

**Town of Canton Finance Committee**  
Meeting Minutes  
Monday, February 13, 2017

Minutes Voted on: 2/22/17  
Vote: 6-0-0

**Members Present:**

Rob Barker, Jerry Dorman, Nichola Gallagher, Cynthia Holcombe, Stephanie Leach, Tim McKenna, Barbara Saint André and Cindy Thomas.

**Members Absent:**

Dianne Gustafson.

**Guests Present:**

Jim Murgia, Finance Director  
Ellen Jones, Finance Committee Secretary

**Opening:** A meeting of the Canton Finance Committee was called to order by Chair Saint André at 7:03 p.m. on Monday, February 13, 2017 in the Salah Meeting Room of the Town Hall.

**A. Approval of Agenda**

Chair Saint André reviewed the items on the agenda – Police Department Budget, Assessing Budget, Voting on Town Meeting articles and review of other articles.

**B. Announcements**

There were no announcements made at the meeting.

**C. New Business**

**FY18 Police Department & Animal Control Budgets** – Police Chief Ken Berkowitz presented his FY18 budget requests for the Police Department as follows:

- Chief Berkowitz praised the Finance Committee's commitment and dedication for coming out on such an inclement evening and thanked them for serving on the Finance Committee.
- The largest item that Chief Berkowitz has requested for his FY18 budget is \$45,000 for the addition of an officer who would serve as another school resource officer to augment the current school resource officer that is already in place at the High School. Currently, Chief Berkowitz stated that there is a full time officer assigned to the High School, a part-time officer assigned to Blue Hills Regional School, a full-time officer at the Galvin Middle School and one liaison officer assigned to all the elementary schools.
- The additional police officer would also serve as a traffic enforcement officer during the nicer weather and the summer months when school is not in session. This officer would augment the other traffic enforcement officer currently in place.
- After budget discussions with Mr. Murgia and Town Administrator Mr. Aspinwall, Chief Berkowitz learned that all of the COLA increases he requested in his FY18 budget request were already being budgeted for.
- Chief Berkowitz is also requesting a \$10,000 increase to his Training Overtime Salary budget line item. This increase will be used to cover overtime when officers are required to "back fill" for officers that are attending 40 hours per year of academy training as required by Massachusetts law.
- Chief Berkowitz stated that he has requested a few small budget increases to items such as a \$2,000 increase for radio equipment repair, a \$2,000 increase for software maintenance, a \$500 increase for postage, a \$4,000 increase for active shooter training, a \$5,000 increase for uniforms, a \$2,500 increase to the training program budget line item and a \$2,000 increase for dues and memberships.

Chief Berkowitz is requesting that the Animal Control budget be level funded for FY18. The Chief commended the Animal Control Officer Stacy Nee for the great job she is doing keeping the Animal Control expenses down and the services up.

Mr. Barker commented about the police departments around the country that are struggling to balance the concerns of citizens and the defense of police officers. Chief Berkowitz stated that the Town of Canton has a solid community policing program with few citizen complaints regarding officers. Mr. Barker commended Chief Berkowitz for doing an extraordinary job over a very long period of time.

Mr. Dorfman inquired about the Police Department's FY18 capital needs. Chief Berkowitz stated that his FY18 capital requests include new vehicles and vests. Vests are part of a five-year rotation plan. Tasers were purchased through drug forfeiture money.

Mr. Dorfman inquired about homeland security grants. Chief Berkowitz stated that the Town of Canton is part of a 50-town LEC (Law Enforcement Council) through which they receive grant money associated with anti-terrorism.

Mr. McKenna inquired about the status of body cameras for the Canton Police Department. Chief Berkowitz commented that he is on a legislative committee for Massachusetts Police Chiefs that is working on getting language in place to address the use of body cameras. He stated that there are two communities, Methuen and Boston, currently using body cameras. Chief Berkowitz is in favor of the use of body cameras and predicts that this will be the future.

Chief Berkowitz thanked Ms. Gallagher for her Finance Committee liaison work she has done through meeting with the Chief and getting to know the Police Department.

**Article 36 – Retired Police Officers** – Chair Saint Andre stated that the purpose of Article 36 was to allow the Board of Selectmen to authorize retired police officers over the age 65 to return to work on details.

Chief Berkowitz explained that currently police officers are allowed to return to work police details for the Town up to the age of 65. This Home Rule Petition article if approved by the state legislature would raise the age to 68 and allow retirees to work up to 960 hours per year. The Chief is currently having problems filling detail work. Many of the surrounding towns have already raised the age to 68. The Chief had been approached by a retired police officer to consider increasing the age to 68. Officers would be required to have a physical every year and qualify with a weapon.

Chief Berkowitz stated that this change would financially benefit the Town because the Town would receive 10% of the billing for detail. When the Town is required to hire out-of-town details the Town does not receive 10% of the billing. Currently the Town has to accept retired police officers older than age 65 that are sent from another town that has already adopted this home rule petition.

The home rule petition must first be approved by Town Meeting and then would have to go to the legislature for approval.

**Article 51 – Adopt Marijuana Regulations** – Chief Berkowitz stated that he reviewed the Planning Board Article 51 even though it is not his article. He agrees that Canton has to regulate marijuana facilities and keep them located in industrial-zoned areas.

The discussion with Chief Berkowitz concluded around 7:22 p.m.

**Verizon ATB Case Update** – Chair Saint André welcomed Assessing Director Karen Zukauskas and inquired of Ms. Zukauskas if there was anything she could say publicly about the pending Verizon ATB (Appellate Tax Board) case. Ms. Zukauskas stated that five cases had been settled. These five cases were being disputed by Verizon over the legality of charging Verizon personal property taxes at the commercial tax rate. The result of these cases being settled meant that the Town of Canton would not have to pay approximately \$1,057,000 to Verizon. She further stated that there were 7-8 cases still pending and that she has been informed the Town would hear within the next few weeks but was doubtful



as to this timeframe. Because the cases were still pending there would be no further public discussion on the matter.

**FY18 Assessing Department Budget** – Ms. Zukauskas stated that the Assessing Department has to do a total revaluation of the entire Town by 2021. The last time a total revaluation had been done was in 2010. The cost of the 2010 revaluation was \$200,000. The cost estimate for the 2021 revaluation will be \$210,000. Ms. Zukauskas explained to the Committee that rather than waiting until 2021 to do all of the work, the work will be split up over four years in 2018, 2019, 2020 and 2021 with a cost of \$52,500 per year for the next four years. The \$52,500 would be added to the Appraisal Services budget line item.

The Assessing Director stated that the last time the Town revalued properties, fourth quarter tax bills were not sent out until May. The inspection of the houses will occur over the four-year period but the values will be adjusted in 2021.

The 3-year valuation adjustments and the 10-year revaluation will be done in 2021. Going forward the re-certifications will be every five years. The state law states that total revaluations are supposed to be done every nine years, which would be 2019 for the Town, but the state is giving Canton a 2-year grace period to 2021. Ms. Zukauskas stated that if the law changes and the revaluations occur every ten years, then one-tenth of the cost of the revaluation could be placed in the budget for ten consecutive years.

Mr. Murgia spoke in support of phasing this work in over a period of four years. Canton was one of the last towns to set its tax rate in fiscal 2010 because the Town tried to do the entire 10-year revaluation in one year, which was very challenging.

In response to Mr. Dorfman's question about whether the Town uses the same appraisal company every year, Ms. Zukauskas stated that it will go out to bid. The current software that Assessing uses is Paul Kapinos software who has been the lowest bidder every year. Other appraisal companies who bid on the job have to deal with this software. She further stated that there are three major appraisal companies in Massachusetts: Vision, Patriot and Paul Kapinos & Associates.

Ms. Zukauskas' discussion with the Finance Committee ended at approximately 7:35 p.m.

**Vote – FY18 Budget Target Guidelines** – Chair Saint André reviewed for the Committee the target budgets that had been recommended by the Revenue Forecasting Committee (RFC) as follows:

- \$40,221,559 for the School Department (a 5.6% budget increase which includes the approximately \$700,000 for Ch. 70) (5% increase in the prior year).
- \$19,919,076 for the Municipal Departments (a 4.7% budget increase).
- Last year the School Department received a greater than \$1.8 million budget increase.
- This year the School Department would receive a \$2.1 million budget increase according to the Revenue Forecasting recommendation.

Ms. Leach spoke in favor of these budget target numbers set by the RFC and agreed with the unused levy capacity of \$535,955.

Chair Saint André reminded the members that the one-time increase of \$495,000 the School Department received as a transfer from free cash for the full-day kindergarten will be covered by the approximately \$700,000 of Ch. 70 funds the Town is expected to receive.

Mr. Barker commented that anytime the School Department receives a greater than 2½% growth is fantastic.

The Chair stated that the Finance Committee does not have a say in how the School Department spends their money because of bottom line authority. Chair Saint André further stated that the vote the Finance Committee would take is merely a "budget guideline" and that the School Committee would be attending an upcoming meeting at which time they may make a case for a different budget request. She further stated that based on the \$40,221,559 FY18 budget number being recommended by the RFC, the budget increase was very generous.

**A motion made by Mr. Barker that the Finance Committee recommend an FY18 budget target number of \$40,221,559 for the School Department and an FY18 budget target number of \$19,919,076 for the Municipal Departments was seconded by Ms. Thomas.**

Mr. Dorfman cautioned that increases to the School Department could affect the Municipal budgets with regard to fixed costs such as benefits costs, pension costs etc.

As stated by Chair Saint André, the FY18 budget increase of \$2,143,849 for the School Department does include the increase of approximately \$700,000 to Ch. 70 state aid.

Mr. Murgia explained that if there was a revenue shortfall and state aid came in lower than budgeted, the shortfall would have to be raised on the tax recap. If there is a surplus in state aid revenue, the taxpayer could receive the benefit when the tax rates are set.

Ms. Thomas spoke in favor of the RFC's target budget recommendations and was open to the School Committee attending the Finance Committee meeting to express their budget needs.

**Vote: 7-0-1.** Ms. Gallagher abstained.

**Vote – Article 7 Motion 2 – Set Salaries of Elected Officials** – Ms. Leach spoke in support of reducing the Assessors salaries to \$600 each instead of \$2,400 since it had been discussed at prior meetings that the field work was being done by the office staff and that the three Assessors were not actually doing field work as they had in the past. Mr. Dorfman proposed a reallocation of some of these funds, for example reducing the Assessors salaries to \$600 and reallocating the funds to another salary such as the Board of Selectmen's salaries.

Ms. Thomas suggested grandfathering in current elected officials and newly elected officials would not receive a salary. Chair Saint André would check with Town Counsel on the legality of this.

**A motion made by Mr. Barker to set the salaries for FY18 for all elected officials at zero was seconded by Mr. Dorfman. Vote: 4-4-0.**

**A motion made by Mr. McKenna to set the salaries for elected officials as follows:**

Board of Assessors	\$2,400.00, for each member
Board of Health	\$600.00, for each member
Board of Selectmen	\$1,400.00, for each member, with an additional \$200.00 to chairperson
Planning Board	\$0.00
School Committee	\$0.00
Library Trustees	\$0.00

**was seconded by Chair Saint André. Vote: 4-4-0.**

Ms. Leach suggested including in the discussion for Article 7 Motion 2 information regarding the insurance costs.

**A motion made by Ms. Gallagher to set the salaries for FY18 for elected officials as follows:**

Board of Assessors	\$600.00, for each member
Board of Health	\$600.00, for each member
Board of Selectmen	\$1,400.00, for each member, with an additional \$200.00 to chairperson
Planning Board	\$0.00
School Committee	\$0.00
Library Trustees	\$0.00

**was seconded by Ms. Leach. Vote: 4-4-0.**

Chair Saint André stated that Article 7 Motion 2 would be tabled.



**Vote – Article 7 Motion 1 – Set Salaries of Elected Officials**

**A motion made by Ms. Gallagher to set the salary for the Town Clerk for FY18 at \$84,595 was seconded by Ms. Thomas. Vote: 8-0-0.**

**Vote – Article 10 – Transfer Unexpended Prior Year Appropriations** – Mr. Murgia provided a chart of three proposed transfers. For purposes of voting, the Finance Committee voted the Article as one motion. Three motions would appear in the final copy of the Finance Committee Recommendations to the Voters of the Town of Canton.

**Mr. Barker made a motion to approve the transfer of unexpended prior year appropriations as follows:**

**\$1,441.00 from High School Boiler ATM14 Art. 11 Mot. 6 to High School Roof Repair ATM11 Mot. 25,  
\$3,405.00 from High School Boiler ATM14 Art. 11 Mot. 6 to Rodman Building Roof Repair ATM11 Mot. 26 and  
\$56,675.04 from Elm St. Water Improvements ATM09 Art. 13 Mot. 8 to Mechanic Street Water Mains ATM15 Art 12 Mot. 7**

**was seconded by Mr. Dorfman. Vote: 8-0-0.**

**Vote – Article 15 – Insurance Proceeds** – Mr. Murgia stated that the \$365,958.28 insurance proceeds were related to the rink roof collapse and that these funds would be added to the \$1.8 million insurance proceeds received already by the Town.

**A motion made by Mr. Barker that the Town appropriate \$365,958.28 from the Insurance Reimbursement Fund #173 to the Rink Enterprise Capital Account Fund #701 was seconded by Mr. McKenna. Vote: 7-0-0.** Ms. Gallagher was absent from the meeting room at the time the vote was taken.

**Vote – Article 16 – Rescind Unused Borrowing Authorizations** – (see meeting handout) Mr. Murgia stated that this was a housekeeping article. The Hansen School Windows project and the Galvin Middle School Windows project were MSBA (Massachusetts School Building Authority) funded projects. The projects were supported at Town Meeting for 100% of the project cost while MSBA reimbursed the Town for 40% of the project. This article would rescind an extra amount that was unissued.

**A motion made by Mr. Barker to approve Article 16 as written in the warrant was seconded by Mr. Dorfman. Vote: 8-0-0.**

**Vote – Article 18 – Amend General By-Laws, Article VII, Part - Finance Committee** – (see meeting handout) Ms. Thomas questioned if the language with regard to term limits that stated “and no member of such Committee after serving three consecutive terms shall be eligible for reappointment” was clear enough to the average reader. There was discussion if the language in the by-law would cover reappointment of a member having already served three consecutive terms for a total of nine years with a brief hiatus prior to reappointment.

**A motion made by Mr. Barker to approve Article 18 as written in the warrant was seconded by Mr. McKenna. Vote: 8-0-0.**

**Vote – Article 27 Motions 1-10 – Recommendations of the Community Preservation Committee –**

**Vote - Article 27 Motion 1**

**A motion made by Ms. Gallagher that \$30,000 be appropriated for FY18 Community Preservation Fund revenue for administrative expenses of the CCPC in FY18 was seconded by Mr. Barker: Vote: 8-0-0.**

**Vote - Article 27 Motion 2**

**A motion made by Ms. Gallagher that the transfers from the FY18 receipts of the Community Preservation Fund be made in FY18 as recommended by the CCPC:  
\$60,000 into the Fund Balance Reserved for Open Space,  
\$60,000 into the Fund Balance Reserved for Historic Resources,  
\$60,000 into the Fund Balance Reserved for Community Housing and**

\$390,000 into the Undesignated Fund Balance was seconded by Mr. McKenna. Vote: 8-0-0.

**Vote - Article 27 Motion 3**

A motion made by Mr. McKenna that \$148,975 be appropriated from the Undesignated Fund Balance Reserved for Community Preservation Act for installation of a copper roof on the Revere Rolling Mill at the Paul Revere Heritage site was seconded by Ms. Holcombe. Vote: 8-0-0.

**Vote - Article 27 Motion 4**

A motion made by Mr. McKenna that \$35,000 be transferred from the Fund Balance Reserved for Historic Resources for Community Preservation Act for the restoration and preservation of the Washington Street Library entrance was seconded by Mr. Barker. Vote: 8-0-0.

**Vote - Article 27 Motion 5**

A motion made by Mr. Barker that \$28,000 be appropriated by funding this through \$25,000 from the Fund Balance Reserved for Historic Resources and \$3,000 from the Undesignated Fund Balance Reserved for Community Preservation Act for an architectural study and code assessment of the historic Pequitside Farm was seconded by Mr. McKenna. Vote: 8-0-0.

**Vote - Article 27 Motion 6**

A motion made by Mr. McKenna that \$80,000 be appropriated by funding this through a transfer from the Fund Balance Reserved for Community Housing for the purpose of installing exhaust fans at the Rubin Court Senior Housing Complex was seconded by Mr. Barker. Vote: 8-0-0.

**Vote - Article 27 Motion 7**

A motion made by Ms. Gallagher that \$401,300 be appropriated by funding this through a transfer from the Undesignated Fund Balance Reserved for Community Preservation Act for the purpose of the restoration of the Devoll and Tilden Playgrounds was seconded by Mr. Barker. Vote: 8-0-0.

**Vote - Article 27 Motion 8**

A motion made by Ms. Gallagher that \$173,500 be appropriated by funding this through a transfer from the Undesignated Fund Balance Reserved for Community Preservation Act for the purpose of the construction of bathroom and storage facilities at the Kennedy Elementary School fields was seconded by Ms. Holcombe.

Mr. Barker expressed concern over the location of the bathroom and storage facility on the Kennedy property and the possibility of the location being a hindrance if a future expansion of the school was necessary. Members also expressed concern as to which Town department and personnel would be responsible for the maintenance and security of this building. Chair Saint André will reach out to either a member of the Community Preservation Committee or member of the School Department/Committee for further clarification on Article 27 Motion 8.

The Finance Committee did not vote on Motion 8.

**Vote - Article 27 Motion 9**

A motion made by Mr. McKenna that \$150,000 be appropriated by funding this through \$110,000 from the Fund Balance Reserved for Open Space and Recreation and \$40,000 from the Undesignated Fund Balance Reserved for Community Preservation Act for three separate planning projects: an open space and recreation plan, a comprehensive trails plan and a Newhouse Waterfront plan was seconded by Ms. Gallagher. Vote: 8-0-0.

**Vote - Article 27 Motion 10**

A motion made by Mr. McKenna that \$20,000 be appropriated by funding this through a transfer from the Fund Balance Reserved for Open Space and Recreation for a permanent conservation restriction for the Paul Revere Heritage Site was seconded by Ms. Thomas. Vote: 8-0-0.

**Vote – Article 33 – Amend Sec. 13 of Article VIII of the Town’s General By-Laws – Local Licenses & Permits** – Mr. Murgia stated that he was the sponsor of this article and the change was proposed under the Modernization Act. He further explained that the current by-law allows the Town to deny or hold permits and licenses for which an owner is at least 12 months overdue on taxes, fee assessments,

betterments or other municipal charges. The change to the by-law would allow the Town to deny or hold permits and licenses for taxes that are overdue less than 12 months. This change would allow the Town to be more aggressive with repeat delinquent tax offenders.

**A motion made by Mr. Barker to approve Article 33 as printed in the warrant was seconded by Ms. Thomas. Vote: 8-0-0.**

**D. Other Business/Open Issues**

The Finance Committee members received information regarding Article 20 (Payment in Lieu of Taxes Agreement with Dynamic Energy Solutions, LLC) and Article 47 (Vote to Approve Funds for a Consultant to Update the Master Plan). These articles would be voted on at a later meeting.

**E. Approval of Minutes**

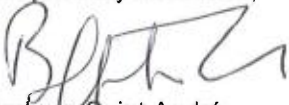
**A motion made by Ms. Thomas to approve the minutes as written for February 8, 2017 was seconded by Mr. McKenna. Vote: 6-0-2. Mr. Barker and Ms. Holcombe abstained.**

**F. Next Meeting Date:** The next meeting would take place on Wednesday, February 22, 2017 at 7:00 p.m. in the Salah Meeting Room of Town Hall. The Fire Chief, DPW Superintendent Mr. Trotta and the sponsor of Article 37, Mr. Rohr, have been invited to the meeting

**Adjournment: A motion made by Ms. Gallagher to adjourn the meeting at 9:03 p.m. was seconded by Ms. Leach. Vote: 8-0-0.**

Minutes reviewed by: Cynthia Holcombe

Respectfully submitted,



Barbara Saint André  
Chair, Canton Finance Committee