

**TOWN OF WEBSTER
FINANCE COMMITTEE**

*Michael Finamore, Chairman
Sarah Sansom, Vice Chairman*

Town Hall, 350 Main Street, Webster, Massachusetts 01570

MINUTES
May 24, 2016

PRESENT: Jim Bazinet, Joe Beresik, Neil Dixon, Mike Finamore, Earl Gabor, Stanley Lenky, Carol Marchand and Sarah Sansom

ABSENT: Julie Dell'Anna

The meeting of the Finance Committee was called to order at 5:02 PM in the Board of Selectmen's meeting room in the Town Hall by Chairman Mike Finamore. A moment of silence was observed for Officer Robert Tarentino Jr. of the Auburn Police Department who was killed in the line of duty.

Budget

Acting Town Administrator Pam Leduc was in attendance to present the FY17 budget. She said she will take \$8,000 from the Police Department Gasoline 210) and transfer to the Senior Center Heating Fuel account (541), and no changes to Health Insurance. In response to a question about 15% increases to town employees and the possibility of other changes unknown at this time, Ms. Leduc indicated there would be some changes in certain line items, but no change to the bottom line from the budget that was presented to the Finance Committee on April 7th. *Motion was made by Chairman Finamore and seconded to rescind the Finance Committee's vote of April 7th where they accepted the budget as presented. Vote: Yes-7; Abstain-1; motion carried.*

It was noted that the salary of Executive Secretary to the T/A was \$41,920 in FY16, and in the FY17 budget it is \$52,303 (a 27% increase). Question was asked if she intended to lower the amount for the T/A's secretary as there is not a permanent T/A in place and she said she would not. Ms. Leduc stated the T/A's office needed this position, similar to that of the Executive Secretary to the Police Chief and the Board of Selectmen, and she had the support of the Board of Selectmen. She indicated the other Executive Secretaries (Police and Board of Selectmen) are much the same, but the Executive Secretary to the T/A would take on additional duties such as responsibility for Human Resources. Regarding the new Town Administrator, the salary ranged advertised with the position is between \$125,000-150,000 and it is expected a person should be in place by September 4th (Labor Day weekend)

Question was asked about the SWCC budget (211). Ms. Leduc said it was \$558,916 in FY16 and in FY17 is at \$569,902 and indicated Webster's share is 70.3% and Dudley's 29.7% \$62,683, calculations based on number of 911 calls and the population. The Director's position is funded by a grant from the State Department of Public Safety with a 3% increase in salary based on performance evaluation.

The Treasurer's position was discussed, noting the salary was \$10,000 for the elected official's position while working approximately 10 hours/week in addition to his regular full-time job with the Town. The newly elected Treasurer has the necessary credentials for the position, which is 31-1/2 hours, accountable to the Town, and salary in FY17 is \$55,212. She indicated that the foreclosure properties auctioned off by Zecco brought in approximately \$265,000 and the only cost to the Town was about \$5,000 to clean them up. When properties are foreclosed they are written off when the Town takes over the property; the purchaser is responsible for the property once sold. The net revenue for the 10 properties goes into the General Fund. Ms. Leduc said the Treasurer, Collector, Town Clerk and Assessor are all elected positions. There was discussion with regard to talking about combining the Collector and Treasurer positions in the past, with past T/As, as other towns do, but it was never passed. Ms. Leduc stated that during the DOR audit in 2004 it was strongly suggested that the Treasurer/Collector positions be combined and be appointed.

Question was raised regarding the three (3) positions defeated by Prop 2-1/2 (two patrolmen and one DPW person) asking why not wait three months until a new T/A is in place; Ms. Leduc said she is responsible for determining priorities for FY17 as she was appointed to do the T/A job by the Board of Selectmen. Ms. Leduc was asked about her goals/objectives and she said she has provided a balanced budget and is meeting with department heads, has an excellent understanding of the departments. It was again brought up by the Chairman that Ms. Leduc increased salaries and created new positions while Acting T/A, rather than wait until September when a new T/A would be in place to make those decisions, not live with those made now. She indicated she put the increases and positions in place to move the Town forward; the Sr. Clerk (union position) was put into the Health Agent position in the FY17 budget at \$68,262 and the Director of Planning & Economic Development (new position) in FY17 at \$70,269. When asked if all contracts with Clerical, Police and DPW were done, Ms. Leduc stated she has reached tentative agreement with all three. She indicated there is \$100,000 to negotiate and if funds left, can be allocated to Prop 2-1/2 items. It was the feeling of the Finance Committee members that the voters spoke loud and clear and would not be beneficial to resurrect.

There were several residents in the audience who had questions of Ms. Leduc with regard to the full-time Treasurer position and Ms. Leduc said it is 31-1/2 hours. When asked about combining Treasurer/Collector if doable, Ms. Leduc said she was in favor of the combined position being appointed. Another resident stated he felt the process and information provided prior to the Town meeting is inadequate and with the lack of information, very difficult to make decisions. Question asked about "unpaid bills" and what the amount was and why not in the article; actual bill was from December 2014 and amount was approximately \$96. Article 5 was another with no dollar amount. The individual stated he sent questions to both Ms. Leduc and the Board of Selectmen via e-mail and received no response.

It was suggested by Ms. Sansom that Ms. Leduc include assumptions, disclosures and verbiage to help voters understand the budget and questions they might have. Ms. Leduc stated she had other priorities but would strive to do better. Question on free cash and Ms. Leduc said it is not yet certified so not public information. Mr. Beresik asked if Ms. Leduc had completed Schedule A, which is due November 30; she said it was done two weeks ago. Motion was made by Joe Beresik and seconded to allow the School Committee members in the audience to come forward and make their presentation regarding their warrant articles. Vote was unanimous; motion carried.

Dr. Malkas and Mr. Avlas were present to update the Finance Committee and provide numbers for the Annual Meeting Warrant Articles concerning the school. **Article 9:** To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate, borrow or transfer from any available sum in the treasury, an amount sufficient to fund the purchase of technology devices for Bartlett High School and Webster Middle School or take any action thereon. *Mr. Avlas said the original plan was a 3-year lease if Prop 2-1/2 override passed and their plan was to provide devices for all in Grades 5-12. The School Committee will be meeting on Thursday, May 26, and will determine the \$\$ for the article. He explained there were many steps necessary prior to purchasing the devices. First, the school needed to have the correct bandwidth which was done with Charter Communications two years ago; second was to have wireless infrastructure connectivity, which was done last year at a cost of \$240,000. This is for the Middle School and High School, state-of-the art; same as Park Avenue. Cost for both buildings \$90,000; grant for \$150,000. Third, the number to cover Grades 5-12 and a few extra reserves would be about 1,200 and charger carts needed. Cost estimated to be approximately \$244,500 for all and this will be brought to the School Committee, as stated on Thursday night.* It was noted that the trend seems to be to lease devices, and it was initially the goal to lease, but Mr. Avlas said in checking the price is almost identical for the Lenovo Chrome. Dr. Malkas said the child information protection act requires the school to put the software on the devices which blocks access to the internet and social media sites. **Article 18:** To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate, borrow or transfer from any available funds in the treasury, a sum sufficient for the purpose of funding repairs and repaving of the Bartlett High School grounds including driveways, sidewalks and entrances, and to provide directional signage throughout the campus or take any action thereon. *Mr. Avlas said it cost \$40,000 last year out of free cash to fix the sidewalks and driveway to/from the school. They want to finish the remaining sidewalks and repair the student parking lot; they have a quote for \$12,600. There is no signage; did some last summer quote received for 5-6 signs driving in/out approximately \$4,808; total cost to do both is \$17,408 which they will bring to the School Committee on Thursday night.* Mr. Beresik congratulated Dr. Malkas for her work done in Webster and leaving to "go back home."

The Senior Center in the budget shows four (4) full-time personnel, who in addition to salary receive benefits/vacation time, and the park-time clerk is not in the FY17 budget. The Health Agent and Director of Planning & Economic Development are both considered department heads; the health agent was formerly the senior clerk and the Assistant Planner was full-time and not being replaced. The Conservation Agent is 10 hours/week. The Custodian for the Senior Center/Town Hall in FY16 was paid \$12,262 and will be going from 35 to 40 hours and FY17 salary is \$22,268.

Water Department Budget - The Board of Selectmen will be meeting on Wednesday, May 2 to set the rates. Ms. Leduc said we are no longer on "Water Watch" and commended Mr. Krause for doing such a great job and he will be staying through December 2016. Account 511036 Operations Manager was \$32,750 in FY16 and the FY17 proposed budget is \$65,250. Account 519005 Unused Sick Leave Payment has zero in the FY17, person is retiring. The FY16 budget for Water was \$594,983 and for FY17 is \$635,384.

Sewer Department Budget - Question was asked regarding 534001 Telephone account why FY16 was \$8,000 and FY17 is \$4,000; Ms. Leduc will check. Said Town has benefitted from National Grid incentives; reduction of about \$50,000/year. Account 511051 Administrative Assistant salary FY17 \$53,203; was told it is in line with the other Executive Secretaries (Police/BOS/TA) and person has been in that position 30 years. The FY16 budget for Sewer was \$4,297,601 and for FY17 \$4,032,310. The ice pigging was successful and will do again this year in August.

Annual Meeting Warrant Article 8 "To see if the Town will vote to raise by taxation, transfer from any available funds or issue notes or bonds, including borrowing from the Massachusetts Clean Water Trust, a sum sufficient for the purpose of financing the construction of a Water Treatment Plant ..." Mr. Gabor asked Ms. Leduc if all interest accrued from this trust fund would be transferred to the General Fund, noting there should be a significant amount of interest going back to the 90s when the trust was created.

SPECIAL TOWN MEETING WARRANT ARTICLES

ARTICLE 1: To hear and act upon the report and recommendations of the Board of Selectmen and the Finance Committee.
Sponsored by the Board of Selectmen

ARTICLE 2: To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate or transfer from any available funds in the Treasury, a sum sufficient to the Town Administrator Unpaid Bills Account for the purpose of funding the payment of prior years' unpaid invoices; or take any action thereon.
Sponsored by the Acting Town Administrator; *Acting T/A - one bill for \$96.00 from December 2014*

ARTICLE 3: To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate or transfer from any available funds in the Treasury, a sum sufficient to the Sewer Unpaid Bills Account for the purpose of funding the payment of prior years' unpaid invoices; or take any action thereon.
Sponsored by the Acting Town Administrator; *Acting T/A - pass over*

ARTICLE 4: To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate or transfer from any available funds in the Treasury, a sum sufficient to the Water Unpaid Bills Account for the purpose of funding the payment of prior years' unpaid invoices; or take any action thereon.
Sponsored by the Acting Town Administrator; *Acting TA - pass over*

ARTICLE 5: To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate or transfer from any available funds in the Treasury, the sum of \$22,500.00 to the Police Custodial Services Account, or take any action thereon.

Sponsored by the Acting Town Administrator; Acting T/A – pass over

ARTICLE 6: To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate or transfer from any available funds in the Treasury, the sum of \$22,176.00 to the Unused Sick Leave Payment Account for the purpose of funding the payment of unused sick leave to James A. Chauvin pursuant to the provisions of Article 22 of the collective bargaining agreement between the Town of Webster and SEIU Local 888 (DPW Unit); or take any action thereon.

Sponsored by the Acting Town Administrator; Acting T/A – will come from the Town Administrator Salary Account; individual is committed to retire 10 days after the Town Meeting (6/17)

ARTICLE 7: To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate or transfer from any available funds in the Treasury, the sum of \$4,620.00 to the Earned Vacation Payment Account for the purpose of funding the payment of accrued vacation leave to James A. Chauvin; or take any action thereon.

Sponsored by the Acting Town Administrator; Acting T/A – will come from the Town Administrator Salary Account

ARTICLE 8: To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate or transfer from any available funds in the Treasury, a sum sufficient to the Senior Center Heating Fund Account; or take any action thereon

Sponsored by the Acting Town Administrator; Acting T/A - \$5,000 will come from the Town Office Fuel Account

ARTICLE 9: To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate or transfer from any available funds in the Treasury, a sum of \$75,000.00 to the DPW Snow and Ice Account; or take any action thereon.

Sponsored by the Acting Town Administrator; Acting T/A – will transfer from free cash

ARTICLE 10: To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate or transfer from any available funds in the Treasury, a sum sufficient to the Unemployment Compensation Account; or take any action thereon.

Sponsored by the Acting Town Administrator; Acting T/A – will transfer \$15,000 from the Town Administrator Salary Account

ARTICLE 11: To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate or transfer from any available funds in the Treasury, the sum of \$45,000.00 to the Stabilization Fund; or take any action thereon.

Sponsored by the Acting Town Administrator; Acting T/A – for Hovercraft

ARTICLE 12: To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate or transfer from any available funds in the Treasury, the sum of \$250,000.00 to the Stabilization Fund; or take any action thereon.

Sponsored by the Acting Town Administrator; Acting T/A – to repay account

ARTICLE 13: To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate, borrow or transfer from any available funds in the Treasury, the sum of \$150,000.00 to replace two (2) sections of roof on the Thompson Road Fire Station, or take any action thereon. Sponsored by the Fire/Rescue Department; *Acting T/A – quote from Fire Chief of \$535,205 – not enough dollars in free cash*

ARTICLE 14: To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate, borrow or transfer from any available funds in the treasury, a sum sufficient for the purpose of funding repairs and repaving of the Bartlett High School grounds including driveways, sidewalks and entrances, and to provide directional signage throughout the campus; or take any action thereon. Sponsored by the Webster Public Schools; *Acting T/A – quote of \$17,408.00*

ARTICLE 15: To see if the Town will vote to amend Chapter 253 of the General Bylaws as follows:

253-1. Notice of meeting.

Notice of every Town Meeting shall be given by publishing notice of the warrant in a newspaper of general circulation within the Town at least seven days preceding the meeting in the case of Annual Town Meeting, and at least fourteen days preceding the meeting in the case of Special Town Meetings, and posting attested copies of the complete warrant in the Office of the Town Clerk, the Town Library, and on the Town website in a legible fashion.

Sponsored by the Acting Town Administrator and Town Clerk

The Finance Committee will vote on the warrant articles at their June 2nd meeting.

Next Meeting

The next meeting of the Finance Committee will be held on Thursday, June 2 at 7:00 PM in the Board of Selectmen’s meeting room in the Town Hall. There being no further business, meeting adjourned at 8:40 PM.

Christine Jackel, Secretary

Michael Finamore, Chairman - Accepted