

TOWN OF FREETOWN

RECEIVED
FREETOWN TOWN CLERK

Finance Committee

2022 JAN 10 AM 11:12

3 North Main Street / PO Box 438

Assonet, MA 02702-0438

PHONE: 508-644-2201; FAX: 508-644-3342

Minutes of

MEETING: 5:00 PM Thursday, December 2, 2021

Council on Aging, 227 Chace Rd., East Freetown

Chair Gary Martin called the meeting to order at 5:05 PM.

Present: Chair Gary Martin, Bob Alderson, Kent Wilkins, Emily-Anne Dors, Margaret French, Deborah Pettey, Interim Town Administrator, and Kim Johnson, Recording Clerk. Christine Dupras and Katie Calheta were excused.

1. Minutes from 11/4/21-

Margaret motioned to accept the minutes from 11/4/21, as presented, seconded by Emily-Anne. Vote was unanimous.

2. Payment of bill from Moonlight Design for \$1,482.66 for mailing about October Town Meeting -

Bob motioned to approve the payment of \$1,482.66 to Moonlight Design Copy and Print with \$734.66 coming from the Printing budget and \$748.00 from the Mailings/Postage budget, seconded by Kent. Vote was unanimous.

3. Presentation by Interim Town Administrator Deborah Pettey regarding anticipated unbudgeted expenditures for FY 2022-

Interim Town Administrator Deborah Pettey said she came to the meeting to meet everyone on the Finance Committee and gave a list of items to let them all know what is going on and what to expect with the FY 2022 budget:

- a. Injured Police Officer – Deborah said that there is an injured Police Officer, and he has been out for about 6 weeks now and is expected to be out for 18 weeks. He is being paid out of sick time and because he was injured on the job, the Police get reimbursed the insurance money. Some overtime is being paid out to fill in for this Officer being out, and the Police Chief estimated this to be a cost of about \$10,000.00.
- b. Injured Firefighter – Deborah said that there is a firefighter that is out for 6 months with an injury that did not happen on the job. She said when they looked at the estimate using overtime at time and a half, it came out to about \$50,000.00. She said they have thought about hiring a new firefighter, for a cost, with benefits, of about \$38,000.00. She said that Chief Sylvia is retiring in January of 2023, and if they hired a new firefighter at this time, the transition when the Chief retires would be a little smoother. The Fire Department budget would be \$38,000.00 short if they hired a new firefighter at this time.

There was some discussion about salaries, overrides, and reserves. Deborah said that the tax rates were just set. Margaret asked how the firefighter that was injured was being paid. Deborah said that the Fire Department pools their sick leave, and he is being paid from that sick leave pool, at full pay. She said that \$38,000.00 is the potential amount that the Fire Department will be looking to transfer.

- c. Water Enterprise – Deborah said that there have been a couple of expenses that have come up. At some point they will be looking internally to move money within their budget. One of the expenses is an EPA permit that they might

need to get that is \$19,000.00 and their new software needs to coincide with their meters and that cost is \$11,000.00. These expenses were not in their proposed budget.

- d. IT Budget – Deborah said that last year IT budgeted for 20 licenses and there are 47 licensees. She said there were no firewalls in place, so upgrades were needed. Deborah anticipates that IT will be \$15,000.00 to \$20,000.00 off on their budget.

Deborah said the total is about \$98,000.00 with \$30,000.00 from the Water Enterprise and the remaining \$68,000.00 from the Reserve Fund. She asked the committee what they would like to see from her. Gary said that communication is really what they want. Bob said he would like to see a better form, process, or documentation, for times when a Department Head is making a request that needs approval from the Finance Committee. Deborah said she will work on the financial request process. There was some discussion on past budgets and about the schools.

4. Revisit the request to raise the spending authorization of the Long Pond Boat Ramp Revolving Fund to cover the police details, boat, and beach attendants' costs for May-June 2022.

Gary said that they approved a request in September to raise the spending limit by approximately \$1,400.00 and then they came back with another request to raise it a total of \$10,000.00. He said there is nowhere on the form that acknowledged the interim increase and if the Finance Committee were to approve that, there is no place that makes it explicit that it is not being added to the original requested amount of approximately \$1,400.00. He said that the Finance Committee would like a revision to the form so that the total is \$10,000.00. Margaret suggested that it say something like "previously approved for \$1,400.00 and now the total is \$10,000.00". Deborah said she would go back and look at it and work on getting the revised form.

5. Discussion and possible vote on naming a Vice Chair for the Finance Committee.

Gary said that Kent can no longer serve as Vice Chair, and he asked if anyone would be willing to step up to become Vice Chair. Margaret said she is willing, although she is up for re-election. Gary said that when there is no pandemic, he travels in May and June and would need the Vice Chair to be his backup, especially at Town Meeting.

Emily motioned to name Margaret French the Vice Chair until the election in April, and if she gets re-elected that she remains Vice Chair until June, seconded by Bob. Vote was unanimous.

Emily-Anne motioned to adjourn at 5:46 PM, seconded by Margaret. Vote was unanimous.