

Canton Finance Committee
Meeting Minutes
Monday, February 26, 2018

Minutes Voted on: 3-8-18
Vote: 5-0-1

Members Present:

Rob Barker, Nichola Gallagher, Cynthia Holcombe, Tim McKenna and Cindy Thomas.

Members Absent: Barbara Saint André.

Guests Present:

Chief Ken Berkowitz, Police Department
Liz Francis, Parks & Recreation Director
Louis Jutras, Manager of Information Systems
Tracy Kenney, Town Clerk
Deputy Chief Helena Rafferty, Police Department
Mike Trotta, Superintendent, Department of Public Works
Jim Murgia, Finance Director
Ellen Jones, Finance Committee Secretary

Opening: A meeting of the Canton Finance Committee was called to order by Chairman Barker at 7:04 pm. on Monday, February 26, 2018 in the Salah Meeting Room of Town Hall.

A. Approval of Agenda

Chairman Barker reviewed the items on the agenda which included a discussion regarding the FY19 budget requests for the Police Department, Town Clerk, MIS, Parks & Recreation and a discussion with the DPW Superintendent regarding water and sewer assessments as well as Town Meeting articles.

B. Announcements

Chairman Barker announced that there were three vacancies on the Finance Committee and that interested parties should reach out to the Town Moderator.

C. New Business

FY19 MIS Department Budget Request – Mr. Jutras presented his FY19 MIS budget request as follows:

- **A full-time Software Coordinator position was being requested for FY19.** Once the position is filled the existing part-time position (11 hours) would be eliminated.
- The impact of adding the Software Coordinator position would be an approximately \$56,000 increase to the budget.
- **The last time a position was added to the MIS Division of the Finance Department was the Network Coordinator position in 1999.** A part-time employee has been assisting the division in recent years.
- The Software Coordinator would be responsible for the managing, maintenance and upgrading of over 45 software programs the Town utilizes.
- A job description has been developed along with a grade for the position. **The salary range for the position would be \$60,000 to \$75,000.** This would be a personal contract position and would not be within any union.
- In response to Chairman Barker's inquiry about the pros and cons of having this new position be full-time instead of part-time, Mr. Jutras responded that space allocation within the department could better accommodate a full-time person instead of two part-time positions. In addition he further stated that the

projects the division is currently working on are larger and more complex and it would not be conducive to splitting the workload between two part-time employees that are only working 2 ½ days.

- Mr. Murgia stated that it is difficult finding part-time employees that have the skill set needed for this position. Having been with the Town for over 25 years Mr. Murgia has seen a growth in support that is needed in this division beyond just supporting the financial software for the Town but other departments as well.
- In response to Ms. Holcombe's inquiry whether this position would be a software developer, Mr. Jutras explained that the position would be more of a coordinator who would validate software packages, scheduling training along with program management. This position would not be designing or creating any in-house software packages.

FY19 Town Clerk & Elections Budget Requests – Ms. Kenny, the Town Clerk, presented the FY19 budget requests for the Town Clerk budget as well as the Elections budget. She referred the Committee to her budget request information along with a copy of the HR policy regarding the Town's compensation plan.

- The Town Clerk is **seeking a 2% COLA increase as well as a 5% increase for over 20 years of service** with the Town. She stated that her position is the only elected full-time position whose salary is voted at Annual Town Meeting. Ms. Kenny further stated that she has been with the Town for over 30 years. She just recently became aware of the Town's policy to grant a 5% increase to employees with 20 years of service. She believes she is eligible for this increase.
- With regard to the Town Clerk's budget, Ms. Kenny **shifted some of the funds to the overtime budget and reduced the overall Town Clerk's budget by about \$1,200 and shifted these funds to the Elections budget.**
- Because the Town has three elections in FY19 – the State Primary in September 2018, a State Election in November 2018 and the Town Election in April 2019 Ms. Kenney has requested an approximately \$26,000 increase to the Elections budget. She stated that in FY17 there was a \$20,000 deficit to her budget because of the expenses incurred for early voting. The unfunded state mandate of early voting will be offered again for the State Election in November in 2018. The Town received only \$1,000 for early voting in FY17 because the Town agreed to be open for four hours on Saturday.
- Ms. Kenney stated that her office was recently informed that the Governor signed an appropriation for \$1 million to be spread out over the state to help compensate the Towns for a portion of the 2016 election for early voting but the state is very limited as to what they will allow the Town's to submit for reimbursement. The state will not cover the cost of any additional personnel for workers that assist with early voting. Ms. Kenney is estimating that the Town may receive approximately \$1,700 of this \$1 million.
- Any potential reimbursement to the Town for early voting for FY19 is unknown to Ms. Kenney at this time.
- Ms. Kenney based her FY19 elections budget on the budget for FY17, which also had three elections with early voting.
- After submitting her FY19 budget, Ms. Kenney was informed that the Secretary of State announced that early voting might be offered one week before the State Primary in September. This could cause a further budget problem as this was not considered when the FY19 Elections budget was prepared.
- Ms. Thomas stated that based on the actual expenses for the Elections budget in FY15 (\$56,191) and in FY17 (\$59,789) that it would be reasonable to conclude that the Elections base budget for FY19 of \$32,150 was not sustainable and that indeed the \$58,175 being requested for FY19 was a more reasonable amount.
- Ms. Kenney stated that her elections budget with regard to the police details line item can fluctuate based on the rank of the police officer hired to cover the police details at the six polling locations. Officers are assigned for the details on a rotating basis.

FY19 Parks & Recreation Department Budget Requests – Ms. Francis, Parks & Recreation Director, is seeking the following budget changes/increases to the Parks & Recreation budget for FY19:

- The **Playground salaries budget request for FY19 is being reduced** from \$19,500 to \$17,000. In previous years Canton had offered four supervised playgrounds for free during the summer. This has been reduced to two playgrounds.
- The **Lifeguards salaries budget request for FY19 is being increased from \$33,000 to \$38,000** in order to keep the pool open an additional week at the end of the summer. Ms. Francis stated that the Parks & Recreation Department had received many requests from the community to have the pool stay open an additional week at the end of the summer. She further stated that she would also like to keep longer hours in the evening beyond 6:00 p.m. to offer hours for swim lessons in the evening for families that might not be able to attend during the day. In the past staffing issues has been a problem for keeping the pool open through the last week in August because many of the lifeguards had to return to college or attend high school sports activities. Ms. Francis is confident that they will be able to staff the pool for the additional nighttime hours and the extra week.
- Ms. Francis has requested **an increase to the Electricity budget**. Parks and Recreation has seen an increased use of field lights due to additional games being offered in the evening hours. She further stated that Parks & Recreation plans on doing a better job of monitoring the lights used at the fields to avoid lights being left on at the fields overnight. Ms. Francis is working with Mr. Jutras on a system that will allow the Town to have timers on the lights as well as allow remote access for control of the lights.
- **A new budget request of \$3,000 has been requested for software maintenance** for the Parks & Recreation data base program entitled MyRec.com. Software maintenance has been previously coming out of the Parks & Recreation Revolving Fund and Ms. Francis believes it should actually be an operating budget item.
- Parks & Recreation has requested a **\$5,500 increase to its Chalk and Fertilizer budget** from \$12,500 to \$18,000 to cover the increased costs of maintaining the fields.
- In response to Chairman Barker's inquiry with regard to field lights being converted over to LED lights, Mr. Murgia responded that Eversource may have a grant program for the conversion and installation of LED lights. Ms. Francis stated that many of the field lights were installed over different periods of time by different vendors and that because of that many lights would have to be retrofitted to accommodate for the new lights.
- **Paul Revere Heritage Site – A new budget request of \$50,000 for maintenance of the Paul Revere Heritage Site by an outside vendor has been requested for FY19.** A projected expenses worksheet was provided to the Committee prior to the meeting. The \$50,000 is based on a preliminary quote from a vendor, but this purchase of service would eventually have to go out to bid. Ms. Francis stated that given the amount of vegetation and irrigation as well as the size of the property, she was concerned that Parks & Recreation might not have enough equipment and personnel to take care of a property of this size. By having an outside vendor take care of the property it would give Parks & Recreation a short-term solution until the demands and resources for the property are better known. The price quote does not include snow removal. Electricity estimates for the lighting along the walkways at the site was based on the electricity for the ornamental lighting in the downtown area. The costs for maintaining the pumps for the irrigation system are unknown at this time. Ms. Francis stated that it is unknown as to when the Town will take control of the property. Mr. Murgia stated that for the time being the Paul Revere Heritage Site maintenance budget will be included in the Parks & Recreation budget but that the **plan is to set up a separate cost center within the Parks & Recreation budget in order to track expenses separately.**
- **Playgrounds** – Ms. Thomas inquired if the playgrounds that will be installed at the Tilden and Devoll field will be ADA compliant as well as inclusive. Ms. Francis stated that Parks & Recreation is attempting to include inclusive components to the playgrounds they are having installed. She noted that a new inclusive playground is being built at the Pappas Rehabilitation Center.

- **Rink Budget** – Mr. Murgia stated that Ms. Francis submitted an FY19 Rink budget of \$15,430. Of the \$15,430 total budget, \$6,180 will be used for debt service payments and \$9,250 will be used for continuing to cover the cost of securing the rink with a fence and a storage container for equipment.
- **Article 14 – Funding for the 4th of July Celebration** – Ms. Francis is recommending \$35,000 for the upcoming 4th of July celebration which is the same amount that was requested last year. Funding for this if approved at Town Meeting will come from free cash.
- **Article 60 – Authorize Disposition of the Gridley School** – Ms. Francis stated that the design of the Gridley School made it difficult to run programs in the space, with the second level unusable and the first level needing significant repairs in order to make it a usable space.

The discussion with Ms. Francis ended at approximately 7:46 p.m.

FY19 Police Department & Animal Control Budget Requests – Police Chief Berkowitz presented the following budget requests for FY19:

- **Traffic Control Officer \$55,000** – The Chief stated that the Police Department is seeking a **budget increase of \$55,000 to hire an officer dedicated to traffic enforcement**. Five years ago the Police Department had two officers assigned to traffic. When one of the traffic officers retired, that position was redeployed to the School Department and the position was never filled with another traffic officer. There are currently police officers located at the Galvin Middle School, the High School and the Blue Hills Regional School on a full-time basis.
- Chief Berkowitz stated that the Department of Public Works and the Engineering Department reach out to the Police Department for information when considering traffic designs and signs. He further stated that the BOS is in the process of combining the Traffic Committee and the Blue Ribbon Study Committee into one committee that will address traffic concerns.
- The Police Department has not had a new position added to the Police Department since he had become Chief.
- **Computer Expenses \$15,000 Increase** – The Police Chief is looking for a **\$15,000 increase to the computer expense budget** to meet the increased demand for cameras, technology and for the annual license fees.
- **Patrol Cars** – Through the capital request process the Police Department is requesting three new police vehicles. Funds remaining from last year will be used to purchase the remaining police vehicles needed.
- **Animal Control Assistant and Stipend** – The Chief recently interviewed a candidate from Suffolk to fill the vacant part-time Assistant to the Animal Control Officer Stacey Nee. The Animal Inspector **stipend of \$2,300 which was originally under the Board of Health budget will be transferred over to the Animal Control budget** for FY19.

The discussion with Chief Berkowitz and Deputy Chief Rafferty ended at approximately 7:56 p.m.

Article 7 Motion 1 – Town Clerk Salary - Vote

A motion made by Ms. Thomas to recommend that the salary and compensation for the Town Clerk be fixed at \$90,517 for the 2019 Fiscal Year beginning July 1, 2018 through June 30, 2019 was seconded by Ms. Gallagher. Vote: 5-0-0.

MWRA Assessment for FY19 – Chairman Barker thanked Mr. Trotta for attending the Finance Committee meeting even though Mr. Trotta did not have any budget changes for FY19. Mr. Trotta did not have any formal presentation for the Committee.

- The MWRA water assessment is based on prior years' usage.

- MWRA estimates the revenue needed for their operating budget and their debt service budget and apportions this amount to 61 cities based on the percentage of water used for calendar year 2017.
- **The water assessment is down by approximately 25%.** The Town did leak detections and repairs and the Town was also under a water restriction. Mr. Trotta further stated that the Town would be under water restrictions every year under the new water withdrawal permit. The Town is permitted to use 2.67 million gallons a day. Of that 2.67 million gallons, 2.43 is local sourcing. The Town is only using approximately 1.8 million gallons.
- The sewer assessment is calculated differently than the water assessment. A formula is used based on total population, total flow, suspended solids, etc. **The sewer assessment for Canton is up approximately 5%.**
- Total water and sewer assessment is down approximately 6.3%. According to Mr. Trotta approximately 2/3 of the Town is on sewer.
- **Article 25 – Acquire Property Rights for the Old Shepard Pond Dam Project** – Mr. Trotta explained that the Office of Dam Safety (ODS) has designated the Old Shepard Pond Dam as in poor condition. The dam is inspected every five years. The dam was first designated as being in poor condition in 2007 and again in 2011. The Town is under agreement with ODS to make repairs or to have a design in place to make repairs before the end of the year. In order for this to take place there are four properties in which the Town will have to acquire easements to do reinforcement work along the base of the dam, clean out vegetation, regrade it and install rip rap (stones placed along slopes of embankments). According to Mr. Trotta the new Town Engineer, Barbara Thissell, was scheduled to meet with the residents to go over the project and help the residents understand the impact the project has on their properties. This is the same article that was on last year's Town Meeting warrant that did not pass. If the Town fails to get the work done, OSD will issue an order and start imposing fines on the Town until the work is completed. The design work has been completed and the Town is going out to bid for the work to be advertised in the next couple of weeks so the Town will have a bid in hand prior to Town Meeting.
- **Capital Request for \$700,000 for Repairing Old Shepard Pond Dam** – Mr. Murgia stated that there was a capital request for \$700,000 for borrowing for the repair of this dam.
- **Article 61 – Disposition of Water Sewer Storage Building located on Pine Street** – Mr. Trotta stated that the DPW gave the Water Sewer Storage Building back to the BOS two years ago. Mr. Trotta further stated that his department had no use for the 1880s building, the building is in need of repair, the roof members are in rough shape and the building would need significant funding if it were to be reused. The Town is in the process of having a red "X" marked on the building to help identify the building as unsafe to the Fire Department.
- **Articles 26 thru 36 - Street Acceptance Articles** – Mr. Trotta informed the Committee that there are four subdivisions with street acceptance articles on the Town Meeting warrant. The request for street acceptance has been initiated by residents of three of the subdivisions. The fourth was requested by the developer.
- There is still work to be done on all of the identified streets. The residents are seeking to have the Town complete the work or to manage the completion of the work. Some of the work will be funded by bonds that the developer has pledged to the Town, some through betterments to property owners. In the case of the developer's request (Preserve at Canton) there is a punchlist of items that must be completed.
- There are three developments being assessed for street acceptance: Knob Hill Estates (approximately \$40,000 worth of work), Washington Commons (approximately \$40,000 worth of work) and Colts Crossing (approximately \$100,000 worth of work to be completed).
- The goal is to have bids within the next two weeks and to get the work done before Town Meeting.
- Mr. Trotta suggested that if it is not bid and not in progress that the BOS may want to consider withdrawing the articles for acceptance.