**Town of Wales**

**Finance Committee Meeting Minutes**

Thursday, March 9, 2017 @ 7:00 PM

Town Hall, Selectmen’s office

In attendance: Bill Darnley, Roy Lainson, Kimberly Jorge, Valerie Bernier

**CALL TO ORDER**

The meeting was called to order at 7:10pm

**MINUTES**

The minutes were not adequately circulated and will be reviewed for approval next meeting.

**APPOINTMENTS**

Wales Library Trustees @ 7:17pm

This current year, with the minimum wage increase, wages had to be increased by $1 in addition to the 1.75% increase for each employee so that the salaries would still be in keeping with the seniority and complexity of each role in relation to one another. February 2015 the librarians claim to have met with the finance committee to approve that these salary increases could be applied as described. The FY18 budget request incorporates $1 plus 2.5%, which they recognize as an oversight because they did not intend to apply another $1 increase on top of the percentage increase; the will be no minimum wage increase in the coming fiscal year. The current fiscal year may need a reserve request to prevent running out of finance for salary line items. The mold problem drained a large portion of the library funds and will strain their FY17 budget.

We have to be at $51,029.28 to qualify for state aid in FY18. 20% must be used for materials. This obligation will be met for the FY17 fiscal year. They we $64 short in FY17 for the materials requirement and they will therefore will be taking a prorated hit in state aid.

The building maintenance line item on the budget request should be coming out of the building maintenance line item managed by the BOS. The new floor in the children's room will be coming out of building maintenance. The librarian representative states that while the building maintenance fund is covering some of the necessary maintenance, they do not believe that this is sufficient to cover all of the expenses associated with the library’s upkeep. It would be an outrageous expense to bring the building up to code for a library. The Finance Committee will look into our meeting minutes from this time period to erode the above mentioned salary discussion.

**NEW BUSINESS**

Since the budget for the library must total $51,029.28, it was suggested that this amount should be incorporated into the budget and the use of these funds would be left to the discretion of the library trustees. This would make sense because the library, unlike other departments, has a budget that is determined on the state level rather than the local level.

Motion by Bill to give the library a budget of $51,029.28 without breaking out the line items individually.

Roy seconded the motion

Discussion: there is concern that this would set a precedent that other departments may want to follow suit. Another concern is that this could increase future retirement payouts and the Medicare expense would also increase if salaries for the librarians were to increase unchecked. The other option would be to increase the salary expenses by the blanket percentage used for the entire town and the remainder of the required funds would be added to the library expenses line item. From an accounting perspective, the salaries must be reported as a 5100 number. The salaries could be combined into a single line item. The whole appropriation could be placed in the expense line and the library can distribute this as desired. One line item could be titled “library appropriation” and intradepartmental transfers could occur as desired.

All in favor

The motion passed unanimously

Finance committee will be level funded for FY18.

Assessors recently submitted a budget request which incorporated a request for a vision maintenance increase which is a software expense that is not optional. Hampden county dues increased as well. Postage decreased by $150.

Planning board submitted their budget requesting level funding with the exception of an increase to wages.

Zoning board of appeals will be level funded for FY18.

Emergency management: there has been no request yet but there is a question as to whether the funds for this have been utilized. An inquiry will be filed with respect to this department’s current spending.

Police: the $2,000 uniform increase, the $408 increase for the third air card, and the $1,670 increase for the software management system need to be finalized. There was some discussion as to whether these increases are all necessary at once. Once the budget is more complete, it will be possible to determine whether cuts must be made to these items.

Fire department: Brimfield, Holland, and Easthampton were consulted regarding the number of members on their fire departments. The holland roster is 22 and the Brimfield roster is 30. Both towns have all their own gear. Brimfield started a new budget line item for their gear. They replace three sets per year for $8,500. The current Wales Fire Department request is for 10 sets in a single year. It was suggested that, as with Brimfield, a set number of gear sets should be purchased per year with a line item for gear that can be level funded each year. It costs $2,300 per set of gear. One line item could be allotted to cover 3 sets per year. A new line item for $6,900 will be added to the budget as “gear replacement.” The e-dispatch system is deemed to be a necessary expense as well.

Animal control: they currently do not have a vehicle so they do not currently need a vehicle maintenance line item. They want to move this $800 to another line item to cover the increased cost for a cell phone with a data plan. $200 extra for the phone seems reasonable but the additional $600 does not seem to be accounted for. Additional information will be requested.

Tree warden: no request has been submitted. This will be level funded.

Inspector clerk: this department only contains a salary line item and will therefore be adjusted according to the blanket salary increase.

Elementary school: increased by $51,392.

Accountant: level funded except the new accountant’s starting salary is to be determined once a candidate is hired.

The revenue for the charter amounts should be an additional $138,444 while the expenses are $184,844 for the charter line. The debt refund will go up substantially. This should be recorded as a part of local receipts. Sue reported the general stability $218,040 and capital is $6,754.

Bill mentioned that the 5 Main Street committee may be requesting $30,000 to tear down the building on 5 Main Street. This would come out of capital planning rather than the budget. Additionally, there is concern over the addition of the line item for a van driver for the senior center. Adding this to the budget may be overstepping our bounds by creating a position rather than creating the position through an article for the town to vote on. Roy will send a letter to The BOS to confirm that they have requested the incorporation of this position.

Reserve request: the town clerk received her certification in December 2016 and she is requesting half of her certification stipend at $500. This would be prorated from the $1,000 annual stipend. This request is in keeping with the town bylaws.

Motion by Roy to approve the reserve request

Seconded by Bill

All in favor

The motion passed unanimously

**MOTION TO ADJOURN**

Motion to adjourn by Roy at 9:05pm

Seconded by Bill

All in favor

The meeting adjourned at 9:05pm

Reserve after $500 reserve request was approved: $26,200