

**5/3/21**

**Buckland Finance Committee Minutes**

Called to order at 6:00

Attending - Paula Consolo, Larry Langford, Raymond Lanza-Weil, Tim Gaulin, Bruce Lessels (taking minutes), Barry DelCastilho, Heather Butler, Karen Blom

Approved minutes from 4/12/21 as revised - unanimous

HB - changes to budget since last Fin Comm meeting

- selectboard rejected request to fund newly created personnel account from free cash. Suggests we create a personnel reserve fund to fund potential retirement vacation buybacks, recruitment costs (newspaper notices, legal notices, etc). This will be a carryover account that will accrue
- Town clerk requests increasing election expense by another \$2000 in order to increase the salaries of the election workers who are presently being underpaid. HB has asked her to work within confines of FY21 allocation. We will look into changing this for 2023.

KB - election workers are paid between \$8 and \$10 an hour as a stipend. People doing this job presently are getting old and some are not able to do it.

HB - we should not be paying this as a stipend - should be W2 employees. Some of them will have a threshold for their earnings due to pensions or social security.

KB - with \$6000 in election expenses this year we'll be fine, but with an additional election in 2023, we'll have to reconsider this amount.

HB - selectboard has finalized the town clerk hourly wage at \$23 an hour for FY22.

- There's been a suggestion that we add money for police reform act, but chief suggests we don't do that in anticipation of the state possibly providing some funds.
- HB would like to add \$700 to veterans recognition services line in order to put up additional flags on telephone poles
- Trying to get library salary hours to come in line with what they've proposed for their budget request. At this point it matches within \$100
- Health insurance - budgeting for worst case
- selectboard voted to put \$20,000 of free cash toward OPEB. It's already a trust, but if it's in our operating budget, it doesn't come off the levy.
- \$35000 for salt shed engineering
- \$25000 to hwy stabilization for loader
- \$30000 for grant match

Green communities and another grant may provide an opportunity to purchase a hybrid cruiser.

BL - are the new school capital projects included in this year's budget?

LL - capital projects to be voted on this year, but payments won't start until FY23

HB - showed proposed warrant articles related to school capital items

- Chair of selectboard is asking to increase short term rental tax from 5% to 6% which is the maximum allowable.
- Amending bylaws so we don't have to approve revolving accounts each year
- Article re lowering street lighting would require a budget allocation which hasn't been proposed at this point.
- She reviewed other proposed warrant articles

These budget changes result in a \$45,635 surplus

BD - doesn't want to be limited in personnel searches to \$7500 if we need more.

We reviewed the draft memo

When warrant articles are finalized we'll review the memo again

Annual town meeting is on Saturday June 5. Warrant posted on Friday, May 28. Fin Comm should complete our work on the memo by May 24

Adjourned at 7:43 pm