

**Town of West Boylston
Finance Committees
Meeting of April 13, 2016**

A joint meeting of Fincom and CIB was convened at 7:06 pm at the town hall. Attending were Chris Berglund, Ray Bricault, Dave Eckhardt, Bill Fay, Pavel Loven, Jim Marinelli, and Pete Murphy. Absent were Pat Bryant and James Bedard.

The meeting minutes of April 11 were not ready for review.

Library, Fire, and DPW were scheduled for this Fincom/CIB meeting to discuss operating budgets and capital needs.

New library Director Anna Shaw was welcomed to her first Fincom/CIB meeting:

- Library salaries were level funded. The retirement of the previous director created some available funding in salaries that was used to increase hours for the director to 40 and the assistant director to 32.5, and cover the step increase for 3 employees. No other salary increases were included. A COLA of 1.5% may be added by the Town Administrator.
- Additional boiler repairs have occurred and will be handled in the FY16 budget. Available funds in payroll should cover the expense. The repairs are to control equipment that was not replaced during the boiler heat transfer equipment replacement.
- The FY16 purchase account is out of money due primarily to higher electricity expenses, even though kw usage is down. The library lost their 10% discount from MLP last year. Saving in natural gas should provide the needed extra funds.
- The carpet in the library needs to be replaced this year. This is a capital item that has been deferred for several years. The new carpet will be tiles at a cost of approximately \$80,000. The library expects to hire a consultant to write the request for proposal at an additional cost.
- The window leakage problem at the library seems resolved. Inspection and maintenance will continue.

DPW Acting Director Michael Kitteridge discussed the operating budget:

- Salaries are level funded due to 2 new employees at starting wages, which made money available for salary increases of 2%.
- All other budget items were level funded except fuel, which was cut 10% due to lower fuel prices.
- Street lighting budget is down 20% due to a reduction negotiated by the Town Administrator with MLP.
- The tipping fee budget is up 2% due to a fee increase.
- The Snow and Ice expense is lower this year but not as much as expected. The DPW Director explained that small storms require less plowing and

more salting, especially if school is open. This combined with the higher salt only cost raised the costs this year.

The DPW capital budget was discussed:

- No generator is requested as a capital item this year. DPW is pursuing a grant for generator purchase together with the Fire Department.
- The loader (DPW's largest equipment item, used for a variety of needs) is unreliable and should be replaced. It is 20 years old and suffers salt corrosion, particularly in the electricals. It is hard to start and is an important piece of emergency equipment for clearing roads of obstacles to open them to fire and police. The cost is \$135,000.
- The plow truck (large dump truck) needs to be replaced with a smaller Ford 550 due to age and deterioration. The cost is \$64,000.
- The salt shed request is still deferred.
- Future capital needs will be discussed with the new DPW Director.

Fire Chief Tom Welch discussed the department operating and capital budgets:

- Salaries increased 4.5% due to a 2% contract increase and overtime costs.
- Purchased Services and supplies were cut to offset the increase in salaries.
- Fire has gone to full time fire fighters on duty 24 hours. The number of on-call firefighters has declined and they are less willing to take late hour assignments. There are only 6 full time firefighters and overtime is needed to cover if one is out, especially overnight.
- Turnout gear cannot be more than 10 years old. Fire is budgeting replacement at 10 years. Fincom suggested that the budget should include a full suit replacement every year.
- Ambulance receipts are declining. The Chief presented data, which showed about a 20% decline, or 150 calls. About 100 calls were lost from the County Jail contract. Unknown additional calls were lost from the nursing home contract. These seem to be largely responsible for most of the decline. The data did show smaller declines for insurance paid calls. The Chief did not think that much can be done to reverse this trend and has no plan.
- Capital expense includes the following:
 - The 3 front garage doors for \$16,000. The original estimate of \$51,000 was for all doors. The other doors have already been replaced or repaired.
 - Engine #3 replacement for \$561,000. This engine is 25 years old and under constant repair. It no longer meets current engine standards. The replacement engine would be a combined fire/rescue vehicle and will take 1.5 years to specify and purchase.
 - Engine #5 replacement is scheduled for FY18 for \$300,000. This is also an older vehicle with maintenance problems. This engine will be discussed further at another meeting.
 - The generator is on hold pending the grant application with the DPW.
 - Turnout gear purchase is currently tabled. This will also be discussed at a later meeting.

The meeting adjourned at 9:35. The next meeting is with the Selectmen to discuss the town meeting warrant articles.

Pete Murphy
Secretary