

Buckland Finance Committee Minutes
March 19, 2016

Meeting called to order at Buckland Town Hall, Shelburne Falls, at 8:37 am.

Committee members present: Karen Blom, Cynthia Caporaso, Bill Knittle, Paula Consolo, Ben Murray, Michael Turley

Others present: Town Administrator Andrea Llamas, Selectmen Rob Riggan and Kevin Fox arrived 9:03am, but left the room soon after.

Karen moved to approve the minutes for February 25; Paula seconded. Unanimously approved.

Karen move to approve the minutes for February 29; Bill seconded. Unanimously approved.

Karen told committee that there will be a special town meeting on March 24 at 7:30; we will discuss the warrant during our meeting on Monday, March 21.

Short discussion on fact that fuel costs are down and whether we should ask departments to lower fuel estimates.

Andrea leaves to update budget sheets and reprint.

Buckland Public Library representatives arrive 9:02 am.

Liz Jacobson-Carroll – library director

Sue Atherton, Amy Love, George Dole, Horace Taft – trustees

Discussed library budget and request for more hours for the assistant (3 hrs per week more) and for technology. We asked the trustees to submit a written technology plan before next year's budget. We also asked that they bring a list of programs and attendance numbers to the budget meeting next year.

Buckland Public Library representatives leave 9:38 am.

Arms Library representatives arrive 9:38 am.

Laurie Wheeler – director

Sheryl Gilmore, Randy Gobeil – trustees

Discussion focused on largest increase, which is for the bookkeeper, up from \$3,900 to \$6,000 because of new personnel. Board hopes not to need the full amount. Discussed possibility of lowering this a bit.

Requested that the representatives bring user numbers and program list to the budget meeting next year.

Arms representatives leave 9:56 a.m.

Council on Aging arrives 10:01 a.m.

Cathy Buntin – director

Donna Liebl, Eric Temple, Joann Soroka – Buckland COA board members

Penny Separance – Shelburne COA board member

Budget increases are very minimal. Asked Cathy to add a column for percent increase to municipal funds on the budget sheet for next year.

Discussed how Colrain residents pay for services. No indication that Colrain has any interest in rejoining the consortium.

COA representatives leave 10:37 a.m.

Police Chief Jim Hicks arrives 10:38 a.m.

Discussed areas in police budget that have increased.

Uniforms. Using cheaper uniforms for part-timers, who might not stay for the long term. After discussion decided to drop the requested amount for uniforms from \$4,000 to \$2,500 and keep that amount for the next year (spreading out expense).

Fuel. For next year, add number of gallons to the worksheets. Jim had some usage numbers on hand. Decided to change cruiser fuel request to \$6,500 (2,600 gal. at \$2.50 per gal).

Andrea returned to the discussion.

Heating fuel. Jim explained that we are still using up the fuel purchased last year at a higher rate (\$3.15 per gal), and we have more fuel locked in at \$2.08 per gal. Eventually we will get to the fuel that we purchased at \$1.69 per gal. but that may not happen next year. Still, we decided to drop the request for heating fuel to \$4,500.

Jim submitted a capital request for next year for a new cruiser, which is on our capital plan for 2018. Because we did not put money in stabilization for the cruiser last year, we will need to find money or borrow if we want to purchase the cruiser as planned.

Jim reported that he was able to purchase 8 vests, 3 mobile cameras, 3 body cameras, and hand-held radar using grant money.

We need to update the cruiser capital worksheet to reflect the increase in projected costs.

Jim Hicks leaves at 11:25 a.m.

Highway Chief Steve Daby arrived at 11:25 a.m. Rob Riggan returned.

Andrea explained that she lowered Steve's request for Winter Roads to the current \$130,000 because this is the only budget that we can go over, and the state will never allow us to lower it once we increase it. This year we may actually spend only that amount or very little over.

Street lights. Plan is to add two lights in the Salmon Falls parking lot, which is owned by the town. It is getting more use because of the restaurant downstairs and lack of parking in town. Andrea thinks it's a matter of public safety.

Discussed possibility of going to 4 highway crew members rather than the current 5 (one man is retiring on March 31). Steve pointed out the problems with having such a small crew: can't use hot patch on roads, which requires full crew, so cold patch is used, but cold patch doesn't last. Also, we would need temporary summer help, making the savings minimal. Paula pointed out that we had run the numbers when we decided to go to the 5-man crew and had decided that the advantages outweighed the minimal cost savings.

Steve said summer help would run about \$46,000 for just a few months, and the full-time help would run about \$52,000. The summer help wouldn't cover additional help needed in the winter for plowing.

Steve leaves at 12:05 p.m.

Town is looking at an override. Rob Riggan says preliminary estimate is the override would be 86 cents on \$1,000 valuation, with an additional 2 cents if COLA is set at 2.5%.

Andrea will show us an updated budget with a 2% COLA for Monday night's meeting.

Meeting adjourned at 12:41 p.m.
Respectfully submitted by Paula Consolo