

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT: Lois Stearns, Dan Campbell, Bernhard Porada, Tony Matteo and Sue Kaczinski

ALSO PRESENT: Deb Mero, Town Accountant; Willie Morales, Town Administrator; Skip Dunnell, Fire Chief

BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT: Bonnie L'Etoile

The meeting was called to order at 6:00 pm by Stearns.

This meeting was video recorded.

• **FIRE DEPARTMENT BUDGET PRESENTATION**

- Fire Chief Dunnell reviewed the line items
 - Increase to Salary; put in for a slight increase for those on salary/stipend (Chief, Deputy Chief, Captains, Lieutenants, Secretary and Treasurer). Increase dependent on what the Selectboard/FINCOM recommend.
 - Increase to Wages (those who fight fires or performing emergency services) based on a decision that the Selectboard made to increase those wages from \$15.86 to \$17.00
 - Operating Expense increase to the Dispatch Cost
 - Operating Expense increase to Propane; added back into budget
- Capital Expenditures
 - \$50,000 for Public Safety Complex Site Plans
 - \$350,000 for a used aerial truck (possible gift funds may help with this cost; however, Dunnell not certain about this at this point). Dunnell stated that they may entertain a service fee to the campus as calls have increased substantially. Historically never billed NMH (for unintentional calls) or currently the College, however, with this increase in call volume, it may be necessary.
 - Porada suggested generating By-Laws to set up fees for Police and Fire Calls, to eliminate the "pick and choose" method. A By-Law would set the cost for any and all types of calls.
 - Stearns inquired about a PILOT program (payment in lieu taxes). Morales stated that the Board of Assessors have been working with both the campus occupants about a PILOT and are trying to meet in the middle, however, Morales reminded group that this is completely optional for these entities.
 - \$ for a new chassis on rescue truck for FY21
 - \$ For Public Safety Complex; unknown figure. Note: there is an article that Morales is working on to change the wording of the deed to clear the title (Inhabitants of Northfield to The Town of Northfield)

• **EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT BUDGET PRESENTATION**

- Dunnell (director of Emergency Management) level fund

6:27 Chief Dunnell leaves FINCOM meeting. Bill Llewelyn joins FINCOM meeting

• **AGRICULTURE COMMISSION BUDGET PRESENTATION**

- Llewelyn, Chair, increased budget by \$200; part of a two-year project that the group is working on.

• **CONSERVATION COMMISSION BUDGET PRESENTATION**

- Llewelyn increased slightly for dues and memberships
- CONSCOM is still waiting for a secretary, so the wages for that position have not been used
- Article for an outstanding bill
- Article for \$4000 to obtain the services of a forester to prepare for logging in the town forest (50 acres); The stewardship committee came to the CONSCOM

6:35 Llewelyn leaves meeting

- **PLANNING BOARD BUDGET**

- Stearns advised that the Planning Board had requested a level fund budget, however when actual form was received, it reflected a decrease of \$985.

- **TOWN CLERK BUDGET PRESENTATION**

- Campbell decreased on Meetings and Seminars, vital records, dues
- Increase on Postage
- Review of Election budget
- Working on codification/by-laws, may be on future budget request
- Still has funds available for equipment; looking to purchase another 4 person voting booth
- Matteo inquired about state reimbursement for elections; Campbell explained process
- Campbell announced Non-Partisan Caucus to be held Tuesday March 6 at 6:30 pm, needs to have a minimum of 25 registered voters.

- **MISCELLANEOUS BUDGET DISCUSSION**

- Mero found a reduction in the police budget (Chief has agreed to it). The lease for computer equipment ends in FY18, no payments will be made in FY19; line to be eliminated from Police Budget, an \$8,000 decrease.
- Stearns would like to drop the Alexander Hall budget as it hadn't been used since 2013; the Selectboard to decide.
- Pioneer budget has not yet been set; budget sub-committee will be meeting again March 8th, public hearing then scheduled for the following week (the 15th). Porada asked whether the Selectboard had approved the request for an extension on the budget from the school committee; Morales stated that the Selectboard did respond and state that there was disappointment in delaying the process.
- Follow up from last FINCOM meeting regarding Marc Fortier and the discussion on a donation of an ambulance. The town of Acushnet would donate (no cost); Fortier is looking into the use of this and if it is a good fit for Northfield.

LMH

- **MAIL**

- February Balances from Mero

- **MINUTES**

- Minutes from the February 5th, 2018 meeting were reviewed. *A motion was made by Matteo, seconded by Campbell and **VOTED** unanimously to accept the February 5th, 2018 minutes as presented.*
- Minutes from the February 26th, 2018 meeting were reviewed. *A motion was made by Campbell, seconded by Matteo to accept the February 26th, 2018 minutes as presented.* Discussion. Kaczinski wanted it noted that she left the portion of the meeting in which the EMS budget was presented; left when MacEwen left and joined back when Fortier left. Motion rescinded by Campbell.
- *A motion was made by Matteo, seconded by Campbell and **VOTED** to approve the February 26th, 2018 meeting minutes as amended.* In Favor: Stearns, Campbell, Porada, Matteo. Abstained: Kaczinski

- **MEETINGS ATTENDED AS REPRESENTATIVES OF THE FINCOM**

- Porada: Meeting of the Public Safety Facility; discussed the deed situation as well as putting together presentations for future events (i.e. State of Our Town Dinner on April 7th)
- Porada: Town Governance, no communication
- Matteo: Community Preservation Committee nothing new to report from last week

- Matteo: HEART committee, news about Bernardston Selectboard calling a meeting on 3/14 to possibly close Leyden Elementary. Morales stated that there was a proposal received from the RFP for the study that the HEART committee needed for the research to gather and analyze data of the schools.

- **PRELIMINARY BUDGET ACCOUNT DELIBERATIONS**

- Morales stated that the Selectboard requested to have all the articles for the March 7th meeting. Then at their following meeting, the Selectboard will prioritize the articles
- Stearns discussed the levy limit; thinking in terms of the tax rate and keeping it down. Groups input when looking at articles; Campbell would like to see all articles first to see where we are at
- Stearns stated that the Chair of the Selectboard has asked the FINCOM's position on the Maintenance Position. Members of the FINCOM requested to delay the discussion and wait until the FINCOM meets with the Selectboard; not at this point. Campbell wishes to table discussion. ***A motion was made by Campbell, seconded by Porada and VOTED unanimously to table the discussion on the Maintenance Position.***
- Stearns asked about an audit; Morales has an article for the Audit. Last audit was done in 2011. \$17,000-\$25,000 for cost of audit
- Matteo asked about the School Lunch deficit; was an article created? How are they going to resolve it? Appears it may be paid for by towns over a certain amount of years (Northfield will be approximately 50%). Discussion on the future and what the school will do to insure this won't happen again.

- **NEXT MEETING**

- T/B/D based on when the Selectboard meets. Potentially the 19th of March, if Selectboard has met. Stearns to advised FINCOM

A motion was made by Campbell, seconded by Porada and VOTED unanimously to adjourn the FINCOM Meeting.

Meeting adjourned at 7:30 pm

Submitted by:
Bethany Walker
FINCOM Secretary

Approved On: 3-19-18

Approved By: Lou H. Stearn