Wales Finance Committee Meeting Minutes – March 10, 2016

Present: Roy Lainson, Valerie Bernier, Bill Darnley, and Kim Jorge

The meeting came to order at 7:02 PM

New Business:

The minutes of the last meeting were not available.

New Business:

Bruce Cadieux came in to present the highway budget request for 2017.

He requested the following:

Gas and oil – no increase, general highway +$500, Vehicle repair parts +$1,000, payroll +$1505.88, OT line item $867.20, Road commissioner +$1,040.40, Snow & Ice wages +$334, Clerk +$1,872, new line items for licenses $300, boots/clothing/tools $850.

The sand and salt is currently in deficit $20,000 but snow payroll has $10,000 left, net deficit is $10,000. Bruce explained that while we had little snow, there were many icy days and salt has increased in price. He would like to increase his clerk from 5 hours per week to 10 hours. With all the paperwork she has been a big help, and there is much more coming up for Monson Rd. grant, DEP, Baystate Roads Program, FEMA/MEMA grants and Chapter 90.

Bruce would like a line for office supplies rather than to take it from general highway. He would like overtime so he can call someone out to help him when there are trees down, etc. rather than calling the volunteer fire department.

If Bruce gets a price for a system to monitor the gas, he will revise the budget request.

Discussion was held on the requests. There was some feeling that general highway should not increase since items were being broken out. It was pointed out that many of these items are new items. The general feeling was that the highway department should have the funds it needs to maintain the roads.

Roy made a motion and Bill seconded to increase sand and salt by $5,000. There was discussion about the ability to move items within the snow and ice budget. All were in favor of the increase.

Bill made a motion to approve the general highway and miscellaneous items as requested by Bruce. Val seconded, all were in favor. Val made a motion to approve repair parts as requested, Bill seconded. There was discussion regarding vehicle repairs and equipment including the recent repairs to the old sander with a rusted and twisted frame. All were in favor of the motion.

Roy then explained his change of the building inspector clerk line item. All the inspectors will now be sharing the same clerk. The budget remains the same.

Roy requested we postpone reviewing the warrant articles as they were still being put together.

The Council on Aging will be attending the next meeting with their requests.

Old Business:

Planning board legal expenses update – Roy sent an email to Lynn asking who was charged for legal when a department used the attorney. Historically legal comes out of the Selectmen’s legal line item. Lynn told him that department’s can use the attorney with the selectmen’s permission.

There was discussion about legal help and what departments might need it. Bill made a motion to give planning the $600 for legal they requested. Roy seconded, all were in favor. It was decided not to break it out, but to put it in their general expense line item.

Fire department wages – a discussion was held on the request for additional money for volunteer fire fighters. In 2015 the finance committee gave them half of what they requested with a promise to review it again for FY17.

Roy made a motion to grant the requested amount, Bill seconded, all were in favor.

BOH stipends and conservation stipends remain the same. Selectmen did not approve any increase.

Bill Darnley mentioned that other towns use the senior tax write off to pay van drivers, as the COA requested $2,000 for a driver. They will be in next meeting for discussion.

Park was put in as requested. Items left, police, senior center, treasurer.

There was a discussion on the across the board salary increase. Roy suggested a 2% increase. Val felt there might be backlash as the highway contract is 1.75% and the school contract is not settled yet. It was agreed that growing the budget too large could cause problems down the road, and it has been our policy to keep all the salary increases the same as much as possible. Everyone agreed on the 1.75% increase in salaries at this point.

Roy made a motion to close the meeting, Bill seconded, all agreed. The meeting came to a close at 9:05 PM.