

**Town of Weston
Finance Committee Meeting Minutes**

Thursday, February 16, 2017

A meeting of the Finance Committee of the Town of Weston, which was duly called and posted in compliance with the laws of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, was held on February 16, 2017, at the Weston Town Hall. There being a quorum present, the meeting was called to order at 7:00pm.

Present for the meeting were:

Finance Committee: John McDonald – Chair, Gabrielle Clemens, Gerard Jansen, Keith Johnson, Sandra Metraux, James Philipkosky, Lisa Reitano, James Jarrett, and Ellen Richstone.

Also Present: Donna S. VanderClock, Town Manager; Susan Kelley, Finance Director; Pete Forcellese, Treasurer/Collector; David Soar, Fire Chief; Gary Jarobski, Facilities Director; Ben Polimer, Fields & Grounds Coordinator; Alex Cobb, School Committee and Proctor Fields Working Group member; Danielle Black, School Committee Chairperson; Videographer James Tremble, Weston Media Center.

1. Gabrielle Clemens was appointed to serve as Secretary *pro tempore* and charged with keeping the minutes of the meeting.
2. The minutes of the February 2, 2017 meeting were unanimously approved.
3. Committee member, Ellen Richstone, provided an overview of the Fire Department budget.

David Soar, Fire Chief, explained that the Fire Department is focused on improving public fire prevention education and upgrading fire fighting equipment including replacing a vehicle and thermal imaging devices. Thermal imaging devices cost roughly \$11,000 each. He would like to focus on improving education at the Council on Aging and in the public schools, and to improve and offer more CPR classes.

David Soar requested a new vehicle for the fire prevention officer. The current vehicle has over 100,000 miles and will be traded in for a new one.

The Committee and David Soar discussed:

- Medicare reimbursements for ambulance expenses, how the rates are set, the reimbursement process, and back up ambulances;
- Deputy Chief position and salary is under negotiation;

- Overtime pay has increased as a result of running the department at 85% capacity;
- The impact of additional residents due to 40b housing proposals;
- Number of calls to the Mass Turnpike and I95;
- Responding to calls on the Mass Turnpike average three times per week and costs approximately \$1,000 per call for the fire vehicle and ambulance. State reimbursement is only \$400 per call. Time spent responding to calls on the Turnpike has increased due to the reduction in toll plazas as exit opportunities;
- Car fires and small fires have increased, working fires have decreased;
- David Soar will provide an incident report at the request of John McDonald.

4. Ellen Richstone provided an overview of the Facilities Budget.

Gary Jarowski explained that the increase in budget expenses is due to increases in tree maintenance, machine maintenance, elevator inspections and related fees, plumbing maintenance, chair lifts, minor carpentry, and replacing aging fire extinguishers.

5. Ben Polimer, Fields and Grounds Coordinator, requested a budget increase of \$89,000 to improve the maintenance of Town and school fields. The largest cost increases are due to higher expense for aeration, a sharp increase in the cost of grass seed, field treatments, small equipment maintenance, soil, professional development, water, and irrigation. The cost of improving the irrigation systems may be offset by water efficiency.

6. Proctor Fields Replacement Update: Alex Cobb, Member of the School Committee and Proctor Field Working Group, provided an update on the Proctor Field Replacement Project. The Committee discussed the materials used for the new field and the cost/benefit of synthetic turf and concussion padding. The lifespan of the synthetic carpet is 8-12 years and there is a reduced maintenance cost to installing artificial turf (no seed, water, aeration).

Alex Cobb provided an update on components of the project including the new restrooms, track and field sports (javelin, shot put), and the sports wall.

7. School Budget Update from FinCom School Sub Committee members Lisa Reitano and Sandra Metraux.

The Committee discussed feedback received from the School Committee and the community from the Finance Committee's Letter on the School Budget.

The Committee also discussed the best way to provide this letter to all residents. The letter has been posted on the town website and published in the Weston Town Crier. Discussion ensued regarding the cost and wisdom of sending the letter directly to each household via mail service. A motion was made and the Committee took a vote (5-3 in favor, 1 abstained) to send the letter via direct mail to all households. A motion was made to transfer \$2,000 from the Reserve Fund to the Finance Committee operating expense budget to cover the expense of producing and mailing the letter. The Committee took a vote (6-3 in favor) to approve the Reserve Fund transfer.

The Committee discussed being transparent with costs and the best way to communicate to residents the actual/anticipated cost per household of proposed town projects and design fees.

The Committee discussed the Affordable Housing project, and CPC and state funding for the proposed rail trail and affordable housing.

8. A motion to adjourn was made, duly seconded, and the meeting adjourned at 9:30pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Gabrielle Clemens