May 15, 2019

Meeting of the Finance Committee held on Wednesday, May 15, 2019 beginning at 6:30 p.m. in Conference Room #1 in the Town Hall.

Members present: Eric Gregoire, Chairman, Maureen Downing, Joan Cavallo, Richard Moskal, Raymond Yando, Anthony Alves and Beverly Tokarz

Members excused: Susanne Boyea

Ms. Collins was present

First Order of Business: The Pledge of Allegiance

The committee went through their annual re-organization. Mr. Alves was selected as acting chairman. He will hear nominations from the members for the office of Chairperson

Ms. Downing nominated Mr. Gregoire for Chairman; Ms. Cavallo seconded. Mr. Alves called two more times for the nomination for Chairman. Hearing none

The first nomination for Vice Chairman

Mr. Gregoire nominated Ms. Downing, seconded by Mr. Yando. Mr. Alves called twice more for the nomination for Vice Chairman. Hearing none

The first nomination for Secretary

Ms. Downing nominated Ms. Tokarz, seconded by Ms. Cavallo. Mr. Alves called twice more for the nomination of Secretary, Hearing none

Moved by Ms. Downing, seconded by Ms. Cavallo to nominate Eric Gregoire as Chairman
Vote: 7-0 in favor

Moved by Mr. Gregoire, seconded by Ms. Cavallo to nominate Maureen Downing as Vice Chairman
Vote: 7-0 in favor

Moved by Ms. Downing, seconded by Ms. Cavallo to nominate Beverly Tokarz as Secretary
Vote: 7-0 in favor

The meeting was turned back to Mr. Gregoire.

At this time the committee met with Nicole Parker who is interested in becoming a member of the Finance Committee.

Mr. Gregoire welcomed Ms. Parker and asked that she inform the members of her background and what interested her in joining the committee. After a brief statement, questions will be taken from the members.

Ms. Parker: I work for Palmer, which was on my letter and am on several of those committees by default, because I have to be. Once I learned municipality and laws and regulations, even though their different in cities and towns, I wanted to get involved in my own. I became a member of the ZBA and now then I saw that there was a vacancy on the Finance Committee and working closely with my own budget and all of our finances in our town, I thought that I would be a good fit in being able to help you be fiscally responsible in going forward into the future with good intentions and good decisions for the Town of Ludlow.

Ms. Downing: You understand the time constraints, in other words that it gets busy especially during budget time.

Ms. Parker: I do. All our budget times are basically around the same time. The good thing is that my budgets are not usually on Wednesdays. Mine are always on Mondays. So, Mondays I'm out but typically every other day of the week I'm available. I'm really used to working at night and I work weekends. At my other job I work holidays just for outreach to the community. I'm used to working and coming back for meetings.

Ms. Downing: Sometimes it's a once a month thing. We don't meet in the summer, but when it's budget time it's every week for sometimes several weeks. Some people it's hard for them with their children.

Ms. Parker: My children are older now. My older daughter drives, she can bring my other daughter. My husband is very much involved and has been because I do work a lot of evenings.

Mr. Gregoire: As you mentioned, you're a member of the ZBA. I guess that experience opened yourself up to thinking about how finances in Town work and the interaction with Town departments and your perspective on working having a spin on another committee and bringing any lessons that you might have learned there.

Ms. Parker: Your right, as far as the Finance Committee, learning about Town finances on the ZBA. No, we approve permits etc. We don't necessarily have anything to do with the revenue or expenditures or anything like that with the Town. I am familiar with our budgets and attending meetings and Town Meeting and what we spend money on. I certainly am not an expert, but I understand and can catch on quickly when it comes to different budgets and expenditures, revenue, those types of things.

Ms. Downing: A lot of people who have come on the committee in years, some of them don't think that their financially brilliant. I don't think it takes that. I don't think you need to know finances in and out. I think it's common sense, listening, communicating, agreeing to disagree, coming to a common conclusion and I think especially with our committee, we're good, we argue back and forth but always come to a consensus. We always leave any agenda's outside the door and that's important.

Ms. Parker: Yes, I certainly wouldn't want to bring any animosity to the board, especially with Town business and personal. It's separate. I think that my view on the fiscally responsible decisions shouldn't necessarily go outside the door.

Mr. Gregoire: So, from this point our committee would make a recommendation and our appointing authority is the Town Moderator. I might have talked with you before when we went back and forth. Essentially, our committee makes a recommendation to the Town Moderator. He's the appointing authority to the committee, so after tonight we will make that recommendation to appoint you, then you would hear from him for that part of the action. Do you have any questions for us?

Ms. Parker: No, I don't think at this time I have any questions for you.

Ms. Downing: We all must take an Ethics test, which you must be familiar with. You only must take it once.

Ms. Parker: I had to take it for Palmer and the ZBA.

Mr. Gregoire: Your welcome to stay for the remainder of our meeting if you'd like or not. I'll leave that up to you. I would entertain a motion to recommend Ms. Parker to join the committee

Moved by Ms. Downing, seconded by Mr. Yando to recommend that Nicole Parker be appointed to the Finance Committee
Vote: 7-0 in favor

Ms. Tokarz will research when Ms. Fogg's term will end, since Ms. Parker will be replacing her. Ms. Gregoire said they are a three -year term, however it can be an unexpired term for a shorter period of time.

Correspondence:

Memo from the Town Clerk regarding re-organization

Memo from the Town Accountant re: Payroll/Bills Authorization Form. Committee to designate a member to sign for the committee.

Moved by Ms. Downing, seconded by Mr. Alves to appoint Mr. Gregoire as the committee's designee to sign all payroll, bills and authorization forms.
Vote: 7-0 in favor

Copy of a letter from the DPW notifying the Board of Selectmen that they have overexpended their Snow and Ice Removal budget as of February 18th and in accordance with Chapter 44, Sec 31 MGL is requesting that the Selectmen declare a State of Emergency and notify the Department of Revenue. The Selectmen did do that at their April 2nd meeting. Mr. Moskal said this happens every year. Ms. Downing said they never raise the budget. It's the only line item that can be carried over from one year to the other. Even though there wasn't a lot of snow, the DPW put down a lot of chemicals this year. Ms. Collins said that they went over $99,000 this year and a lot of it is overtime.

Memo from the Board of Selectmen reorganizing as follows: Chairman Derek DeBarge, Carmina Fernandes, Vice Chair., Mr. Gonsalves, Mr. Silva and Mr. Rosenbloom as Board members. Mr. Gonsalves will be the liaison to the Finance Committee.

Memo from the Board of Health notifying the committee re: Health Agent position and that the Classification Compensation for this position has been approved at a Level 3 and was included in their budget. Mr. Yando asked if the funds were included in their budget. Mr. Gregoire said the funds are in the budget and went on to explain that their Revolving Fund was decreased and the revenue was used to offset the position. 29

Ms. Cavallo asked to discuss the Article for the DPW at Town Meeting. Mr. Gregoire explained how there was confusion. The Article removing some sections of the job description for the Town Engineer was presented at Town Meeting and the Chairman was advocating against it and created confusion among the Town Meeting members. The Article failed. Discussion continued among the members. Ms. Collins said that Mr. Haluch was speaking on behalf of the board, even though he wasn't the majority when they voted. He was voicing his opinion. On February 4th when they made that decision, she watched the meeting. Mr. Haluch voiced opposition to it. He didn't want the Article. The other issue that wasn't brought up was that the acting director at this time is an engineer, although he doesn't have his stamp. Every one of the Town Meeting members didn't realize that there was an engineer on staff who reviews the Planning Board's applications etc. Ms. Collins said that the member who voted for the deletion was told by HR to just get rid of the wording and in October, she will write them a new job description. The biggest thing is they're not replacing wording with anything. You can't delete all the information and not replace it with different wording. They were under the direction of HR and she would eventually write the job description. It should have been presented at Town Meeting, taking wording out and replacing it with new wording. Ms. Cavallo said that Mr. Haluch assumed that they already have an engineer who is coming on board. Mr. Gregoire said that they do have somebody. Ms. Collins said they have an interim and will maybe make that person the director.

At this time the committee met with Ms. Zepke, Director of the Council on Aging to discuss her request for a Reserve Fund Transfer in the amount of $1,000. She still has $3,210 in her budget. She needs $4,200. The head gasket and breaks need to be fixed on one of their vans. The biggest issue is that the mechanic needs 24 hrs. to repair it. The van is still running. Their looking at the third week of June to repair it. Mr. Alves asked about the life of the van. Ms. Zepke said the van has 77,000 miles on it. The plan is to apply for a grant next year to replace the van. She will order the larger van next week.

Moved by Ms. Downing, seconded by Ms. Cavallo to waive the date on the transfer to today's date
Vote: 7-0 in favor

Moved by Ms. Downing, seconded by Ms. Cavallo to approve $1,000 for the Council on Aging for vehicle repair
Vote: 7-0 in favor

At this time the committee met with Chief Madera to discuss his request for a Reserve Fund Transfer.

The Repair and Maintenance to cover the leasing of radio equipment on a monthly basis is in the negative for $6,371. The original line item budget was $9,829, requesting $9,571. There are no other general expense accounts that have extra money in them. The next item is for software expenditures. This is part of the dispatch upgrades, the operating software lease, licensing fees. This will be called Central Dispatch in the future because it takes care of several departments. Total is $40,000, there was $22,000 appropriated at Town Meeting for the telephone system upgrade. The police side, with no line item, is $8,944. The State has increased their equipment line item, so they will receive incentive monies and an additional amount of money in the amount of $12,500 because they take 911 calls. The State monies will then increase and he can use those monies next year to offset any expenditures for technology or equipment in the 911 dispatch. He said they will have to look at creating an expense line item for dispatch going forward. It is still coming out of the police budget. The two Overtime line items; the Town did allocate $75,000 at the Special Town Meeting. The current numbers have changed. The Overtime department is in the negative for $124,253.34 and the Training area is in the negative for $41,803.95. The Overtime has been used to cover two empty positions and Chapter 111F injuries. That line item is in the negative for $85,000 at this time. That is covering a supervisor who had surgery and the retired officer who was on a long-term injury. There are no monies budgeted for that area. The Chief explained the reasons for the negative funding in all the Overtime accounts. He also spoke about having extra personnel to take away some of the expense of overtime. They are filling 35-45 extra details in Ludlow. The staff is from all areas because they can't fill the personnel. There are probably 4 or 5 officers from Ludlow. The Overtime amount is lower than last year and the year before, because of all the administrative movement that went on with shifts and officers and changing schedules. He is not paying for any training at this time because there is no money. It's equal time which means time off for the officers. He pays for patrolling. He has five people gone for various reasons, which is an entire shift. He's asking for $50,000 for Overtime. Overtime training is $15,000. Ms. Collins said that the Chief came to Finance last year and asked for $82-83,000. He is up to $83,000 this year. She said that one of the issues is that the way that everyone is budgeting he has exactly enough employees listed and the spreadsheet calculates all the salaries out. She feels that the department is budgeted so tight that there is no flexibility. She and Ms. Villano agreed that maybe he should budget for two additional positions to cover those 111F expenses that come out of the department that really shouldn't. Mr. Gregoire asked how they are utilizing the insurance that they bought up into. Ms. Collins said that the problem is that the three people that their paying for at this time are old cases. They can't pull them on the new insurance. Their paying everything out of pocket which only covers medical. It doesn't cover salary. In addition to the fact that Overtime is paying for those positions that he hasn't filled, he's budgeted down to every position. In addition to that the 85k in 111F is higher than it's ever been. She can see whey this year he's in need of so much money. She said going forward in 2021 the thought is to budget for two additional officers. Put it in Chapter 111F which would be beneficial to all of his other line items that he wouldn't have to pull from. Mr. Moskal asked questions about money going back into the General Fund and why can't it be used towards the $20,000 that was taken out of the budget? He also asked how many cruisers do they have. The Chief answered the questions, he is offsetting the funds by no longer auctioning cars. He's trading them in to get the money to put

towards the vehicles. There are 14 cars/cruisers in the fleet. Mr. Gregoire stated the amount of monies needed in various line items: $50,000 in Personnel, Regular Overtime; $15,000 in Overtime Training; $9,571 in General Expenses Department Equipment Repair and Maintenance; $8,944, Service Contract for Central Dispatch software and license fees. Grand Total of $83,515.

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Moved by Ms. Downing, seconded by Mr. Yando to wave the Rules on the dates of all four requests
Vote: 7-0 in favor

Moved by Ms. Downing, seconded by Mr. Alves to approve $8,944 for Service Contracts for the Police Department
Vote: 7-0 in favor

Moved by Ms. Downing, seconded by Mr. Alves to approve $9,571 for Department Equipment Repair and Maintenance for the Police Department
Vote: 7-0 in favor

Moved by Ms. Downing, seconded by Mr. Alves to approve $50,000 for Regular Overtime for the Police Department
Vote: 7-0 in favor

Moved by Ms. Downing, seconded by Mr. Alves to approve $15,000 for Overtime Training for the Police Department
Vote: 7-0 in favor

The next meeting will be held on June 19, 2019. Year end transfers will be discussed.

Moved by Ms. Downing, seconded by Mr. Alves to adjourn the Finance Committee meeting at 8:20 p.m.
Vote: 7-0 in favor

Ludlow Finance Committee