

Financial Advisory Committee
Budget Meeting – January 8, 2014 4 pm

Members present: Donna Lowell-Bettencourt, Chair; Les Baynes, co-chair; Mort Fearey, Jr.; Barbara Shriber; Steve Jordan; Bob Clay; Alex Rentumis

Others present: Margaret Serpa; Art Smadbeck, Board of Selectmen; Pam Dolby, Town Administrator.

Meeting called to order at 4 pm.

Information Technology – Adam Darack – Discussion took place regarding the upgrades made to the town hall system and the progress to date. Budget for IT will be somewhat lower due to the fact we now have in-house payroll. There is a line item to upgrade cable for \$10,000. Margaret Serpa and Art Smadbeck both pointed out that by doing most of the upgrades himself, Adam has saved the town considerable amounts of money. He continues to improve the system and the website himself. We now have an off-site secure backup location at the police station.

Library – Jill Hughes, Director; Herb Foster, Trustee – Jill updated the FAC on the progress made during her first year and a half on the job. She presented a printout of distributions, programs and usage of the library. They have increased the programming budget for FY15 to one line account to keep better track of usage and costs. They are developing bi-lingual story time for young children and school age children; summer programs for early literary along with high school volunteers. New kindergarten programs will begin in March. Summer programs, music on the law, etc. will continue and grow as demand dictates. Discussion took place as to when the library will be moving to the new facility and should expected increase to costs be included in this budget. Also, if any of the solar project will reflect savings to the library.

Pam updated the FAC on the status of the solar installation at this time. The budget did go up about 3%.

Wastewater – David Thompson, Superintendent; James Carter, Commissioner; Pia Webster, Adm. Assistant – Discussion took place regarding a warrant article to supplement a FEMA grant. The grant has been signed and the town share is \$131,000. The article requested \$150,000. to include any contingencies. It was explained that the town share cannot be increased without notifying the granting authority and risk losing the grant altogether. There is also a time element involved of two years. It was decided to keep the article at \$131,000. for the town share and \$525,000. for the grant share and if unexpected costs are incurred, to deal with it at that time. There is a possibility for more funds due to Hurricane Sandy distributions. Discussion took place as to when bids should go out for the project. The best time to do the work is October – April. David will work on getting the information together as soon as possible after town meeting. The required audit on federal funds is ready and the town accepts the cost of \$6,500. as their share to pay. Discussion took place on the clarifiers article and whether one or both should be done at the same time to save on expense and travel costs. Capital Programs does not have this project in the five-year plan, but David has notified Jane Barbini (CPC). It was decided to amend Art. 55 down to the sum of \$141,000. for one clarifier at this time meeting. Aerators are another big project due in 2016. They have reached their 20 year life span and again, the decision has to be made to fix one or two at the same time. The idea of a stabilization fund came up and to encumber portions of the amount expected as they did with the fire truck. It was suggested that an engineering study be done on these upcoming projects rather than estimates from companies that may supply or do the work themselves.

Revenues are up dramatically and past due payments are up to date. They are expecting about \$236,000. in this fiscal year over \$199,000. In the previous year.

The FAC suggested that the wastewater get in touch with Capital Programs to get their projects on the five-year plan and keep them informed of any large project upcoming. They also requested that an updated list be sent to the FAC.