June 15, 2022

Meeting of the Finance Committee held on Wednesday, June 15, 2022 beginning at 6:00 p.m. in the Selectmen's Conference Room, Town Hall.

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Members present: Maureen Downing, Chairman, Susanne Boyea, Joan Cavallo, Richard Moskal, Aneta Lombardi, Michael Lafever and Beverly Tokarz

Members excused: Matt Goncalves

Kimberly Collins and Marc Strange were also present

First Order of Business: The Pledge of Allegiance

The committee discussed Interdepartmental Transfers. This is the time when all of the departments can transfer money needed in one part of their budget to another part. Every transfer has to be approved by the Finance Committee.

Police Department: Requesting $400 for the Animal Control Officer. The money will come from Police Dispatch, All Other Professional Services and transferring it into Other Professional Services for Animal Control.

Ms. Collins explained that the DPW pays for all fuel up front. As people fuel up at the DPW station the cost are allocated out to the departments. There is another transfer from the Police Department for $6,400 in expenses for the Animal Control, but in addition there is the transfer for the fuel costs. She doesn't expect the cost to be over $400.

Moved by Mr. Moskal, seconded by Ms. Cavallo to approve the transfer of $400 to the Police Department Animal Control Account.
Vote: 7-0 in favor

Board of Selectmen: From Treasurer Fringe Benefits in the amount of $73,129.76. Transferred into Property Liability Insurance.

Mr. Strange said the new Harris Brook School Building and the Central Office Building and vacated buildings had to secure insurance policies. They added two new buildings to the existing policy and took out three other policies for the vacant buildings.

Moved by Mr. Moskal, seconded by Ms. Cavallo to approve the transfer of $73,129.76 from Fringe Benefits Treasurer to Property Liability Insurance.
Vote: 7-0 in favor

Treasurer: Transfer from the Health Insurance Account to the Salary Accounts of Fire Salaries, $65,000; $15,000, EMT Salaries; $70,000 Police Salaries for a total of $150,000 to Town Health Insurance.

Ms. Collins said that the Town is paid on a weekly basis and every 6 to 10 years there are 53 pays instead of 52 pays. They budgeted for 52 pays and there were 53 this year because everyone got paid on June 30th. Some of the larger departments will run into problems. Fire, Police and EMT are three of those departments. She would like to reserve this transfer. The amounts could

be smaller but the transfer would not exceed $250,000, which is the weekly payroll for the Town. The reason there is so much money in the Treasurer Fringe Benefits budget is because during COVID, they were given a health insurance holiday which saved ½ million dollars in health insurance costs. That money will be used to cover the week of additional salaries. When Ms. Collins receives the payroll, she will update the request. The Selectmen will be reviewing the transfers on the 15th. The Finance Committee could approve up to $250,000. She would know the exact total on the 15th. The transfer request will be adjusted to say "not to exceed $250,000".

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Moved by Mr. Moskal, seconded by Ms. Cavallo to approve the Treasurer's Interdepartmental Transfer, to cover the 53 week pay period, not to exceed $250,000 for final approval by the Board of Selectmen on July 12th.
Vote: 7-0 in favor

Police Department: From Dispatchers full time salaries in the amount of $40,000, $4,400, $2,000 and regular EMT salaries in the amount of $7,000 for a total of $53,400. The amount to be transferred into Vehicle Upfit for $40,000; All Other Purchases for $4,400; Appointed Officials ACO's salary, Energy Expenses for $7,000.

Moved by Mr. Moskal, seconded by Ms. Cavallo to approve the Police Department's Interdepartmental Transfer in the amount of $53,400.
Vote: 7-0 in favor

Council On Aging: Transfer from Food Supply in the amount of $2,915.68 to WestMass Eldercare.

Moved by Ms. Cavallo, seconded by Ms. Boyea to approve the Council on Aging Interdepartmental Transfer in the amount of $2,015.68.
Vote: 7-0 in favor

Recreation Commission: transfer $2,000 from the Head Lifeguard Payroll, into Food for $2,000.

Moved by Ms. Cavallo, seconded by Ms. Boyea to approve the Recreation Commissions Interdepartmental Transfer in the amount of $2,000.
Vote: 7-0 in favor

Building Inspector: Transfer from All Other Professional Services in the amount of $2,200 to Appointed Officials.

Ms. Collins said that they have been short staffed in that department. They wanted to hire a temporary person to help the Administrative Assistant. The Building Inspector is no longer working for the Town. They had to give him a pay-out. Those two expenses total $2,200. Mr. Strange said that there are two temporary inspectors. An Inspector from South Hadley works on Monday, Wednesday and Friday and an Inspector from Belchertown who does inspections on Tuesday's and Thursday's.

Moved by Mr. Moskal, seconded by Ms. Cavallo to approve the Interdepartmental Transfer for the Building Department in the amount of $2,200, to cover expenses.
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Fire Department: Transfer out of EMT Paramedic Salary $16,000; Ambulance Overtime, $7,000 into Vehicle Repairs and Maintenance for $16,000 and Ambulance Medical Supplies for $7,000.

Ms. Collins said that the Chief prepared an explanation. The salary account overage is due to vacant firefighter positions throughout the year. The EMT Overtime money is available because of coverage that they were unable to fill. The funds are going into the maintenance of vehicles due to costly maintenance and repairs and to purchase medical supplies used on the ambulance.

Moved by Mr. Moskal, seconded by Ms. Cavallo to approve the Interdepartmental Transfer for the Fire Department in the amount of $23,000 from EMT salaries to Vehicle Repair and Ambulance Medical Supplies.
Vote: 7-0 in favor

Department of Public Works: Moving out of Laborer's Salaries, $8,000; Appointed Officials, $9,400 and Laborer's Salaries, $142,800, for a total of $244,800. Transferring into Purchaser Contractual.

Ms. Collins said the majority of the Interdepartmental Transfer is for the Wilbraham Bridge. The department is down laborer's, the DPW did not have a director for the majority of the year. They are using that money to cover the bridge payments which total almost $200,000. The rest of the funds are for dam inspections, driveway repairs, brush grinding and traffic signal repairs.

Mr. Moskal found a discrepancy in the amounts requested and the transfer itself. Ms. Collins said those are the outline of the majority of the costs. She's not sure if they included every single item. There are also fuel and utility costs that need to be covered. Ms. Downing said that Mr. Santos would like to cover the cost inhouse and advised him to take the funds out of their salary accounts.

Moved by Ms. Cavallo, seconded by Ms. Boyea to approve the Interdepartmental Transfer for the DPW in the amount of $244,800 for repairs of the Bridge and associated costs.
Vote: 6-0-1 in favor. Mr. Moskal abstained

Mr. Moskal said that he had a discussion with Mr. Santos. Mr. Moskal knew about the bridge, but was shocked at the request.

Veterans Services: Remove $2,000 from the Burial and Flags Account and Veterans Benefits, $11,000 and transfer $2,000 into the General Fund and $11,000 into Equipment.

Mr. Strange said that Mr. Segundo would like to purchase another shed for storage.

Moved by Mr. Moskal, seconded by Ms. Cavallo to approve the Interdepartmental Transfer for Veterans Services in the amount of $13,000 from the Veterans Benefits Burial Account, General Fund and Equipment.
Vote: 7-0 in favor

Town Clerk: Transfer from Elections and Registration, $6,050 and move it into Town Clerk line item to archive very old documents.

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Moved by Mr. Moskal, seconded by Ms. Cavallo to approve the Interdepartmental Transfer for the Town Clerk's Office in the amount of $6,050.
Vote: 7-0 in favor

Board of Assessors: Transfer from Purchases and Contracts the amount of $3,000 and move into Appointed Officials.

Ms. Collins said that the Assessor has already gone through his extra payroll and is anticipating a shortage in his line item for payroll.

Moved by Ms. Cavallo, seconded by Ms. Boyea to approve the Interdepartmental Transfer for the Board of Assessors in the amount of $3,000.
Vote: 7-0 in favor

Mr. Moskal reported on the Senior Center issues. He handed out spreadsheets of a detailed budget of all that has been done for the committee's review. He indicated that there is $515,000 left over from the building project after all the expenses, including invoices that are in the process of being paid for. The only thing that is not calculated for is the possibility of expanding the parking lot. There are funds to do a survey to find out what the cost would be. There could be twenty spaces added. They would like to do the survey. He believes the cost would be less that $100,000. He would like to know what will happen to the balance of the money.

Ms. Collins said that the money will sit in the account until they close out the borrowing and at that point (the money has already been borrowed) they would have to use the money for a future project that is the same timeframe as the Senior Center Project. Mr. Moskal asked about the meeting that the Selectmen had a few weeks ago, where the Treasurer asked to take additional funds. All the money was taken out for the Senior Center and not for the Harris Brook School. Ms. Collins said that the Selectmen has to sign anytime the Treasurer borrows money. She was under the impression that the Treasurer had already borrowed all the money for the Senior Center. If she was borrowing, she was most likely borrowing for the Harris Brook School. Mr. Strange didn't know the answer, he will inquire. Mr. Moskal thought it strange that Ms. Barros was looking to borrow money. Ms. Collins said that money cannot be taken from one authorization and moved to another until everything is closed out. She would have to fund the school separately for those authorizations. She would have to fund the Senior Center, but that money sits within that project. She can't take it and use it for the school. Mr. Moskal asked why all the money wasn't borrowed for the school? Ms. Collins said that the school is run by the MSBA. Their strict about how they do their cash flows. They determine how much money will be spent. They have a project manager that does that and that is what Ms. Barros would rely on for borrowing in a timely manner. There wasn't a state agency involved to take care of the Senior Center. Ms. Barros would be borrowing based on the cash flow and if she felt that the project was going to be complete and all the money needed to be borrowed, she would have done that. Ms. Downing said as opposed to being regulated as to sections of what could be borrowed and when. The questions that Ms. Downing has is that they are almost 2 million dollars under budget,

why would they be borrowing a half million dollars. Ms. Collins felt that it would be best to speak with the Treasurer. Ms. Lombardi asked what a PCO was. It is a Project Change Order. Mr. Moskal said that there will be a generator coming in. There is a concrete slab that was poured. There needs to be a modification to the slab and that would be an expense. He believes after all is said and done the amount of money remaining would be in the vicinity of $475-500,000.

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Moved by Ms. Cavallo, seconded by Mr. Moskal to approve and sign the Finance Committee Minutes of May 4, 2022, as indicated.
Vote: 4-0-3 in favor. Ms. Boyea, Ms. Lombardi and Mr. Lafever abstained

Ms. Downing made a plea to the television audience that the Finance Committee needs members and if anyone is interested, please contact Mr. Strange or the Board of Selectmen. She would appreciate any help.

This is Ms. Downing's last meeting, she thanked everyone for all of this cooperation through the years and working together was a pleasure and is very much appreciated. She also thanked Beverly Tokarz and Joan Cavallo as they will also be leaving the committee.

Moved by Mr. Moskal, seconded by Ms. Cavallo to adjourn the Finance Committee Meeting at 6:42 p.m.
Vote: 7-0 in favor

Ludlow Finance Committee