

**Town of West Boylston
Finance Committees
Meeting of April 11, 2016**

A joint meeting of Fincom and CIB was convened at 7 pm at the town hall. Attending were James Bedard, Chris Berglund, Ray Bricault, Pavel Loven, Jim Marinelli, and Pete Murphy. Absent were Pat Bryant, Dave Eckhardt, and Bill Fay.

A motion was made by Ray Bricault to accept the minutes of meeting for April 5. The motion was approved 6-0.

Police, Computer Administration, and the Schools were scheduled for this Fincom/CIB meeting to discuss operating budgets and capital needs. Computer Administration was not available for the meeting due to a misunderstanding over the date.

Police Chief Dennis Minnich discussed the department operating and capital budgets:

- Salaries increased 4.7% due to a 2% contract increase and buyback costs.
- Overtime costs for FY16 were higher than expected due to officers off work for injuries and dispatch. A budget fix of \$50,000 will be required.
- Purchased Services increased 32.6% due to machine service and warranty contracts. These contracts are necessary because these machines are frequently damaged during booking of arrested individuals.
- Training is increased 28.6% due to a new police officer hire.
- Communication costs remain high due to regionalization. Anticipated regionalization makes it hard to retain dispatch personnel. Consequently overtime is required, often by police officers.
- New training will be required for regionalization due to new Tri-Tech computer software. The cost is estimated at \$72,179 and it is not currently in the budget. Timing is uncertain and this may become a fall town meeting item.
- There was extensive discussion of control of dispatch costs after regionalization. The operating decisions will be made by a Board that will include the town police chiefs. Each town will pay a fee based on population and number of calls. The dispatch center will be staffed based on a state template using call volume. Capital and maintenance costs are not to be included.
- Capital expense in the operating budget is reduced 50% due to no capital cost expect the purchase of a new cruiser. Annual cruiser replacement from the operating budget is working and will continue, 3 cruisers every 4 years.

The Schools were represented by Superintendent Elizabeth Schaper and Administrator Roger Pontbriand. The operating budget was discussed first:

- The salary budget was increased 3.9% by returning Athletics from School Choice (\$87,986) and including a contract 2% salary increase. The salary increase is the first year of a 3 year contract calling for 2% per year.
- Major Edwards and MS instructional costs increased due to a required curriculum material replacement.
- Special Education increased 27.2%. This cost is not discretionary but is entirely determined by the number of students and their needs. Students are expected to age out of the system in coming years but the number of new students moving to town cannot be predicted.
- Vocational tuition (\$1,245,928) has been budgeted for the maximum expected number of students based on applications. Since some applications will not be accepted this cost is expected to decline closer to the School Choice funds received of \$880,000. The Assabet Vocational school costs remain a major cost control problem. The administration is exploring an alternative with Leominster Schools for technical education. This option is being developed with other neighboring towns to offer a vocational education in place of Assabet, and also to have input in the curriculum and cost.
- The school population is targeted between 900 and 1000 students. School Choice fills available openings in Major Edwards and the Middle School. High School openings are only partially filled by School Choice.
- Utility savings from the ESCO project remain uncertain. Heating costs seem to be within target, but electricity is not at the target. Data is being collected and the results will be further reviewed over the summer.
- The three school vans have been a success, saving transportation cost. They are being used regularly and expansion of the program is being considered.

The capital budget was discussed:

- The electric generator of the MS/HS is the only required capital item for the new fiscal year. There is no FEMA or MEMA money available for this purchase, even though the school serves as the emergency shelter. The Town Administrator is looking into available funds from the town insurance company, since the generator can reduce loss risk.
- The Schools have submitted a funding request to the Town Administrator for a fire detection system upgrade that has been declared required by the Fire Chief and the Building Inspector. The Schools were using operating funds to replace detectors as they failed, but a new system controller is required and it cannot operate with the aged detectors. A full replacement is \$20,850 and a funding source has not been determined.
- There are no known school capital needs for the next 5 years other than the completion of the phase 2 ESCO heating system upgrade.

The meeting adjourned at 9:07. Library, Fire and DPW will attend the next meeting.

Pete Murphy
Secretary