

Town of Canton Finance Committee
Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, February 22, 2017

Minutes Voted on: 2-28-17
Vote: 5-0-3

Members Present:

Rob Barker, Jerry Dorfman, Cynthia Holcombe, Stephanie Leach, Barbara Saint André and Cindy Thomas.

Members Absent:

Nichola Gallagher, Dianne Gustafson and Tim McKenna.

Guests Present:

Kyle Bush, Resident
Chief Charlie Doody, Fire Department
Tracy Kenney, Town Clerk
Bruce Rohr, Resident, Sponsor of Article 37
James and Jeff Swanson, Residents
Mike Trotta, Superintendent, Department of Public Works
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 7:05 p.m. on Wednesday, February 22, 2017 in the Salah Meeting Room of the Town Hall.

A. Approval of Agenda

Chair Saint André reviewed the items on the agenda – Fire Department Budget, Public Works Department Budgets, a citizen-sponsored article by Bruce Rohr and voting on various articles.

B. Announcements

Chair Saint André introduced James Swanson, who was attending the Finance Committee meeting and taking notes as part of the work he is doing on his Citizenry and Community Involvement Boy Scout Merit Badge. James was accompanied by his father Jeff Swanson.

She also introduced Kyle Bush who is working on a Boston College graduate degree. Mr. Bush moved to Canton about a year ago and is currently employed in Finance specializing in bonds.

C. New Business

FY18 Fire Department Budgets – Fire Chief Charlie Doody presented his FY18 budget requests for the Fire Department and Ambulance Service as follows:

Regional Dispatch Center

- Chief Doody explained that the annual fee for the Holbrook Regional Dispatch Center will be \$225,000.
- Last year \$150,000 was appropriated to help with the expenses related to the Holbrook dispatch. An increase of \$75,000 is being requested for FY18. \$50,000 from the FY17 budget was recently transferred to Holbrook to help with the cost of hiring and training dispatchers.
- Louis Jutras is working with a program manager for data conversion to Holbrook.
- There is infrastructure work (such as dish installation) that needs to be done.
- May 1 is the target date of a trial run of dispatching, with dual systems running in Canton and Holbrook.
- June-July 1 is the target date to go live with the Holbrook system.

Fire Department FY18 Budget Requests

- Chief Doody stated that he is requesting \$46,000 to promote four Firefighters to Lieutenants.
- Taking the advice of the Finance Committee in years past, Chief Doody stated that for FY18 is attempting to budget for overtime closer to the true costs of overtime. He provided a 1-page

overtime analysis (see meeting handout). He estimates that his overtime costs to cover vacation liability is \$575,320 and overtime costs to cover sick time liability is \$191,972 for a total liability cost of \$767,292. He estimates the combined cost of overtime for all of his budget line items if \$715,305. This could leave an overtime shortfall of \$51,987.

- An increase of \$50,000 is being requested for Overtime. \$30,000 is being requested for the Fire Department's Overtime budget (#220) and \$20,000 is being requested for an increase to the Ambulance Service Overtime budget (#231). Chief Doody is optimistic that this would help in avoiding having to request a Reserve Fund Transfer Request at year end in FY18.
- In FY17 the Chief explained that his overtime budget is being affected by covering the costs of one firefighter being deployed to Iraq until September, one vacancy from a firefighter that transferred to another Town and two firefighters that are out on long term disability leaves. He further stated that he will most likely need a budget supplement or a Reserve Fund Transfer at year end.
- Chief Doody took into account decreases in fuel costs for some of his expense line items so he reallocated these to other budget line items. In total the Chief is requesting a \$20,000 increase to various expense items.

Chair Saint André questioned the true increase request for FY18 of \$96,090 or 1.9%. It was discussed that the \$96,090 is the difference between the FY18 base budget of \$4,921,196 and the FY18 Department Request of \$5,017,286.

The real cost of the FY18 Fire Department budget increase being requested is the difference between the FY17 Original Budget of \$4,867,597 and the FY18 Department Request of \$5,017,286 or \$150,000 or a 3% budget increase. Mr. Murgia explained that contract costs have already been factored into the FY18 base budget amount.

- With regard to the Ambulance Budget (#231), the Chief is requesting an increase of \$4,000 for various expenses.
- The Emergency Management budget (#291) is being level funded for FY18.

The budget discussion with Chief Doody ended at approximately 7:40 p.m.

FY18 Department of Public Works Budgets – Mr. Trotta presented his FY18 budget requests for the Department of Public Works as follows:

- A \$67,164 increase is being requested for the addition of a working foreman to the Highway Maintenance budget (#420).
- Mr. Trotta stated that he took the suggestion of former Finance Committee member Jim Sims and by closing out and transferring approximately \$32,000 from the Police Station Maintenance budget (#193), Public Safety Facility budget (#194) and the Pequitside Farm (#632) to the Public Buildings (also known as Property Maintenance) budget (#192). Mr. Trotta is requesting a total increase of \$82,315 for the Public Buildings budget to cover expenses based on need (repair costs, service contracts and building & maintenance supplies).

Snow and Ice Budget – Mr. Trotta explained that he is requesting an increase of \$36,000 for the FY18 snow and ice budget to bring the new annual total budget to \$600,000.

Trash Collection Budget – A \$60,000 increase is being requested for the FY18 Trash budget based on an anticipated 3% increase to the bill.

The Finance Committee questioned the purpose of Pequitside maintenance being covered under the DPW budget. Pequitside expenses included maintenance items such as utility costs – electric, heating fuel, gasoline, oil etc. which should fall under the property maintenance budget. The Pequitside Revolving Fund (approved under an annual article at ATM) is used for costs associated with rentals.

Water & Sewer Enterprise Funds – Mr. Murgia provided an updated summary of the Enterprise Funds' Operating Budgets for FY18 (see meeting handout).

- Mr. Trotta explained that he is requesting an upgrade of a Meter Reader Grade 9 to a Utility Technician Grade 14 for FY18. He is also requesting an upgrade for another position for a working Foreman Grade 17 for placement at a water treatment facility plant.

- **MWRA increase** – Mr. Trotta is requesting an increase of \$867,997 or a 67.5% increase for FY18. This is being based on preliminary assessments released by the MWRA based on calendar 2016's water usage. There is always a year lag between usage and billing. The total increase being requested for FY18 for the Water Enterprise budget is \$961,710 or a 13% increase.
- The impact on the water and sewer rates will be determined at the end of April or May when the Board of Selectmen set the water and sewer rates for the next fiscal year.

Article 25 – Vote to Acquire Sewer Easement at 140 Will Drive – Mr. Trotta explained that E.M. Duggan had recently built an addition to the back of their building. Unfortunately the corner of the addition encroached on an existing Town sewer easement. To remedy this problem E.M. Duggan is willing to give up five feet of land located on the other side of this easement thereby moving the entire easement five feet.

Article 26 – Additional Local Appropriation to Supplement the Commonwealth's Chapter 90 Roads Program – Mr. Trotta and Mr. Murgia explained that the BOS had recently voted to recommend using \$410,000 of free cash to supplement the \$770,000 of Ch. 90 funds the Town already receives annually. The BOS also voted to use \$300,000 from Water Retained Earnings (water surplus) for additional paving and sidewalk repairs due to the Mechanic Street water project.

Mr. Trotta stated that there is a backlog of approximately \$25 million in road repairs needed.

Article 40 – Vote to Accept Cedarcrest Road as a Town Way

Article 41 – Vote to Accept Beatrice Way as a Town Way

Article 42 – Vote to Accept New Boston Drive as a Town Way

- Mr. Trotta informed the Committee that the BOS had recently voted to recommend to Town Meeting that these three roads be accepted as Town Ways.
- Mr. Trotta further stated that there were still punch lists of items to be completed with regard to these streets. The DPW department was scheduled to do an inspection of the streets but was hampered by recent snow storms. He is hopeful that these punch lists and inspections will be completed by Annual Town Meeting.
- There was some discussion by the Committee members about the Town's exposure as a result of developers that put up bonds with the Town that sometimes abandon projects leaving the Town with insufficient funds to complete the roads up to current standards.
- There are 480 named streets in Canton. Of the 480 streets there are approximately 80 streets that have not been accepted by the Town.

Article 37 – Amend Article II, Section 1 of the General By-Laws (Annual Town Election, Time of)

Mr. Bruce Rohr, the citizen sponsor of Article 37, provided information regarding his proposed article to allow a two-week voting period (see meeting handout).

Mr. Rohr stated that the article he had sponsored at a previous Town Meeting to move the local election from April to November (which was approved at Town Meeting) had been deemed that it should have been submitted as a Home Rule Petition. The article was sent to the state legislature but was never acted on and accepted.

Mr. Rohr stated the following about Article 37:

- The article would change the local election from voting on one day to a two-week period during the third and fourth weeks of March. Mr. Rohr stated that he would be flexible with the two-week period by adjusting it to the last week in March and the first week in April if this timeframe conformed more with the restrictions of the state elections laws that the Town Clerk was bound by.
- Mr. Rohr stated that he did not consider his article as an "early voting period" such as the "early voting period" that was allowed and implemented for the first time during the general election in November of 2016.
- Mr. Rohr stated that his article would hope to:
 - Increase voter turnout by allowing a more accessible expanded voting period in which to cast ballots instead of the limited timeframe of one day. He stated that there were only 2,300 voters that cast ballots for a recently contested Board of Selectmen race. Fifteen years ago a local election would bring out 4,000 voters. In a recent uncontested local election there were only 220 voters that cast ballots.

- Reduce costs for holding a municipal election by holding the election at one designated site such as Town Hall or another designated single location instead of four locations. Police details and janitorial services could be significantly reduced by changing the voting location to one site.
 - Reduce the stress on the increasingly elderly population of election workers.
 - Eliminate the annual disruption and safety issues that occur at the schools where the four polling stations are located.
- Mr. Rohr stated that he thought his article was legal since it conformed and exceeded the requirements of MGL Chapter 54, section 64. However, Mr. Rohr sought out legal advice from Town Counsel but was denied access to Town Counsel services. Mr. Rohr stated that he had been granted access to Town Counsel Services in the past, but was denied help on this article.

Mr. Rohr would be willing to adjust his article to accommodate any election implications of state election laws

Tracy Kenney stated that she had not formed an opinion for or against Article 37, however, she provided the following comments and questions regarding the proposed Article:

- Mr. Rohr's article was not using the "early voting" methodology but was considered as "distributed voting".
- The technicalities of when and how ballots would be tabulated as per election laws could be an issue.
- How would police details be used during this two-week election period? State law mandates police officers or constables be used on election day. (There were no police details at Town Hall during "early voting" in which 5,000 voters took advantage of early voting.)
- Ms. Kenney contacted the Elections Division and the Attorney General's office for their legal opinion on this article but did not receive a definitive opinion on the legality of the article. If this article is approved by the voters at Town Meeting the article would still need to be sent to the Attorney General for final approval.
- A Committee member questioned if there would be a disruption to the Town Clerk's office by comparing 2,000 voters over an 80-hour period (8 hours per day for 10 days) versus 2,000 voters over a 12-hour period. Ms. Kenney stated that there were challenges with space issues as well as parking issues when early voting was held last year at Town Hall.
- Ms. Kenney stated that expanded hours was not consistent with state laws.
- Ms. Kenney also stated concern as to how the two-week period would coincide with the deadline dates for which to register to vote and to file nomination papers.
- Ms. Kenney stated that for the November 2016 election she had 5,000 voters turn out for early voting at Town Hall.
- Tracy stated that during a typical election and as per election laws the votes have to be tabulated and reconciled at the end of the voting day. If voters cast their ballots during a voting period the votes would have to be tabulated and reconciled every day, with the tabulator being set back to zero at the beginning of every day.

Several Finance Committee members spoke in support of the Chair seeking the legal opinion of Town Counsel regarding Article 37.

Mr. Rohr commented that in years past voting was better advertised than it is today. The League of Women Voters would hang a banner across the street in downtown Canton reminding voters of the voting day and a sign would be on the front lawn of Town Hall.

The Chair inquired of Ms. Kenney as to the cost of the early voting for November 2016 but she did not have specific figures. Ms. Kenney did state that her staff spent many extended hours as well as working on Saturdays and Sundays.

Vote - Article 2 Motion 1 – Adopt Rules to Govern Town Meeting

A motion made by Mr. Barker that this 2017 Annual Town Meeting shall meet on consecutive Monday and Wednesday evenings (but not including Monday, May 29th) in the Morse Auditorium, on the grounds of the Canton High School until the business of this Annual Town Meeting has been concluded, each such session to begin at 7:00 o'clock P.M. and to adjourn at 11:00 o'clock P.M., or as near that hour as may be feasible, according to the nature of the business pending at the said hour was seconded by Ms. Thomas. Vote: 6-0-0.

Vote - Article 2 Motion 2 – Non-Residents Listing

A motion made by Mr. Barker that the list of non-residents as printed in the warrant be accepted was seconded by Ms. Holcombe. Vote: 6-0-0.

Vote - Article 2 Motion 3 – End Town Meeting with a Balanced Budget

A motion made by Mr. Barker that Motion 3 be adopted as written in the warrant that states Town Meeting will end with a balanced budget was seconded by Mr. Dorfman. Vote: 6-0-0.

Vote - Article 8 – Pay Bills of Prior Fiscal Years

A motion made by Mr. Dorfman to indefinitely postpone Article 8 because there are no bills from prior fiscal years to be paid was seconded by Mr. Barker. Vote: 6-0-0

Vote - Article 3 – Hear Reports of Committee Appointed at Prior Town Meetings

A motion made by Mr. Barker that the following committees appointed at previous Town Meetings be heard (Economic Development Committee, Community Preservation Committee and Town of Canton Substance Abuse Committee) was seconded by Ms. Thomas. Vote: 6-0-0.

Article 27 Motion 8 – Community Preservation Committee - \$173,500 for Bathroom & Storage Facility at the Kennedy Elementary School fields

– This motion had been tabled at the prior meeting on February 13th. Chair Saint André explained to the Committee that she had been told that the control of the field located at the Kennedy Elementary School was not under the control of the School Committee and that it might be under the control of the Parks & Recreation Department. Ms. Thomas was scheduled to meet with Nick Pirelli, Acting Director of the Parks & Recreation and would discuss the care of this field and new facility with Mr. Pirelli. Mr. Barker added to the discussion by stating that he had spoken with the School Committee Chair, John Bonnanzio, who concurred that this field was under the control of Parks & Recreation. This motion would be voted on a future Finance Committee meeting.

Vote - Article 36 – Retired Police Officers – This article would allow Canton to hire retired police officers for police details up to the age of 68 instead of 65.

A motion made by Ms. Holcombe to accept Article 36 as printed in the warrant was seconded by Ms. Leach. Vote: 6-0-0.

Article 37 – Vote to Amend Article II, Section 1 of the General By-Laws (Annual Town Election, Time Of – It was decided that this article would be discussed and voted on at a future meeting.

D. Other Business/Open Issues

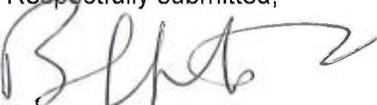
E. Approval of Minutes

A motion made by Mr. Barker to approve the minutes as written for February 13, 2017 was seconded by Ms. Thomas. Vote: 6-0-0.

F. **Next Meeting Date:** The next meeting would take place on Tuesday, February 28, 2017 at 7:00 p.m. in the Salah Meeting Room of Town Hall.

Adjournment: A motion made by Ms. Saint André to adjourn the meeting at 9:10 p.m. was seconded by Mr. Dorfman. Vote: 6-0-0.

Minutes reviewed by: Rob Barker
Respectfully submitted,


Barbara Saint André
Chair, Canton Finance Committee

Town of Canton
Finance Committee Meeting – Wednesday, February 22, 2017

Please note: These meeting handouts may also be found on the Town’s website under the Posted Minutes section (Laser Fiche).

Agenda (1 page).

Fire Department OT Request FY18, provided by Chief Charlie Doody on 2/22/17 (1 page).

Special Tax Assessment Agreement, dated February 2017 (7pages).

Draft Memorandum of Understanding between Town of Canton & Fresenius Kabi Compounding (3 pages).

Article 2 – Adopt Rules to Govern Town Meeting, dated 2/21/17 (2 pages).

Article 8 – Pay Bills of Prior Fiscal Year, dated 2/17/17 (1 page).

Article 3 – Hear Reports of Committees Appointed at Prior Town Meetings, dated 2/17/17 (1 page).

Article 27, Motion 8 – Community Preservation Committee – Canton Little League – construction of bathroom & storage facilities at the Kennedy Elementary School fields, dated 2/17/17 (1 page).

Article 36 – Retired Police Officers, dated 2/17/17 (2 pages).

Article 37 – Amend Article II, Section 1 of the General By-Laws (Annual Town Election, Time of) Information from Article 37 sponsor Bruce Rohr (2 pages) & letter from Charles Aspinwall (1 page).

Enterprise Funds' Operating Budgets for Fiscal 2018 provided by Jim Murgia, Finance Director, dated 2/21/17 (1 page).

Finance Committee Minutes for February 13, 2017 (8 pages).