

Buckland Finance Committee Minutes
Buckland Public Library, March 4, 2019

Meeting called to order at Buckland Public Library 7:15 p.m.

Committee members present: Karen Blom, Ciara Hayden, Larry Langford (remotely), Ben Murray, Paula Consolo.

Others present: Dena Wilmore and Barry Del Castilho, select board; Bob Markel, interim town administrator; Marilyn Kelsey, community member.

Meeting Minutes February 11 - Karen moves to accept, Ben seconds, unanimously accepted.

Review of Google Sheet Budget (created by Ben)

Ben walked the committee through this new medium for the budget, explaining how Google Sheets work, including how to use notes and comments.

Ben pointed out that it would be helpful if all of the department's payroll formulas were the same. Right now different jobs seem to be calculated using different formulas. It was pointed out that we need to consider that some employees are salaried, so an hourly wage should not be calculated for them.

Looking at the Debt Sheet, we noticed that we need a schedule for the Tech School capital payment, which is now showing as \$7400 each year (an estimate).

Ben needs a few more days to complete the Google Sheets budget.

Review of Bob's Budget Worksheets

We went through these worksheets, noting places that need adjusting. Added the Senior Center budget total, which came in as \$53,549.

Noted that there will be a Special Town Meeting on April 4.

Apple Valley Internet Buildout

Discussed the project to provide 20 homes in Apple Valley with high-speed Internet through a system being built for the town of Ashfield. Select board is thinking that each household will be allotted up to \$1,500 to pay for the hookup from the telephone poles to the house.

Question: what is the Distribution Network Construction Cost of \$16,096 cover? Bob will find out and let us know when this must be paid.

Dena noted that we must make it clear to residents that this \$1,500 per household offer for the Internet buildout is a one-time offer; if a resident chooses not to do the work now, they will have to pay for it themselves at a later time.

Items to flag for the accountant, who will be in the office tomorrow.

Line 5420 Expense: Bob will find out what account this is and why we are over by nearly \$12,000

Line 5470 Audit Expense: \$24,300

Bob will clarify what "prior year encumbrances" means.

Bob recommends that the incoming town administrator be able to view the accounting system at any time and not have to wait for the accountant to come to the office. He believes this is possible and will be granted if requested.

Committee decided to push off our work on the Memo to Townspeople until Ben is finished programing the Google Sheet Budget.

Ciara noted that townsfolk can now sign up for email alerts from town departments. Paula suggested we ask Phoebe to send out an email to her town email list letting people know that they can do this.

Senior Center

Short discussion on the Senior Center project and Ashfield Finance Committee member Ted Murray's letter, which asks us to try to come up with an amount that we think Buckland can afford toward the Senior Center project. We decided that we will consider the request, but only after the current year budget is done. We are still waiting for answers to the questions we sent the Senior Center Committee. Paula reported on the latest meeting that she attended. Attention is now moving away from Mole Hollow and toward the land around Arms Academy, because that was the preferred site of people who attended a recent public meeting. The senior center committee has hired a fundraiser.

Health insurance premiums are actually going down because we have fewer employees, but we must consider that this could change as new employees are hired. Also, **copays and deductibles** are going up for employees. As he was asked to do, Bob told us that some **town employees feel that a 2.5% COLA increase** would help alleviate this increase in health costs for them. BOS had voted to give a 2.25% COLA increase at their last meeting.

Discussion of the FRCOG accountant expense request for \$750 - what is this for?

Next meetings

Monday, March 11 at Town Hall

Monday, March 18 at Buckland Public Library

Thursday, April 4, Special Town Meeting at Town Hall

Monday, April 15 at Town Hall

Karen motions to adjourn at 9:11 pm, Paula seconds. Unanimously agreed.

Respectfully submitted by Paula Consolo.

