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Finance Committee  
Combined Meeting with Board of Selectmen  
Meeting Minutes  
Thursday, April 21, 2022, 6:00pm  
Police Station Community Room  
15 Memorial Drive, East Freetown, MA

**Combined Meeting with the Board of Selectmen & Finance Committee**

Discussion/possible action on the following topics:

Margaret French opened the Finance Committee meeting at 5:57pm

Margaret French, Bob Alderson, Emily Dors, Katie Calheta, Christine Dupras from the Finance Committee, Library Director Nicole Davignon, Treasurer/Tax Collector Patty Rodrick, Building Commissioner Jeff Chandler, Fire Chief Gary Silvia, Deputy Fire Chief Harrie Ashley, and Town Accountant Kimberley Fales also joined the meeting.

1. Omnibus Fiscal Year 23 Budget Review with Finance Committee. It is anticipated that Departments will be reviewed. Others may be discussed as may come up or as relates.
  - a. Accounting
  - b. Administration
  - c. Building/Maintenance
  - d. Fire
  - e. Library
  - f. Treasurer/Tax Collector

Selectmen Matthews asked that each Department Head present an overview of their budget and specifically speak about any increases in the proposed Fiscal 2023 budget.

Library Director Nicole Davignon:

Overall budget increase about Nineteen Thousand, Fifteen Thousand was payroll. Most of that was contract related, longevity. The biggest increase was on expenses for books and magazines. The state requires she spends 19% of the budget on materials which includes DVD's, Cd's, audiobooks, also non-traditional like hot spots, puzzles, kids' tips. We need to hit that number to stay in the guidelines of SAILS, to borrow from other libraries. Margaret French asked if any of the employees increased to 36 hours or already. Nicole and Brittany Normandin are at 35 hours and Alyssa Silva was at 33 hours and she increased her to 35 hours this year. Ms. Davignon stated they did 36 hours for coverage of sick and vacation time. Mr. Alderson asked what the library hours were. East Freetown is open 26 hours a week and Assonet is 29 hours a week.

Treasurer/Tax Collector Patty Rodrick:

Section 145: Assistant Treasurer/Collector is now the Payroll Coordinator, and her salary went up.

Longevity and stipend went down. Meeting and training seminars went up. Purchased services went up for a cafeteria plan. State travel went up.

Ms. Pettey stated she asked all departments to raise meeting and trainings budget line to help with employee retention. A cafeteria plan is a separate written plan maintained by an employer for employees that meets the specific requirements of and regulations of section 125 of the Internal Revenue Code. It provides participants an opportunity to receive certain benefits on a pretax basis.

Section 158: Tax Title Professional and Tech- Legal Fees went up, on the advice of Town Accountant Kim Fales. Section 710: Retirement of Debts, went up. Section 751: Long Term Debt, decreased. Section 840: SRPEDD, went up. Section 911: Retirement, went up. Section 914: Health Insurance, went up and Accountant Kim Fales talked about the health insurance. Section 915: Life Insurance stayed the same. Section 916: Medicare went up.

Building Commissioner Jeff Chandler:

Section 241: Building, payroll went up for Facilities Manager and Building Commissioner. Selectmen Matthews suggested in the future, splitting it up and having a smaller salary increase and a stipend for Facilities Manager. Consensus was to have 2% Building Commissioner raise and a Five Thousand Dollar stipend for Facilities Manager. Mr. Chandler noted that printing was increased as he would like to have a pamphlet that inspectors can leave when they do an inspection. \$1,000 increase for building office supplies. Margaret French said we were fine with this budget and asked to move onto Section 242: Gas Inspector and Section 243: Plumbing both went down. Section 245: Electrical has 2 inspectors, 1 in East Freetown and 1 in Assonet. Inspections did go up, so a small increase was needed. Section 192: Town Property Custodial increase in hours. Overtime for snow removal at Police Station went up. Electricity at Police and Fire Stations, Highway Barn, Transfer Station, COA, Libraries went up. Electricity other includes Memorial Park, boat ramp, Hathaway Park. A 30% to 36% increase. Selectmen Zager suggested an equal percentage rate across the board. Heating also went up. Ms. Fales also stated that some items a flat rate won't work. Some buildings have a combination of electric heat. Town Hall building, and grounds went up. Supplies went up. Shoveling went up. Transfer Station Communication Bundle went up due to the cameras and WIFI.

Fire - Fire Chief Gary Silvia and Deputy Harrie Ashley:

Fire Chief Silvia invited Deputy Ashley because he will be retiring halfway through the next fiscal year and Deputy Ashley will be taking over the budget. Deputy Ashley worked hard on this budget and is grateful for Chief Silvia to lean on. Section 220 increased 11%. Most of it was contractual. Several items are more maintenance and repair. Mr. Alderson asked how many firefighters do we have and the process of, if an accident or 2 happen how are the firefighters dispatched? Deputy Ashley answered 13 full time career firefighters including Chief and the Deputy and 18 on call part time firefighters. Selectmen Matthews had no issues with the budget. Mr. Alderson asked about the Fire Retirement Sick Buy Back. Deputy Ashley stated that is the buyback of sick time for Chief Silvia for not ever being sick which is contractual. Katie Calheta asked about the Medical Director fee. Deputy Ashley stated we are required by the state and part of our ambulance license to have a position as our EMS Medical Director.

He works in the emergency room at Charlton. He signs our drug licenses and critiques every medical run we do. As we do in house with the Chief or the Deputy for our quality and medical insurance. It covers us and keeps us on track. Mr. Alderson asked about Page 60 and Fire repairs and maintenance and equipment. Deputy Ashley stated it is for our contracted annual and quarterly breathing apparatuses, calibrating compressors testing. He also asked about the money on vehicles. Deputy Ashley stated our town mechanic do light maintenance. All our vehicles have computers, and everything is electronic controlled. The technology that's in them now is beyond their capacity. He has estimates to send the fire trucks and ambulances to a certified emergency repair facilities that's going to do the annual and chassis maintenance bumper to bumper on each vehicle. Section 291: Civil Defense was good for everyone.

Administration Deborah Pettey:

Section 122: Selectmen budget minor increases. Section 125: Administrators budget increased for the new Town Administrator position and assistants contract increases. Town Administrator Professional and Technical Consulting because we have 2 big positions retiring this year, Fire Chief and Police Chief. The Board may want to hire a firm to replace the Police Chief and will require the funds to do so. Also, money to hire an engineering firm that we may need for preliminary plans for grants. Section 151: Town Counsel was leveled funded. Section 155: Management Information Systems, we had to do a transfer from the reserve fund this year, so there is an increase on software support fees, professional and tech, internet, and replacement equipment. Section 193: Property Insurance. Section 195: Town Report is level funded. Section 912: Workman's Compensation went up a bit. Section 945: Liability Insurance from MIIA quotes. Section 996: OPEB unfunded liability for retirement benefits. Ms. Pettey stated this needs to be bumped up yearly and that we are not where we should be. Section 931: Capital Equipment budget is leases and new purchases. Section 932: Capital Building and other Property Improvement Plan, such as HVAC system for Town Hall. The quotes are for both floors, heating, and air conditioning. The boiler is in tough shape. The other part is to paint the Old School House.

Accounting Kimberley Fales:

Section 135: Accountant expenses are level funded. Personnel are contractual increases. Section 136: Town Audit went up \$250.00.

- Motion made to adjourn made by Selectmen Zager and seconded by Selectmen Lopes.
- Vote: was approved in a unanimous roll call vote
  
- Motion made to adjourn made by Emily Dors and seconded by Katie Calheta.
- Vote: was approved in a unanimous roll call vote

