

TOWN OF WENHAM

Finance & Advisory Committee
Meeting of February 3, 2016
Town Hall, 138 Main Street

Pursuant to the Open Meeting Law, M.G.L. Chapter 30 A, §§ 18-25, written notice posted by the Town Clerk delivered to all Committee members, a meeting of the Finance & Advisory Committee (FinCom) was held on Wednesday, February 3, 2016 at 6:30 PM in the Selectmen Chambers.

1. Call Meeting to Order

With a quorum present, Chairman Lucy, called the meeting to order at 6:30 PM.

Committee Members present: Michael Lucy, Chair; Ned Flynn; Rick Quinn; Alex Begin, Michael Therrien

Also present: Angel Wills, Finance Director; Peter Lombardi, Town Administrator; Catherine Tinsley, Recording Secretary

Public information

Agenda

Proposed budgets - Land Use; Inspectional Services; Fire Department; Assessors; Finance Department

Lakeview – Financial overview

2. FY 17 Proposed Town Budget - Finance Director; Dept. Heads' presentations; Discussion/Questions

Land Use - Planning Board, Conservation Commission, Zoning Board of Appeals

Emilie Cademartori, Coordinator for Land Use was present and gave an overview of the proposed FY 17 budget for land use and highlighted the following:

- Decrease in salaries as a result of taking the portion of the Permitting Coordinator out of Land Use.
- Legal service line item removed
- The GIS computer program is in this budget

Ms. Cademartori reviewed the current fee schedule noting this revenue is minimal and has not in the past covered costs associated with this office.

The Committee questioned grant opportunities to update the Master Plan and was told that a grant may be available to update the open space plan.

Inspectional Services –Building, Electrical, Plumbing, Health

Permitting Coordinator Jackie Bresnahan was present and gave a brief summary of the proposed FY 17 budget for Inspectional Services saying this budget now includes the GEO TMS software fees.

Revenue through this department goes directly to the General Fund but fees are being reviewed to confirm expense for this department is being generated.

The Committee requested revenue information from Inspectional Services

Fire Department

Fire Chief Blanchard summarized the proposed FY 17 budget. Deputy Kavanagh was also present.

Chief Blanchard updated the Committee on a house fire this past weekend on Longfellow Road saying it was fortunate that the lack of snow made the road passible and other homes were saved; if this was last year, the fire trucks would not have been able to get up Longfellow and other homes would have burned.

APPROVED 2.17.16

Chief Blanchard reported minimal changes in the proposed FY 17 budget for the Fire Department:

- Addition of a part time mechanic shared between police/ fire/ DPW
- Reduced uniform allowance & truck maintenance to increase other areas of the budget.

The Committee suggested that repetitive false alarm responses (fire/ police) are paid for in part by the home/ property owner after a pre-determined number of calls; this will be further discussed.

Regarding Gordon College calls, Chief reported that the Collage pays bi annually for each call to cover expenses associated with response calls to the college. Chief Blanchard noted that it is possible that another non-profit school may be coming to town and this would be discussed in the near future of how the budget may be impacted.

It was suggested that the Town negotiate with Lyons ambulance for the town to be compensated for first on the scene expenses

- This is a zero dollar contract
- Pay for some incidentals

Discussion that Wenham look into providing ambulance services and bill insurances to cover the costs; the Committee requested an analysis and Mr. Lucy suggested a post-budget study group to consider the pros & cons of in house ambulance service.

Chief Blanchard cautioned that the number of call firefighters is dropping and it is increasingly difficult to maintain a call fire department adding that the Town may soon be forced to consider a full time department in the near future; this may included a merged department with Hamilton or a larger district department.

Assessors

Steve Gasperoni, Chief Assessor was present to talk about the proposed budget for the Assessing Department, noting he is retiring at the end of February 2016 and did not participate in this budget.

He noted that there is a slight increase form last year and not included in \$60,000 for the valuation of property in town. This will be discussed at a future meeting.

Mr. Flynn moved the Wenham Finance Committee commend Steve Gasperoni for his years of service to the Town of Wenham, and it was unanimous to do so.

Finance Department

Ms. Wills presented the proposed FY 17 budget for the Finance Department.

Of importance she noted the salary line is down due to a reduction in the assistant position from 36 to 30 hours.

Ms. Wills was commended for her professional work.

3. Proposed Lakeview Development - Recommendation to Board of Selectmen

In full disclosure, Ned Flynn stated that he is a neighbor and friend of Bob Tamboni, the proposed developer for Lakeview as identified by the property owners, but he did not see a conflict in this discussion.

Mr. Lucy reviewed that the Town has the right-of-first refusal to purchase the Lakeview Golf course upon the notice to the town of the change of use from recreation to residential.

The Board of Selectmen is considering the pros and cons of purchasing the property or not purchasing the property and allowing the developer to go forward according to the CHA and is requesting feedback of the fiscal impact to the Town.

The Lakeview Advisory Committee is preparing an analysis of potential municipal use including preliminary cost, revenue, maintenance, etc.

The BOS must have a decision by February 16, 2016.

APPROVED 2.17.16

Chairman Lucy prepared a general overview of the financial impact of the Lakeview property with the assistance of the Finance Director:

- The total acquisition cost of the property based on a purchase price of \$2.75 million, bonded over 30 years would be a total of \$4.75 million (\$160,000 annually) not including any improvement, maintenance or other associated costs.
- A private, age restricted development on the property, as described in the Host Community Agreement, based on 25 market rate units at \$ 1 million each at a tax rate of \$16.98 / \$1000 for a net to the town of an estimated revenue of \$19.9 million over 30 years with minimum impact of fire/ police services.

Mr. Lucy summarized that the town is losing the biggest taxpayer to the town with the Mullen property having sold to a non-tax paying school, tax increase is currently at 7% without this added debt.

It was the consensus of the Committee to recommend to the BOS to allow it to move to development, as proposed, on a 100% age-restricted basis.

Mr. Quinn moved, and it was seconded, that the Chair of the Wenham Finance & Advisory Committee be authorized to pass along the advice of the Finance Committee based on fiscal issues associated with the Lakeview the Finance Committee recommends that the Board of Selectmen not purchase the property and exercise the Town's right-of-first refusal to buy the Lakeview property. The motion carried unanimously.

The Finance Committee meets next on February 10, 2016, jointly with the Hamilton FinCom in the Bessie Buker Multi Media room at 6:30 pm.

The Finance Committee unanimously adjourned at 8:27 pm.

Respectfully submitted by

Catherine Tinsley
2.11.16