

## **Buckland Finance Committee Minutes**

**February 1, 2020**

**Meeting called to order at the Buckland Town Hall, Buckland MA, 8 a.m.**

**Committee members present:** Karen Blom, Ciara Hayden, Larry Langford, Raymond Lanza-Weil. Paula Consolo, Ben Murray arrives at 8:05 a.m.

**Others:** Town Administrator Heather Butler, Selectboard member Barry DeCastillo  
Highway superintendent Steve Daby

### **Highway discussion**

Heather would like to order \$4,500 road inventory software (iworks) to track expenses & supplies; ongoing cost would be \$2,500 annual. This will help us track costs and problems, and figure out how to better allocate resources.

**MaryIn Kelsey arrives 8:20am**

**Steve leaves 8:25**

### **Police**

**Chief Jim Hicks arrives 8:33 am**

Jim explains that his budget is higher because he wants to bring back part-time officer hours to 2019 level after they were cut in 2020. Jim would like to request that we communicate with him any cuts we make in budgets before it gets to town meeting floor. Heather will ensure that department heads see their budgets as soon as they are done.

Fourth cruiser is used for details. Right now no maintenance costs.

State is requiring that we change the radios we use. FRCOG will give us Kenwood brand radios, which is what the state will finance. Because these are less reliable than the Motorola radios that we currently use, Jim is requesting \$10,000 to upgrade the radios that we would get from FRCOG. State will finance 9 radios of the lesser cost. Jim would like to stick with the Motorola radios, which will cost about \$500 per radio more plus the mobile radios. Radios cost \$4,000 to \$5,000 a piece.

Oil costs are down, and Jim points to the insulation that was installed. Electric is helped by the LED lighting.

**Jim Hicks leaves 9:05 am**

Treasurer Collector Lisa Blackmere arrives 9:00 am

Request for conferences is up \$900. Lisa went through all the conferences she attended. Heather says that the information she brings back is invaluable. Lisa believes her salary was under appropriated last year. We need to investigate this. Ben and Heather will work with Lisa to solve the mystery.

Recreation Committee reps arrive: Carol Foote and Cindy Schwartz 9:35 am

Lisa leaves at 9:44 am

### **Recreation.**

Currently the gate is open May 1 to Sept 15. The committee would like to keep it open in April and close Dec. 1. Lots of rentals in September and October and would like to offer the pavilion for rent until the end of October. They have requested \$30,000-45,000 capital for putting in a new septic in the fall of 2020. There aren't grants for this and it's the next step in the process. Ben asked if it could wait and be done when the digging for the building is done - could save some money and would create a mess there only once.

Rec got the word that their application for a grant (???) is looking good and should be approved. Looking at 1/3 grants, 1/3 town, 1/3 donations for funding the \$600,000 needed to finish the pool project (in addition to the \$500,000 donation). Paula asked if that money is invested and if it can be invested. Requesting funding for a new septic system. We would need to put together an RFP and could not begin until the money was available on July 1. New septic system would be separate from the current system.

Rec is purchasing a sign and hoping signage will be branded so that folks know they are in a Buckland park.

Cindy and Carole leave 10:07 am

School Committee reps Martha Thurber and David Parrella arrive 10 am

Martha explained the plan for the Mohawk School District in the wake of the unfortunate departure of Superintendent Michael Buonaconti: Leann Loomis is in place for now. They have some good candidates for interim superintendent 2-3 days a week and will be looking for a permanent person. Considering the departure of the superintendent, they do not yet have a budget but hope to have one by Feb 10.

Martha and David leave 10:23 am

**Franklin County Tech** Rick Martin, superintendent; Russ Kaubris, business manager arrive 10:25 am

Presentation: Added AP classes. Adding veterinary studies and LPN and certified medical assistant programs. Means our students would not go to Smith for this. Enrollment is cycling back up. This year Buckland has 6 but they expect it to be 9-10 next year.

Capital assessment is going down to \$5,968.84 from \$7,400 since it's not a fixed loan and changes annually. They will send the debt schedule to Heather.

Right now operating expense is going up an average of 3%. Tuition for nonmember towns is about \$20,000 plus special ed plus transportation. Our assessment will be lower in FY21 but higher as our enrollment catches up (a year lag time). Laura Earle is the Buckland board rep.

Franklin Tech folks leave at 11:08 am

**Historical Society.** Mike McCusker and David Roberts arrive 11:00 am

Requested capital funds totalling \$18,000 for repairs to the town building on Upper St. Provided a spreadsheet listing repairs.

Need to look at inspecting the fire escapes across town buildings.

We need a town building audit. Heather will look at our policy for what constitutes "capital" expenses. Town is not responsible for interior touch-up paint or any operating expenses since Historical Society is not a town department. We must keep the building safe.

Accessibility upgrades can probably wait for some grant opportunities. They were asked to come up with a repair schedule over the next 5 years to prioritize needs since the entire request can't be funded all at once.

There is a septic issue at the building that must be attended in the near future.

Mike and Dave leave 11:47 pm

Next meeting is Monday, Feb. 3, at the library. Senior Center is coming at 7 pm

NO meeting on Feb. 10.

Meeting on Feb. 17 at town hall.

Everyone except Fin Com leaves 11:54 am

Meeting adjourned 11:55 am

Respectfully submitted by Paula Consolo

