

Buckland Finance Committee
Minutes
Nov. 21, 2016 at 7:00 pm
Buckland Public Library

Present: Michael Turley, Ben Murray, Karen Blom, Cynthia Caporaso, Bill Knittle.
Andrea Llamas arrived a little later.

Review and acceptance of prior minutes from Oct. 17th, 2016

Approved unanimously.

Draft financial committee 2017 calendar

Review draft calendar

Update on highway garage

Andrea reporting. There is a need for project manager and funding for this position. Cost range is estimated to be 8-10% (\$250,000 - 300,000) of the projected \$2.5M - \$3M cost of the garage renovations. This cost is for the duration of the project.

Discussion about current police station and plans to stay or move. It was agreed that capital expenses should be planned and budgeted, but that if there is an opportunity to sell, these capital expenditures should be curtailed.

Update on grant status

Rec Area grant application was denied. Plan is now to demo and close the pool area. Other aspects of the rec area will stay operational.

Vets field grant status is still unknown.

BEST recommendation motion

Discussion about the BEST recommendation motion and thoughts going towards it. There recently has been an All Boards meeting called, and it is hoped to be moved back to 6pm at Mohawk on December 12th. There is a significant BEST public meeting is scheduled to be at 7pm following the All Boards' meeting.

The Committee is seeking to have coherent message articulated for School Committee which sets out the constraints that the Town has regarding budget. Discussion around sending a message that asks the schools to constrain their budget to a zero increase over last year's budget - this to sustain town budgets until results can be achieved from plans proposed by BEST. There is some support for this, while others want some more time to consider the position.

Karen updated Committee on the BEST recommendations and some of the thinking behind their proposals. Regarding the draft motion, some concern was raised over the language "Work closely with the Massachusetts Rural Schools

Coalition to further a legislative agenda" and the potential for this to add to expenses. At this point, this effort does not appear to have any significant financial cost.

Prep for BOS, School Committee and Fin Com meeting 12/13

Stated goal for the meeting is to have a general forecast of upcoming budget season and what we can expect. Out of this meeting, seeking to have coherent message articulated for School Committee which sets out the constraints that the Town has regarding budget.

Capital Budget planning & discussion

Andrea provided a Capital Request for \$50,000 to remove the current pool and pool house at the Rec Area.

Andrea provided a Capital Request for \$15,000 to purchase a new server and set up a domain for Town Hall. It is hoped that there will be no or minimal increase in annual operating costs for this new infrastructure. There were concerns brought up that this project was going to raise annual operating costs for an overbuilt system.

Discussion around Master Capital plan and how we typically fund capital items.

For the December meeting, Committee members are asked to read through the capital requests and be prepared to discuss and make recommendations.

Recent reval effect on budget planning – preliminary assessors projections

Andrea provided Revenue/Expense Analysis sheet that is updated for revenues only to give sense of direction we are heading. Reval captured growth on Gardner's Falls power station and this offset TransCanada losses. Essentially, Town's growth is flat.

Any other items not reasonably known 48 hours prior to the meeting.

Topic of budget presentation was raised. It was agreed that the next budget presentation will be with more consolidated line sub-totals to still provide important detail and information to voters but not such specific lines that do not add to the discussion.

Meeting adjourned 9:07pm.

Respectfully submitted by
Ben Murray