000 divided by five months multiplied by 12 months to annualize, the number is \$287,000. Mr. Sorrell said it should only be four months. Ms. Galib asked if they are cutting back on staff. Mr. Sorrell explained that with the former chief retiring they are down to

five men but there are still 6 shifts to fill. The overall savings with the part-time people vs. full time is approximately \$20,000. Mr. Sorrell explained how the shifts are filled.

Mr. Tinkham asked about the K9 unit. Mr. Sorrell said that is paid through fundraising only. Mr. Sorrell said he believes the Berkshire Mall also makes a donation. Mr. Sorrell said once Office Rathbun and the canine retire they will not keep the program going.

Mr. Tinkham asked about the 2016 car replacement. Mr. Sorrell and Mr. Sieloff said the cost would be about \$44,000 for an SUV that is Police standard. Budget indicates \$0 vs \$22,000 which will come from Free Cash because the budget is so tight. Mr. Sorrell indicated that a cruiser life span is typically only 4-5 years.

Mr. Terranova talked about 31 towns with 18 Police Departments. Mr. Terranova asked if there could ever be a time when the towns 'mesh' the departments. Mr. Sorrell said he does not see that happening.

Ms. Galib asked about the janitorial supplies budget of \$0. Mr. Sorrell said they do clean the station but he does not know why there is no money in the budget. Mr. Sorrell said they do buy supplies and Mr. Sieloff said they are expensed to 'other'. Mr. Sieloff that in the past month they did have a professional cleaner come in.

Mr. Terranova asked if there are any more questions for Mr. Sorrell. No more questions were asked.

Mr. Terranova and Mr. Wentworth attended the MMA meeting and there was a lot of discussion around Broadband and Solar Energy and how those programs could impact funding to Lanesborough.

Mr. Terranova talked about State land that is non-taxable and how that affects the wealth of the town.

Mr. Terranova said the State will not have a budget available until August so that when Lanesborough has their Town Meeting in June, they will not be able to have an accurate budget.

Unforeseen matters: None

Next Meeting:

March 14 6:00 p.m. Public Hearing at the Lanesborough Elementary School to hear the Mt. Greylock High School proposed budget.

March 21, 2016 @ 6:00 p.m. Mr. Terranova asked if the Town Assessor can attend to explain recap and overlay. Mr. Terranova asked when they would have the Articles. Mr. Sieloff said he could answer most questions. Mr. Terranova said he would also like to talk to the Council on Aging as well. Mr. Tinkham asked about the sheet with definitions that used to be in the Town Report. Mr. Tinkham said the definition page is no longer in the report. Mr. Sieloff will look into it.

Motion to adjourn: Ms. Galib made a motion to adjourn at 7:58 p.m. Motion was seconded by Mr. Wentworth. All in favor.