

Lanesborough Finance Committee Minutes—February 5, 2015

Members present: Al Terranova, chairman, Steve Wentworth, Chris Galib, Greg Wolf, secretary

Others present: Paul Sieloff, Mary Reilly

- Meeting called to order at 6:01 pm
- Motion to accept January, 2015 Minutes: passed unanimously
- Chairperson of Cemetery Comm., Mary Reilly reviewed repair activities, plans for Spring, and answered questions. 2 full days were spent to straighten 42 stones, 30 more to be done at Center Cem., in spring work will be done at Talcott Cem. (\$1,500/day), there are 3 dedicated accts. (approx. \$17,000), an Article will be req'd to transfer to access, P.S. suggested raising burial/plot fees incrementally to go into a revolving acct. that will be set up

Discussion: School budgeting

- A.T., P.S., and Hank Sayers (selectman) met w/ MGRHS leadership in Jan. @Town Hall re the status of the budget. Al T. felt the point that it will be a tight budget was noted. Approx. 72% of the Town's budget is for schools. Health insurance is increasing 13%(\$171,000). The goal is 1% increase in assessment.
- Special ed. needs very expensive and can rise. Level of care and location are negotiable at a team meeting. The school is on the same page re controlling cost by meeting needs locally.
- Al suggested reaching out to teachers (not just school board).
- Issue raised: Can we tuition Lanesborough kids into MGRHS? (We are part of the "region".)
- Tuition/choice students: benefits and costs (tipping point reached for hiring a new teacher)
- Insurance negotiations in 2016/2017, we need to try to lower costs. Can we lower the # of staff on health plan? Can we negotiate the split (80/20) or are we bound by MGL Sec. 32?

Free Cash:

- Approx. \$215,000 of the balance of \$318,000 has been allotted already. Certified at end of fiscal year (June 30); (free cash is unused fund balances fr accts.)
- Philosophic discussion; goal is 10% of budget in stabilization fund, we can build this up, we use it conservatively (for real emergencies)
- Free cash should be used to lower the tax rate

Fire truck: P.S. will propose \$100,000 (from free cash) to go toward purchase of new fire truck. We are trying to get a \$250,000 matching grant. It's better not to use debt exclusion b/c it's not as transparent.

Reserve Fund: \$40,000/year controlled by FinCom. For unexpected expenses. Current bal. is \$22,665

New Business: MGRHS and Elem. Sch. Are req'd to have a hearing re budget. (March 16). Carrie Green wants to give Fincom a preview. This mtg is proposed for Feb. 24 but not finalized.

Motion to adjourn (CG), SW 2d, unanimously adjourned at 7:31 pm