

**TOWN OF ROWLEY
FINANCE COMMITTEE**

**Minutes of Meeting March 26, 2019
Rowley Town Hall**

Finance Committee Attendance: Present were Lawrence White, Chairman, Sharon Emery, Vice Chair, Peter Censullo, Tom Corben, Paul Jalbert, Dennis Roy, David Zizza and Theresa Coffey, Recording Secretary.

Other Attendance: Deborah Eagan, Town Administrator; David Petersen, Board of Selectmen; Bernie Cullen, Board of Water Commissioners; Rob Swiniarski, Chief WTP Operator; Susan Hazen, Town Clerk; Brienne Walsh, Director of Council on Aging; Fire Chief James Broderick; Henry Rolfe

1. Call to Order - Larry White, Chairman, called the meeting of the Finance Committee to order at 7:17 pm with a quorum present.

2. Appointment - Town Clerk – Susan Hazen, Town Clerk, presented the FY 20 budgets for the Town Clerk, Elections, Board of Registrars and Constable. Hazen noted that the Elections budget was revised because it did not conform to the Personnel Board step and grade schedule. The matter was reviewed with the Personnel Board and the election worker wages have been reorganized. The Election budget is variable and is based on the number of elections held during the year. *Jalbert moved to recommend the FY 20 budgets for the Town Clerk, Elections, Board of Registrars and Constable. Roy seconded and the vote was unanimous in favor.*

3. Appointment - Council on Aging – Brienne Walsh, Council on Aging Director, presented the FY 20 budget. Corben disclosed that he is a former board member of the Council on Aging. Discussion was held related to the request for Operating & Programming funds in the amount of \$5,000 to expand services. Walsh reviewed several areas where expanded services are needed. *Emery moved to recommend the Council on Aging FY 20 budget. Corben seconded and the vote was unanimous in favor.*

4. Appointment - Fire Department and Emergency Management – Emery recused herself from the meeting for the Fire Department discussion and vote. Fire Chief James Broderick presented the Fire Department and Emergency Management FY 20 budgets. Updates were made to the budget prior to this meeting and those discrepancies were explained. Utility costs increased in consideration of the new facility and the unknown cost for utilities. This number includes the old fire station. The Station and Equipment Lease is the rent of the station and the forestry truck

payment. This line item is reduced because the forestry truck will be paid off after next quarterly payment and the department will move out of the Hammond Street station as of May 1, discontinuing the rental payment. The increase in the telephone system is the Fire Department's cost for the new Voice Over Internet system, which will replace the telephone system. This will result in an internet cost increase. Shared maintenance services are being worked out with the Police Department. Target move in date for the new station is July 1, 2019. Emergency Management is level funded and a stipend increase for the director.

Roy moved to recommend the Fire Department FY 20 budget. Jalbert seconded and the vote was 6 in favor, 1 recused (Emery).

Emery rejoined the meeting.

Roy moved to recommend the Emergency Management FY 20 budget. Emery seconded and the vote was unanimous in favor.

5. Appointment - Water Department – Bernie Cullen, Chair of Board of Water Commissioners, and Rob Swiniarski, Chief Water Treatment Plant Operator, presented the Water Department FY 20 budget. Discussion was held on following matters:

- Health and Medicare Insurance has been moved under wages. The decrease is due to the reduced staffing level.
- Free Cash certified by the State is \$600,000 and is included in the \$1.7 million stabilization fund.
- Maintenance of Water Mains / Services Lines expenses were combined. Cullen explained that it is difficult to estimate due to the Pine Grove School project.
- Engineering services have gone down due to more prudent use of services.
- A brief discussion was held regarding potential connection to Georgetown. Cullen explained that all is in the planning stages at this point, no commitments have been made.
- Funds continue to be put aside for filter replacement when needed. Excellent water quality can continue with proper distribution cleaning.
- DEP survey compliance was completed under budget. The 2019 survey is ongoing and a portion of that money may be used for the current survey.
- Discussion was held on a rate study and capital projects including replacement of water mains. Cullen noted that the Treatment Plant will be paid off in 2033.
- Ongoing leak detection was discussed, unaccounted water is still high and they are looking for leakages in larger users. Meter replacements are planned.
- Water rates are going down 10% over the next three years. If there is a change in external factors, rates may go down even more. With a better handle on expenses there may not be a need to accumulate such a large amount in the stabilization fund.

Roy commended the department for running so well without a superintendent.

Discussion continued on the staffing issues, the difficulty filling positions and the superintendent position grade and salary.

Roy moved to recommend the Water Department FY 20 budget. Jalbert seconded and the vote was unanimous in favor.

6. FY 20 Budgets

- Town Accountant FY 20 Budget – *Jalbert moved to recommend the Town Accountant FY 20 budget. Zizza seconded and the vote was unanimous in favor.*
- Personnel FY 20 Budget – *Roy moved to recommend the Personnel Advisory Board FY 20 budget. Corben seconded and the vote was unanimous in favor.*
- Harbormaster FY 20 Budget – *Emery moved to recommend the Harbormaster FY 20 budget. Jalbert seconded and the vote was unanimous in favor.*
- Schools – Triton – A lengthy discussion was held on the Triton School Budget. Much effort has been made on the part of town officials to work with the Triton School Committee to develop a budget and assessment that the town can afford. Censullo noted that most of the costs are uncontrollable costs, i.e., Special Education and teacher contracts. The School Committee is working aggressively with the state for more money to fund special education. Discussion continued on the effects of a No vote on the budget. Selectman Petersen explained the process and result of two towns voting No, with the Department of Education becoming involved which may not benefit the towns.

Discussion continued about past experiences, thoughts on how to deal with the schools going forward to set a limit of what the town can afford and the consequences of an assessment that is beyond the town's ability to pay.

Emery moved to recommend the Triton School FY 20 Budget. Censullo seconded. The vote was 4 in favor (Emery, Censullo, Roy, Zizza) and 3 no (White, Jalbert, Corben).

- Schools – Essex Agricultural Technical – Eagan noted that the budget is an estimated cost for 8 students busing and per pupil expense. Actual costs will not be known until the school year begins. The bus is shared by several towns.

Jalbert moved to recommend the Essex Agricultural Technical School FY 20 budget. Corben seconded and the vote was unanimous in favor.

- Schools – Whittier Technical School – *Emery moved to recommend the Whittier Technical School FY 20 budget. Jalbert seconded and the vote was unanimous in favor.*
- Highway Department and Tree Warden FY 20 Revised Budget – Roy recommended that the two additional staff requested remain in the FY 20 budget based on staffing needs and the important work of the Highway Department. Roy discussed staffing needed for planned paving projects and coverage that is needed for absences due to vacations. Roy reminded the FinCom that the position previously eliminated in the Highway Department was never restored so the department is already understaffed. All agreed that road safety is a priority. Eagan recommended that the staffing issue continue to be worked on and to continue discussion at the next meeting.

Emery moved to table the Highway Department and Tree Warden FY 20 budgets to the next meeting on April 2, 2019. Corben seconded and the vote was 6 in favor and 1 no (Roy).

- Blanket Insurance – *Emery moved to recommend the Blanket Insurance FY 20 budget. Roy seconded and the vote was unanimous in favor.*
- Health Insurance – *Emery moved to recommend the Health Insurance, Medicare and FICA FY 20 budget. Roy seconded and the vote was unanimous in favor.*

7. Reserve Fund Transfer Requests

- *Roy moved to approve the Reserve Fund Transfer Request of \$6,300.00 to the FY 19 Annex Budget. Emery seconded and the vote was unanimous in favor.*
- *Roy moved to approve the Reserve Fund Transfer Request of \$4,800.00 to the FY 19 Town Hall Budget. Jalbert seconded and the vote was unanimous in favor.*

8. Review March 19, 2019 Minutes – No action.

9. Set Dates for Future Meetings – The next meeting will be held on April 2, 2019.

7. Adjournment – *Jalbert moved to adjourn. Zizza seconded and the vote was unanimous in favor. The meeting adjourned at 9:45 pm.*

Respectfully submitted,

Theresa Coffey
Finance Committee Secretary

Documents used at or for the meeting:

Agenda of March 26, 2019

FY 20 Budgets

Accountant
Blanket Insurance
Council on Aging
Fire Department and Emergency Management
Harbormaster
Health Insurance
Highway Department and Tree Warden
Personnel
Schools - Essex Tech
Schools - Triton
Schools - Whittier Tech
Town Clerk, Elections, Board of Registrars, Constable
Water Department

Reserve Fund Transfer Request to FY 19 Annex Budget

Reserve Fund Transfer Request to FY 19 Town Hall Budget