

**Town of West Boylston  
Finance and CIB Committee  
Meeting of April 11, 2017**

A meeting of Fincom and CIB was convened at 7:00 pm in meeting room 120 at town hall. Attending were Paul Bohnson, Ray Bricault, Jaime Desanti, Bill Fay, Pavel Loven, James Marinelli, and Pete Murphy. Absent were James Bedard, Chris Berglund, and Pat Bryant.

The minutes of the meeting on March 8 were approved by a vote of 6-0-1.

Library Director Anna Shaw and Library Trustee Janet Bricault presented the library budget for FY2018.

- The operating budget is level funded and does not include the request for more custodial hours. Purchased services increased 15% due to an increase in the cost of operations, particularly the cost of electric power.
- The books and materials budget is \$3,000 below the state minimum of 16% of the library budget. The minimum has been met the last few years. A waiver will be requested and is expected to be granted.
- The library heating boilers were discussed. Based on the repairs this past year, the boilers should have at least an additional 5 years of life and are not currently in the capital plan. The Director was requested to discuss this timing with the service company.
- The library window leakage problem still appears to be resolved for the time being.
- The library is requesting capital funding for a new phone system and a copier.

The School Department, Superintendent Schaper, Finance Director Pontbriand, and School Board Chair Pedone, presented the school budgets for FY2018.

- The school operating budget from town appropriation increased 3.3%. This increase includes the 2% COLA and contract salary STEP increases. This budget is year 2 of the 3 year contract.
- Special education costs in the operating budget declined 7.5% due to a decline in student population. Several students reached age 22. This also decreased transportation cost, along with the switch to school owned vans. The total cost reduction is \$63,442.
- Instructional costs for new course materials, the STEAM program, and additional teacher professional development used all of the special education savings. These costs should return to a lower level in the next budget year.
- Technology cost declined in the operating budgets because most of the technology purchases are complete for the time being.
- Building maintenance costs have remained reduced due to the energy savings from the ESCO program. Also roof repairs were effective. Excess

maintenance funds are being used for repairs in the auditorium, bathrooms and gym at the high school.

- The operating budget includes revised costs for out of district education due to the new vocational partnership with Leominster schools. Students will be required to attend the Leominster program, beginning with the 9<sup>th</sup> grade this year, instead of Assabet. The only exception is for specific programs not offered in Leominster. The Leominster tuition is \$10,000 versus \$15,000 for Assabet, a considerable savings for this budget line. These tuitions are set by the state based on school operating costs and are expected to be stable. Transportation will also be addressed with school owned vans or bus.
- The school population is currently 860 plus 171 school choice students. The population continues to decline, a statewide trend that is expected to continue. The state calculated cost per student is \$11,400.
- The need for capital to replace the HVAC units and controls is uncertain. These units and controls seem to be operating adequately with maintenance. There is little potential energy savings in replacement. The schools are satisfied to continue to operate this old system and no capital expense is anticipated.
- A capital plan was reviewed. There are only a few items; the gym and the lockers at the high school.
- There was a discussion of a new school building. There is no building plan. A strategic plan is currently being prepared and may address buildings.
- The schools would like to implement a school stabilization fund, currently allowed by new law. Excess budget free cash would be reserved, up to 2% of the school budget. This money would be used to cover unexpected special education costs, which can be significant. It was pointed out that the town already had a stabilization fund. The difference would be access; the town fund requires town meeting approval, the school fund would require only school committee and selectmen approval. Fincom agreed to discuss the topic further at a future meeting.

The committee again discussed the need to review the Senior Center proposal for the May town meeting. The request for design funds has increased from \$500,000 to \$1.1 million, and the cost estimate is up to \$6.5 million. This discussion will be continued at the next meeting.

The next meeting is Tuesday, April 18 with the DPW and cemetery. The meeting was adjourned at 9:40 pm.

Pete Murphy  
Secretary  
Fincom & CIB