FINANCE COMMITTEE
Town of Becket
557 Main Street
Becket, MA 01223

Meeting Minutes for March 5, 2020

PRESENT:
Finance Committee (FC): Ron DeFoe (RD); Ann Spadafora (AS); Chuck Garman (CG); Mark Karlberg (MK)
Town Administrator: William Caldwell (WC)
Highway Superintendent: Chris Bouchard
Fire Chief: Paul Mikaniewicz
Board of Selectman: William Elovirta (WE)

Meeting was called to order by AS at 5:30 PM. Dan Parnell was remotely participating due to geographical reasons. Since there was a member participating remotely all votes were roll call votes.

AGENDA:

• Meeting minutes
  • Approve minutes February 6, 2020 FC meeting
    • Accept minutes as written
    • Moved by CG and seconded by RD. Approved; AS – aye; CG - Aye; MK- abstain (was not present); RD – aye; DP-aye

• Correspondence and Transfers
  • None

• Administrator’s input
  • Budget & Capital Acquisition Update for FY 2021
    • Highway Department
      • Requests are to replace trucks 1, 2 and 5
        • Priorities are 2, 1 and 5
        • Hoping for a trade value of $40k on truck 2 (large plow truck); replacement would have a combination body (no need to install/remove sander)
      • Transfer station operation continues to be a challenge due to little/no market for recyclables
        • Keeping improper materials out of recycling will be critical to help control costs
    • Fire Department
      • NFPA and OSHA requirements are adding required safety procedures, inspections, physicals, etc.
      • BFD feels that a command vehicle would be beneficial to meet current needs
  • Tax/title
    • Working on a new letter
    • Have consumed available funds and will likely need transfer of funds
later this FY

- Have increased 2021 tax/title budget from $25k to $35k

- Dilapidated properties
  - House on Benton Hill that should to be demolished this year if possible
  - This will require a transfer later this year (assuming we get a reasonable estimate)

- Budget
  - Working on COLA of 2.5%
    - Our town wages are falling behind competitive rates and we are having trouble hiring new employees
  - CBRSD request is only 0.5% increase
  - Increase in tax/title as we have over $1 M in delinquent properties
  - Requested salary increases above COLA
    - Town Clerk (to match hourly rate of treasurer)
      - Current rate is in line with other towns
      - WC recommends we stay with COLA increase
    - Police Department
      - WC recommends 5% for full time officers to be in line with other towns to aid in officer retention (2.5% for Chief and part time officers)
      - Money will be required to modify the police station rooms in Town Hall (priority due to recent incident)
    - WC recommends Highway Superintendent increase be considered
    - Conservation Commission wants to increase Agent's pay with contribution from Wetlands Fund
      - Needs to be analyzed/evaluated
  - Becket Arts Center
    - FC recommends $10 k for 2021 only as seed money (non-reoccurring)
    - FC intent is BAC will be self-sufficient (not require town operating contribution) from 2022 onward

- Capital Budget Recommendations
  - Town Hall parking lot repaving
    - Seeking grant
  - Highway
    - Borrow for truck #2 replacement
    - Cover truck #1 replacement with free cash
    - Defer to 2021 truck #5 replacement
  - Ambulance
- Cardiac monitor will come from Ambulance Stabilization Fund
- Arts Center Painting
  - Proceed as requested ($2,432)
- Athenaeum Repairs/Maintenance
  - Proceed as requested ($7,500)
- Parks and Rec Maple Pavilion
  - Look at funding through Community Preservation
- Town Hall Maintenance (primarily flooring)
  - Proceed as requested ($15k)
  - We should consider a new generator (in conjunction with Broadband rather than having 2)
- Fire Department
  - We should reassess after looking at current and 2021 operating budget

- Broadband Project Update
  - Hut is going well
  - Things are proceeding; no new news

- Other business
  - None

- Adjourn meeting
  - MK moved to adjourn meeting at 7:35 PM. CG seconded. Approved
    AS – aye; CG- Aye; MK- aye; RD – aye; DP- aye

Next meeting: Thursday, March 26, 2020 at 5:30 PM followed by joint meeting with BOS April 2 at 6:00 PM

Respectfully Submitted by Ron DeFoe
Approved by Dan Parnell, Chair

3/26/2020