

Buckland Finance Committee
Meeting Minutes
Feb 6, 2017 at 7 pm at Buckland Public Library

Finance Committee Present: Karen Blom, Cynthia Caporaso, Ben Murray, Michael Turley

Meeting called to order 7:05pm

Meeting with John Baldwin (President) and Carmela Lanza-Weil, representing Greater Shelburne Falls Area Business Association. They asked the Committee to consider going back up to \$7,000 of prior year's. Some highlights of work include: a renewal of the Memorandum of Understanding is being worked on, and examining parking at Salmon Falls. Salmon Falls parking project is a focus of creating more parking for the Shelburne Falls area using "placemaking" as a model for development and design.

Question was asked about going to other towns to make contributions to the GSFABA. The area served includes ten towns. Current town reps (Buckland and Shelburne) do not seem to currently be enthusiastic about expanding membership to include other towns beyond Buckland and Shelburne.

Concern expressed about how the Partnership is differentiated from the Business Association - in particular with finances. There is some perception (correctly or incorrectly) that municipal contributions simply go to support the Business Association, and it would be helpful to have clarity or mechanism that shows Partnership funding supporting Partnership expenses/work. They are currently reviewing and making changes in their bookkeeping to better track these differences.

Ellen Eller, Cathy Buntin, Margaret Payne, Donna Liebel, representing Senior Center. Short discussion had on Senior Center budget process including different pieces of information coming at different time. For instance, Shelburne just recently set COLA (2.5%) and that has just been factored into the budget. Short discussion on presented budget which overall has a small increase and Buckland's share is a decrease.

Discussion on creation of new Senior Center. A summary of project and conclusions of location were reviewed (as presented at their earlier public informational meeting). Interest in starting a fund with \$15,000 from each of the three member towns (Ashfield, Buckland and Shelburne). The purpose of this fund would be to cover costs incurred in the research and exploration of possible sites, the renovation of an existing building or new construction of a suitable Senior Center or any other related costs.

Capital fund has been put in place with the Senior Center Foundation Inc. This Senior Center project is expected to be funded through the Senior Center Foundation and this request for funding from the Towns is asked as a singular request which is not expected to grow into full funding for the capital project. The capital project is expected (at this time) to cost approximately \$3.6 million.

Paula Consolo joined the meeting at 7:55pm.

There was a short discussion about the proposed warrant article for the new fund for the Senior Center, and it was recommended by the committee to change the language so that the funding was contingent on all the other towns approving the article. It was also recommended that they provide some estimates on future operating costs that would change and be born by the Towns after a capital project of this magnitude.

Martha Thurber presenting for the School Committee. Discussion on current status of budget. At this point, given current projections of town assessments, there is not expected (even with any budget revisions) that those town assessments will increase.

Review and acceptance of minutes from Jan. 16. Moved for approval (Ben Murray) and seconded (Cynthia). Approved unanimously.

Review and acceptance of minutes from Jan. 28. Moved for approval (Paula Consolo) and seconded (Karen Blom). Approved unanimously.

Review of Town Budget. On our meeting, February 20th that we will work in detail on the budget and go through line by line to get closer to our final recommendations. There will need to be some significant cuts. Further discussion was held with regard to Senior Center request for \$15,000 from each Town. Committee agreed we would explore with other Towns the idea of funding over 3 years with \$5,000 per year - spreading out the impact on the operating budget.

Review of Highway garage in preparation for Feb 7th Special Town Meeting. It was discussed and some members were hoping for more details on the proposed construction plans so that they could make a more informed decision.

Next meetings are:

February 20th, 7pm at Town Hall

March 13th, 7pm at BPL

March 20th, 7pm at Town Hall

Motion to Adjourn at 9:10pm (Cynthia) and seconded (Michael).

Respectfully submitted,

Ben Murray