

Minutes
12/14/21 Buckland Finance Committee
Taken by Bruce Lessels

Finance Committee Members Present: Larry Langford, Dena Wilmore, Bruce Lessels, Paula Consolo

Others Present: Heather Butler, Barry DeCastilho

Called to order at 4:02 pm

Review and acceptance November 8, 2021 meeting minutes. Moved by Dena that we approve them with edits by Paula, Dena and Larry. Bruce seconded. Passed unanimously.

Review of budget requests by Town departments. Heather Butler explained that she has encouraged departments to include any foreseeable capital requests in their requests for this year. These are preliminary at this point. Hwy dept is discussing whether to use chapter 90 money for road projects as opposed to equipment purchases or engineering. Chapter 90 is money we receive from Mass DOT each year. We get about \$180,000 annually.

Heather is also populating the finance committee drive with documents detailing assessments for the coming year and with department budget requests. Larry Langford said he's concerned about requests from Franklin Tech and Mohawk in the next several years. He's hoping we can get a sense of that so we can come up with strategies to handle possible significant increases in coming years. We are hoping a representative of Franklin Tech will join us at a finance committee meeting in the near future so we can anticipate their needs in coming years. Heather will arrange to have them join us at our next meeting on January 10.

Heather said that the planning project being done by the Collins Group will focus in part on how we can plan for anticipated capital needs in coming years.

Police budget reflects no shared services, no changes in staffing, despite the ongoing discussions about sharing services with Shelburne. IT services line item will likely increase because present IT provider is not working out. We've asked for quotes to improve or upgrade the server. We don't have the security measures in place that we should have. Level funded building costs. Paula asked why we're doubling the uniform line. Heather isn't sure.

Paula asked why we would pay for wifi at Buckland Rec 12 months of the year since the pool won't be open half the year or more. Heather explained that several of the controls for the pool will be controlled by wifi. This will also let the Rec provide a guest wifi connection that will be used by the public.

Hwy dept is considering renting a chipper instead of owning one. Seemed like a good way to get more work done at a lower cost. Also considering buying a mini excavator. We are hiring two

new people for the highway dept. Both positions are in the present budget. Cost of street lights continue to decline.

We transferred \$20,000 from the hwy dept to building and grounds in order to fund the new position. Next year we will be carrying that full salary from scratch. Some of this salary will come under snow and ice budget.

Discussion of CPA (Community Preservation Act) & ARPA (American Rescue Plan) - Heather put together a summary of the CPA for the selectboard meeting. Is it something we should look at? Will the town agree to it at town meeting? Dena suggested we put together a small working group to look at it.

ARPA - \$552,978. We have received our first two tranches. We have until 12/31/24 to spend the money. Heather suggests a member of the finance committee and a member of the selectboard meet with her to come up with projects this money should fund. Larry suggested a combined CPA/ARPA task force to come up with projects.

Dena said we should keep the two initiatives separate. She sees the CPA task force addressing these questions:

What would be the impact to the community if we took on the CPA?
Do we have projects we want to spend CPA money on?

Community development strategy document - selectboard has been working on it. It hasn't been updated since 2017. Takes goals established at that time and identifies what the town has done and could do going forward. This document could feed projects to both CPA and ARPA.

Copies of the Collins group scope will be handed out at the selectboard meeting tonight.

Public Comments - none

Any other items not reasonably known 48 hours prior to the meeting - none

Meeting adjourned at 4:58 pm. Moved by Dena seconded by Bruce, unanimous.

Next Meeting: 4:00 p.m., Monday, January 10, 2022 (via Zoom)