

Buckland Finance Committee Minutes
February 5, 2018

Meeting called to order at Buckland Public Library, 7:05 p.m.

Committee members present: Karen Blom, Larry Langford, Bill Knittle, Michael Turley, Ben Murray, Paula Consolo

Others present: Dena Wilmore and Zack Turner, select board members

Minutes from January 27: Karen moves. Unanimously approved.

Discuss Budget

We are still over by \$64,000, and we haven't added any salary increases. Dena reports that she will be asking the assessors to release some of the overlay funds. We had already asked about that and were told that they don't like to do this; however, Dena feels that the select board has to ask. No guarantee that the assessors will agree. Dena wants to ask nonprofits if they can make payments in lieu of taxes, and she proposes the town consider adding a meals tax.

Capital discussion

Police vehicle: Do we need to replace it this year? Note that the value of the car will nose-dive when it goes over 100,000 and it is getting close to that mileage. Looking ahead, we might consider going down to 2 vehicles in the future. For now, we can put off replacing the Crown Vic, but maintenance costs might go up and we will lose some retail value. Considering all, we will not put \$12,000 in the Police Stabilization Account. We need to look at this stabilization account and rework it if we go down to 2 vehicles.

[School Committee rep Dave Parella arrives 7:20 pm. School Committee rep Martha Thurber arrives 7:28 pm]

School Committee discussion

Transportation costs went up double-digits for all towns. Explanation is that this is the 4th year of a 5-year contract, which goes through FY'20. School District is looking into possibility of running their own buses. Will this save money? A committee is investigating.

Next step for helping school finances as proposed by the BEST Committee is moving 6th grade to Mohawk. This would open up space in other schools, increasing possibility of closing Colrain. Some believe this is educationally beneficial for 6th graders, but others do not.

Capital for schools is up because some funding from the Mary Lyon Foundation has ended so town needs to pick up this cost.

School Committee meeting is on Wed, Feb. 7, but a snow storm may cancel it.

Martha and Dave leave at 8:05 p.m.

Highway Department Budget

Discussed whether we can reduce the number of trucks. Do we have too many 550 trucks? We will reduce the amount going to the Highway Stabilization Account to \$20,000, saving \$40,000. This means we cannot fund this new truck, meaning our fleet will be reduced. We propose not hiring an extra plow driver, which means that it will take longer to plow the roads. What is the savings for not hiring another plow driver? Discussed that this move to lower the funds we put into stabilization accounts goes against our plan to use stabilization accounts to keep the budget from high and low fluctuations.

Senior Center

Request for \$15,000 for planning for new center, but we don't support funding this. We simply don't have the money to support this.

Buckland Recreation

Capital requests of \$15,000 for putting in road; \$2,000 for electrical. Because there is no urgency to moving the road, we want to wait one year.

SF Business Partnership

They are requesting \$7,000 but last year we gave them \$5,000. We will level-fund this. We are questioning whether it is an advantage to Buckland to be in the partnership.

Radio requests for Police Department

We will fund this with \$10,000 toward the \$50,000 eventual costs as this need will not go away.

We just cut \$69,000, but we haven't added salary increases or General Stabilization.

Dena leaves 9:03 p.m.

Ask Andrea what is cost for elections? Showing \$16,000.

Police Station HVAC

We do not recommend funding this year; saves \$10,000.

Ask Martha to ask the School Committee to use \$300,000 from E&D:

Adjourned 9:21 pm.

Respectfully submitted by Paula Consolo