

LANESBOROUGH FINANCE COMMITTEE  
MINUTES APRIL 4, 2016  
Respectfully submitted by Sherri Thompson

**Attendees:** Al Terranova, Chair; Chris Galib; Stephen Wentworth; Ron Tinkham; Ray Jones;  
Paul Sieloff, Town Manager; Sherri Thompson

**Meeting called to order:** 6:01p.m.

**Motion to accept Minutes of February 1 meeting:** Mr. Tinkham made a motion to approve the Minutes from March 21, 2016 with modifications. Mr. Wentworth seconded. All in favor.

**Public Comment:** None

**Budget:** Mr. Terranova requested another meeting April 26 to break the budget down into sections for review prior to going to print for the Town Meeting June 14. It was requested that April 26 focus on Public Safety, 241-299; Human Services, 510-590; and Cultural Recreation, 610-699. If needed, another meeting will be scheduled for May. Mr. Terranova suggested a meeting be held in June for transfers and to close the books. Discussions will also include Revolving Funds.

**Mt. Greylock Budget Review:** Mr. Douglas Dias, Superintendent; Ms. Nancy Rauscher, Business Manager; Carrie Greene, School Committee; Mary MacDonald, Principal presented a modified budget following the Town debt exclusion vote on March 15. The School Committee will meet April 5 to vote on the amended budget.

Mr. Tinkham asked what the percentages are of SPED for Choice and Tuition for Lanesborough and Williamstown students. Mr. Dias said he did not have those specifics but indicated that the cost for Choice is \$5,000 plus any special services needed based on team processes. These costs are based on a formula allowed by the State of Massachusetts.

Mr. Jones asked if the Town of Lanesborough is reimbursed by the State for the difference in tuition payments from other Towns, i.e. New Ashford pays \$11,000 when the actual is \$18,600. Mr. Dias acknowledged that the Town does not get reimbursed. Mr. Tinkham requested that a building cost-benefit & retirement cost be added to tuition.

There was discussion about Medex Healthcare and it was noted that the School Committee has a Study Group working on these. Mr. Jones reminded everyone that the State requirement is “no less than 50%” and questioned why it would be more than 50% if not required by law. Ms. Rauscher said Mt. Greylock uses Berkshire Health Group and the plan is similar to that of Lanesborough.

**Debt Exclusion:** Ms. Rauscher provided preliminary projections<sup>1</sup> to the Finance Committee with two scenarios. ‘Scenario A’ (\$362,287) would allow for interest only payment whereas ‘Scenario B’ (\$560,993) would allow for principal and interest payments. As indicated in the graphs, scenario b would cost more initially, but would save money in the long run. Mr. Wentworth pointed out that the numbers used in each of these scenarios are estimated numbers, not actuals.

Mr. Tinkham made a motion to support ‘Scenario B’. Mr. Jones seconded. All in favor with no discussion. Mr. Terranova asked if there were any more questions. None. Mt. Greylock attendees adjourned at 7:06 p.m.

**Council On Aging:** Ms. Lorna Gayle presented the Council On Aging budget along with the Transportation Budget. Mr. Terranova asked for questions. Mr. Terranova asked about the Senior Work-Off Program coming out of the Overlay which is not part of the budget so, therefore, there is no transparency or reporting and no way to track what the Town does for the elderly. Mr. Terranova believes this program should be a separate line item in the budget. Mr. Sieloff said it does not go through the budget per the Town Meeting vote and State Law. This program allows 26 seniors to 'apply' for the program at a maximum yearly tax allowance of \$750 minus the cost of Medicare which currently is approximately \$8.56. Mr. Sieloff said this program is helpful in getting Town projects completed which the Town employees are not able to do. Mr. Terranova asked if the program is income based and Ms. Gayle said it is not as decided by the Select Board. Mr. Sieloff said he does not know what other Towns requirements are for the Work-Off Program, but each applicant must meet certain skill set requirements and the Select Board has to approve and vote on each applicant.

Ms. Galib asked how the Program is advertised. Ms. Gayle said advertising is done via the Lanesborough web site, newsletter mailings, and tax mailing insert. She indicated that she currently has 2 applicants for the 2017 year.

Mr. Wentworth asked what the process is for recording hours worked. Mr. Gayle said each person has their own time sheet that Ms. Gayle compiles and turns in to the Town Treasurer.

Mr. Terranova asked about the Handy Man Program. He believes it should be a co-pay based program and available to all seniors. Ms. Gayle explained that the program currently is not active due to insurance requirements for each contractor.

Mr. Terranova asked if there are any more questions. None. Mr. Terranova thanked Ms. Gayle and Ms. Gayle adjourned at 7:35 p.m.

**Budget:** Mr. Terranova asked about the Non-Regional Transportation line item that was presented at the previous meeting and questioned by Ms. Galib. Mr. Sieloff indicated that the \$3,682 was a mis-posting and was corrected.

**General Government Budget:** Mr. Sieloff has requested a salary increase for non-union employees of 2%, which represents an increase in the budget of approximately \$13,000. Mr. Sieloff said the Department Heads do not include a pay increase in their budgets so the Town Manager meets with the Select Board to 'recommend' an increase. Mr. Sieloff said each Town employee earns a modest salary but requires certain skills to accomplish their jobs. Ms. Galib said Social Security recipients will receive a 0% increase this year. Mr. Sieloff explained that the increase in pay and hours is to supplement those that work less than eighteen hours. Mr. Sieloff said the part-time employees cannot break twenty hours each week or the Town would be required to pay benefits. Mr. Sieloff also said he believes this increase is important as a 'cost of living' increase and to help morale. Mr. Jones requested no additional spending at all. Mr. Galib believes automatic increases are out of control. Mr. Terranova said there would be no vote tonight and requested Mr. Sieloff provide a worksheet for the April 26 meeting showing two scenarios; one with the pay increase, and one without the pay increase. Mr. Terranova also reminded everyone that the Finance Committee only makes recommendations on the budget but the final decision is made at the Town Meeting.

**48-hour unforeseen:** Mr. Jones requested a discussion about health care issues be put on the April 26 agenda. Mr. Wentworth asked Mr. Sieloff to work with the Town Accountant on what impact the retirees medical will have on the Budget.

**School Committee Meeting:** The Mt. Greylock School Committee will meet to vote on the amended budget on Tuesday, April 5 at 7:00 p.m. Members of the Finance Committee will attend.

**Next Meeting:** April 26, 2016 at 6:00 p.m.

**Motion to adjourn:** Mr. Jones made a motion to adjourn at 8:01 p.m. Motion was seconded by Mr. Wentworth. All in favor.

**Footnotes:**

[#1] Mt. Greylock debt exclusion information