Finance Committee Meeting

Monday, January 22, 2019

Meeting was called to order at 7:05pm. Present included Chairman Kristian Whitsett and member Shelley Roberts, Jackie Walsh, and Deborah Andrew

**Minutes:** The board passed the minutes from its Jan. 7 meeting.

**New Business**

**Special Town Meeting Items:**

The committee discussed five Special Town Meeting warrant items. They are requests for: $432 for a new treasurer’s computer, $2,568 to pay for blacktopping that was done last year, $4,332 as a first payment on the 623 Mohawk Trail property being turned into the police station, $150,000 for renovations at the new police station and a transfer of $260,329 from Free Cash to the Stabilization Account.

The committee mostly dicussed the police station renovations. Kristian said some of the money is slated to be used for a bathroom and ventilating and draining the Sally port.

Members did not think they had sufficient information to vote on any of the items. They are meeting with the Select Board Wednesday, Jan. 23, and hope to get more information there. Jackie is going to contact the police chief to see if he is attending and whether he has the time before to prepare written information on the plan for the renovations.

**Old Business**

**Mohawk Trail Regional School District Budget**

The committee had scheduled a meeting with Superintendent of Schools Michael Buoniconti in December but he could not make it and had cancelled it. Several members have gone to School Committee meetings and School Committee Budget Committee meetings since then in an effort to learn more about the school budget. Shelburne’s spending on schools accounts for more than half its annual budget, and the Finance Committee this year wants more information about how the money is spent.

Deb Andrews said she still has too little information about the different schools. Committee members also looked at increases in administrative salaries. The budget calls for, for example, an increase from $216,645 to $227,478 for high school principals, yet next year the school will have one principal rather than two co-principals. Why is that so?

The committee decided to invite the superintendent to come to a meeting either Feb. 4 or 11 with the Finance Committee. Kristian agreed to contact him.

**Greater Shelburne Falls Area Business Association (GSFABA) Partnership Proposal**

Whit Sanford of the GSFABA came and talked to the committee on Feb. 7 and the committee reviewed what she had said about the GSFABA, where she is a board member and has put in many volunteer hours applying for grants, etc. Kristian hadn’t been at the meeting with her, so Shelley told him a bit about the committee: it has lost its executive director and is in the process of re-inventing itself. The group wants to continue to foster economic growth in the area and to help each town in its area to create special events, as it has helped with Moonlight Magic in Shelburne Falls. It is seeking $10,000 each from Buckland and Shelburne towards its budget.

Members believe they need more information before approving that. They want to know how many years they will be asked for the money, for example.

**Capital expenses for Fiscal Year 2020**

The committee very briefly looked at a list of capital requests from town departments for FY2020..

Questions were raised about money requested by the Police Department for Tasers. Does Shelburne need Tasers?

**Relocating some of our meetings to Shelburne Center**

Jackie wondered if we could have some of our meetings at the Shelburne Center Library, so as to make it easier for Shelburne Center residents to come to our meetings. Committee members said it was a good idea to meet in Shelburne.

**Other meetings this week**

Members mentioned that the Finance Committee is meeting with the Board of Selectmen Wednesday, Jan. 23, to discuss the proposed Special Town Meeting.

They also discussed attending the Senior Center Expansion Committee meeting on Thursday, Jan. 14, to discuss proposed sites for a new senior center.

**Adjournment**

The committee adjourned at 8:45 p.m.