

## **Buckland Finance Committee Minutes - Feb. 3, 2020**

Meeting called to order at Buckland Public Library, 7:01 p.m.

**Committee members present:** Karen Blom, Ciara Hayden, Paula Consolo, Larry Langford, Ben Murray and Raymond Lanza-Weil

**Non-committee members:** Town administrator, Heather Butler

Meeting with Senior Center reps: Cathy Buntin (Director), Penny Spearance (Treasurer), Ellen Ellers (COA Buckland), Donna Liebel (COA Buckland), Joanne Soroka (COA Shelburne) and Silvia Smith (Expansion committee).

The Senior Center capital budget request of \$15,000 for FY21 and the unpaid \$15,000 from FY20 was discussed. They intend to use the municipal funds from the 3 towns to continue a contract with P3 consultants after July 1st and other site plan preparation. Fin Com members questioned the use of funds when a site is not committed yet. The top site is the Masonic Lodge (present home) with the Buckland Police Dept location a 2nd choice. P3 is working on ownership models first and has suggested reaching out to FRCOG. Fin Com members thought this was a good idea. Penny Spearance was asked to send an up-to date accounting of all municipal funds (\$105,000) given to date and a detailed plan on how additional funds requested would be used.

The FY21 Sr Ctr operating budget was presented by Penny Spearance. Buckland's assessment is \$12,000 more or close to a 23% increase over FY20. The 5-year rolling average figures are skewed since user data was lost to a security breach and 2018 figures will be used for 2019. The main drivers of the budget increase are more staff taking health insurance, 2.5% COLA and 7 hours additional staff time. Cathy Buntin pointed out that the staff often works 10-15 more hours/week uncompensated just to provide the services needed. Ben questioned whether some of the users are getting more services as they age or if growth is from new users coming on. Sylvia Smith wants us to write a letter of support for the expansion committee's request to the state for \$100,000 on the budget.

7:50 pm - Senior Center folks depart

**Motion to accept the January 20th minutes made by Karen, seconded by Raymond Accepted unanimously.**

Discussed letter of support for Sr Ctr request for \$100,000 from the state. We don't support asking for more money for capital work that isn't clearly defined or accounted for. We still support what we agreed on at our Dec 16th meeting: "Finance Committee members discussed and came to the consensus that our voters will not likely support a tax increase to fund the expansion of the senior center. We would be interested in learning more about the distributed

services model. We would like to seek affirmation from voters in moving forward. Possibly a referendum in May discussing options and tax increases."

**Motion to write a letter of support made by Ben, Paula seconded. Did not pass - 5 against and one in favor.**

There was a lengthy discussion about our budget process. How do we communicate with dept heads about decisions (reductions) we make on their requests as a way to balance the budget? We agreed to add another column to the budget showing requests vs our final number and get it out to depts in advance of town meeting.

What if we said yes to all requests - what would that do to the tax rate and the levy limit? This analysis would be useful in showing depts and voters that we can't fund all requests without looking at an override which we won't do for the operating budget.

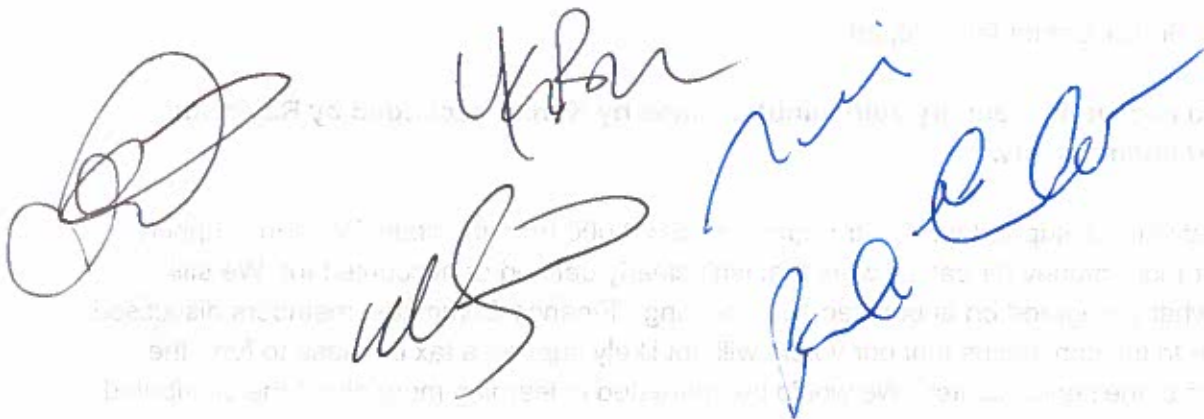
Ben needs to fix some issues with the budget sheets and then Heather can put in place-holder figures for every line item.

We discussed briefly the letter Deborah Andrews, Shelburne Fin Com member sent to Ciara regarding the school budget. The letter will be forwarded to all our members and Paula will take a look at it.

Heather mentioned that the WWTF capital budget request is high due to the TIP project on Conway Street. This is an enterprise fund and has no effect on the town operating budget.

**Karen motions to adjourn, Larry seconds, all approved. Adjourned at 8:56 pm.**

Next meeting has been changed to Monday Feb 17th, 7pm at the Town Hall when we expect the Mohawk school district and the Buckland Public Library budgets.

The block contains five handwritten signatures in blue ink. From left to right, they are: a large, stylized signature; a signature that appears to be 'Upar'; a signature that appears to be 'mi'; a signature that appears to be 'pa'; and a signature that appears to be 'e la'.