

Buckland Finance Committee
Minutes
May 18, 2015

The Finance Committee met at the Buckland Public Library on May 18, 2015. In attendance were committee members Dena Willmore, Michael Turley and Ben Murray. Karen Blom joined the meeting at 8:00pm. Also attending were the two new members of the committee, effective July 1, 2015: William Knittle of North Street and Cynthia Caporaso, also of North Street. Ms. Willmore acted as Chair and Secretary

The meeting was called to order at 7:05. The approval of the prior meeting minutes was passed over at this time.

The next order of business was a discussion and review of the request for a transfer from The Reserve Fund of \$400 to the Zoning Board of Appeals account 0011765400. The Chair of the ZBA, John Gould, has made this request in order to bring in the Citizen Planner Training Collaborative. New members need background and context and older members could use a refresher in special permit and variance decisions. Mr. Murray moved and Mr. Turley seconded and the vote was unanimous by the three members present at the time of the vote.

The next order of business was a preliminary review of the FY2015 Winter Roads Budget over spending. According to materials submitted by Andrea Llamas, the account is short \$48,181.82. Her initial analysis indicates that we can cover that shortage through the use of the following accounts that currently have an overage:

Winter Roads Salaries:	\$ 2,296
Reserve Fund:	\$27,000
Refuse Expense:	\$ 5,000
Wage Adjustments:	\$ 6,000
Retiree Health:	\$ 3,000
Health Insurance:	<u>\$ 5,000</u>
	\$48,296

Final recommendations and decisions will be made at the Finance Committee's last meeting in June.

The next agenda item was a discussion of the Franklin Tech debt and the timing of a ballot vote on having that borrowing debt excluded. Ms. Llamas has researched whether we can attach that question to the Tech ballot regarding the debt (voting to be held on June 23) and we cannot. She has recommended, and we concur, that this question can be held to our next Town election in May of 2016.

The Committee then reviewed the current language in the Town By-Laws that focus on the Advisory (Finance) Committee. Any changes would have to be approved by the Town at either the Annual or a Special Town Meeting. The focus was on bringing the

language of the By-Laws into alignment with practice. An initial red lined version of that section of the By-Laws is attached.

The discussion then moved to a review of the budgeting process for FY16, just completed. It was decided that we should, again, start the process early with the memo to employees, departments and committees be distributed in December along with the time line of meetings. It was suggested that the Saturday meeting with departments be compressed with the object to avoid blocks of downtime. It was also agreed that we should only meet with those departments/committees that have a significant increase in their budgets – with the % or dollar amount to be determined later and highlighted in the December memo. There was a discussion regarding the assignment of committee members to specific areas of the budget and that be done at the July meeting and that dialogue between the committee liaison and the various departments should begin immediately. It was also suggested that these assignments have two persons especially for the larger budget areas (e.g. schools, police and highway.) As Paula Consolo was not able to be at the meeting it was suggested that we ask her to share her thoughts (via email?).

Mr. Murray suggested that we research and evaluate the use of Google Docs for the development of the budget. Ms. Willmore agreed to begin the discussion with Ms. Llamas on this or other cloud sharing programs. It was also agreed that Mr. Murray and Ms. Willmore work on creating a budgeting document that allows the Town Administrator to input data in only one cell and have that information then linked to all other pertinent spreadsheets and documents. There was also some discussion about eventually pushing this process down into the departments in order to free the Administrator from the task of data input, but it was acknowledged that this was a secondary objective.

An area that was discussed off and on during the meeting was the orientation of the new members of the committee. We selected June 8 as a potential informal meeting to review the various documents used during budgeting. Mr. Murray also reminded everyone of the annual need to complete the ethics “test” which can be found at mass.gov/ethics. Ms. Willmore mentioned that the new members (and Mr. Turley) need to be sworn in which they can do at the Town offices by the Town Clerk or at the special town meeting to be held on June 29 at Town Hall.

With no further business to come before the committee, Ms. Willmore adjourned the meeting at 9:00 pm

Respectfully submitted,

Dena Willmore

