

Notes
Finance Committee Meeting
January 26, 2022
GoToMeeting

The meeting was called to order at 6:02.

Present: Ginger Robinson, Joyce Muka, Nate Messer, Michèle Higgins

Absent: Tom Raffensperger

Guests: Bill Glabach, Erica Jensen, Don Sadowsky, Michele Giarusso

Ginger requested that the minutes from the January 12, 2022 meeting be amended to say that she did ask the Highway Department for their inventory but that she had not received it and wanted to give them time in their transition to a new superintendent before asking again. In an unanimous roll call vote, the minutes were approved as amended.

Ginger reported that there was no update on the School Committee.

Michèle suggested that we allow Don Sadowsky to speak so that he didn't have to stay if he didn't want to. Don stated that he is new in town and that he is an attorney for the EPA. He is therefore used to how a large central bureaucracy works with serious filing systems and is finding that Leyden doesn't have any kind of filing system. He wondered how that can be remedied and that Michele Giarusso suggested that he speak to us to see about funding to update our technology and its use for the sake of efficiency. Ginger suggested that we would need to appropriate money into the budget to do this but also asked Michele G. to look into the possibility/availability of grants that could bring in a consultant to help with this. We do recognize the lack of a comprehensive filing system as a problem for the town. Michele G. will check into this. Michèle asked about a committee that might have been formed to look into archiving records. Don said that he had signed up for it but that he had not been contacted. Ginger also wondered if there weren't any university programs where students could intern for such projects for credit. Bill Glabach supports the concept of looking for a grant to help us with this. Nate asked if VADAR fits into this anywhere, but Joyce clarified that VADAR is only for financial accounting. Don will follow up with Michele G. and come back to us in February or March with what he learns.

Ginger next reported on the Public Safety Advisory Committee. At its meeting on January 24, the Select Board passed a request from the Public Safety Advisory Committee to apply for a grant to study future options for Leyden for Police, Fire, EMS and Emergency Management. The grant from the State could be up to \$100,000 with no money spent from Leyden. It would be applied to pay the Collins Institute which is affiliated with UMass/Boston (as well as lawyer fees and other expenses) and which has a lot of experience conducting this kind of study. They look at facilities, interview officials and get an insight into the thinking of the towns in question. This institute has been instrumental in studying and drafting an agreement with Wendell and Leverett. Ginger mentioned that a representative of the Collins Institute was scheduled to come to Leyden soon to talk to Jeff (and anyone else who might show up) to collect some initial thoughts.

Then we moved on to the draft warrant for the Special Town Meeting scheduled for February 23.

ARTICLE 1-

To see if the Town will vote to transfer from Free Cash \$7,500 to the Town Council [sic] Account or take any vote or votes in relation thereto.

SUBMITTED BY THE SELECTBOARD FOR APPROVAL
FINANCE COMMITTEE

Ginger asked if we could scale the request down. Bill wondered if it's enough. Erica agreed with Bill. She pointed out that there is currently a \$412 bill with Town Counsel. Michèle wondered if this fee is outside the grant. It was mentioned that Donna McNichol might not be able to represent Leyden in possible agreement with Bernardston because she is also their Town Counsel. Michèle made a motion to recommend article 1. Joyce seconded. In an unanimous roll call vote, the committee voted to support this article.

ARTICLE 2-

To see if the Town will vote to transfer from Free Cash \$5,000 into a transportation account for the purpose of returning a Humvee, Amblualnce [sic], 2 Generators to a Military Depot in Penn and New Jersey by the town or take any vote or votes in relation thereto.

SUBMITTED BY THE SELECTBOARD

Erica pointed out that this process is already in motion and thinks that the amount will be insufficient. She said that there are also other items including night vision goggles. Joyce asked why they need to be returned. Erica explained that the Federal

Government requires that these items be returned when there is a retirement in the Police Department. Nate asks how these items arrived in Leyden. Bill confirmed that Dan brought them in. Nate questions the process. Bill said that Jeff has talked to a trucking business or two and that the cost estimates come from the businesses. Erica said that Dan may be looking in to transporting these items.

Nate made a motion to recommend article 2. Michèle seconded. In an unanimous roll call vote, the committee voted to support this article.

ARTICLE 3-

To see if the Town will vote to transfer from Free Cash \$26,000 to cover a deficit in the Broadband Construction of the Internet Build out by the town or take any vote or votes in relation thereto.

SUBMITTED BY THE SELECTBOARD FOR APPROVAL
FINANCE COMMITTEE

Erica confirmed that this is the remaining amount of the Broadband overrun. Joyce asked if the retained earnings have been certified. Ginger asked if we can take money back to repay the Town (General Fund) from the original \$68,000 voted in. Joyce said that Broadband and the General Fund should not be mixing. Michele G. talked to Deb Wagner who said that a town can go back a maximum of two years to recoup money spent. Erica said that this would work for the \$26,000 in question but that the (approx.) \$68,000 can't be touched.

We would like to reword the article to transfer from the Broadband certified earnings to free cash. Nate wondered how we can be certain of that two-year time frame. Erica said that there is a paper trail that would prove that we can pay the \$26,000 within that time frame. Bill pointed out that the article can always be amended on the floor. Michèle made a motion to recommend the article as reworded. Joyce seconded. In an unanimous roll call vote, the committee voted to support this article as reworded.

ARTICLE 4-

To see if the Town will vote to transfer from Free Cash \$2500 into the Highway Expense Account to cover advertisement cost related to Superintendents, Laborer and Foreman positions advertised by the town or take any vote or votes in relation thereto.

SUBMITTED BY THE SELECTBOARD FOR APPROVAL
FINANCE COMMITTEE

Ginger pointed out that DLS does not recommend spending free cash for line items. Bill G. would like to talk to Bill B. about this article. Erica would like to use the

Highway expense account and believes that Bill B. agreed to this. There is \$80,000 in this account. Joyce would like a line item transfer at Town Meeting. Ginger suggested using the reserve fund or a transfer at Town Meeting. Bill cautioned that using the Reserve Fund this way is rare because it is strictly for unforeseen expenses. Joyce believes that the money can come from other areas. Ginger pointed out the Highway account is not overdrawn. Nate made a motion not to recommend this article. Joyce seconded. In an unanimous roll call vote, the committee voted not to support this article in the hopes that the Select Board will initiate a transfer from the reserve fund.

ARTICLE 5-

To see if the Town will vote to transfer from Free Cash \$2500 into Boards and Committees accounts for advertising Public Hearings and Employment advertising or take any vote or votes in relation thereto.

SUBMITTED BY THE SELECTBOARD FOR APPROVAL
FINANCE COMMITTEE

Joyce asked if the Town does not charge for public hearings. Bill said that there is a revolving account for advertising. Erica confirmed that the account is depleted; as of January 3, 2022 there is a need for \$627.28. Using the same wording as for article 4, Joyce made a motion not to recommend this article. Nate seconded. In an unanimous roll call vote, the committee voted not to support this article in the hopes that the Select Board will initiate a transfer from the reserve fund.

ARTICLE 6-

To see if the Town will vote to transfer from Free Cash \$1200 into the Highway Machinery account to cover the cost of Solar Batteries for the Identification sign for Public Events or take any vote or votes in relation thereto.

SUBMITTED BY THE SELECTBOARD FOR APPROVAL
FINANCE COMMITTEE

Erica wondered why we would use free cash when the Highway account is healthy. Joyce agreed. Bill mentioned that the money is due and that we shouldn't wait until May to pay, but he thought that Jeff's idea was to replenish the account. Ginger would not like to use free cash for this purpose.

We would like to recommend that the money be taken from the Highway maintenance fund rather than from free cash.

Joyce made a motion not to support this article. Michèle seconded. In an unanimous roll call vote, the committee voted not to support this article.

ARTICLE 7-

To see if the Town will vote to transfer from Free Cash \$50,000 into the Highway Capital Stabilization Account or take any vote or votes in relation thereto.

SUBMITTED BY THE SELECTBOARD FOR APPROVAL
FINANCE COMMITTEE

Ginger pointed out that DLS has recommended that Leyden combine all stabilization funds but would like to see this on a Special Town Meeting warrant that would precede an Annual Town Meeting warrant because voters are used to that. Joyce wonders if moving on it now would garner more interest for this warrant. Erica asked if there is a capital expense account. Joyce points out that it is more like a savings account. Bill said that an account of designated savings looks like a lot of money. Nate said that we really do need to have long range plans which we currently do not have. Bill pointed out that we do have budget planning at TM where there is usually an in-depth discussion. Erica wondered if there are ledger accounts showing stabilization accounts. Ginger pointed out that the Finance Committee has issued new forms this year to begin the process of long-range planning. Bill is impressed that the State wants us to combine but does not understand why they want us to combine at this point in time when it seemed as if they were satisfied in the past that we have several stabilization accounts. Joyce agreed with this. Bill prefers making designations from free cash rather than through taxation. Michèle agrees with Joyce suggesting that for this year we can't do this but that for next year, we use the new budget forms. Nate asked for a clarification between free cash vs. stabilization, and Joyce explained that Free Cash goes away at the end of a fiscal year and is unavailable until it is certified by the State whereas Stabilization funds are always available through a Town Meeting or Special Town Meeting with a 2/3 vote.

Ginger suggested tabling both article 7 and 8 until our joint meeting on the 31st to be able to discuss with full boards together. Ginger will talk to Jeff about this.

ARTICLE 8-

To see if the Town will vote to transfer from Free Cash \$25,000 into the Fire Departments Capital Stabilization Account for Truck Replacement or take any vote or votes in relation thereto.

SUBMITTED BY THE SELECTBOARD FOR APPROVAL
FINANCE COMMITTEE

Tabled until the 31st.

ARTICLE 9-

To see if the Town will vote to transfer from Free Cash \$2500 into the Emergency Management Services Account or take any vote or votes in relation thereto.

SUBMITTED BY THE SELECTBOARD FOR APPROVAL
FINANCE COMMITTEE

It is unclear what the purpose of this request is. Bill said that there is no budget for emergency management. Nate said that we need to plan a budget for this. Ginger pointed out that in the beginning of FY 2018, there was an \$11,943 balance in this account of which Dan received \$9,670 as salary. \$1,500 was spent on a 1991 Ford F-800 vehicle which was purchased in 2019. Bill said that he thinks it was declared as surplus and also that remaining funds are returned to the General Fund. We would like to see more information and process and budget for Town Meeting.

Nate made a motion not to support this article. Joyce seconded. In an unanimous roll call vote, the committee voted not to support this article.

ARTICLE 10-

To see if the Town will vote to transfer from Free Cash \$30,000 for the purchase of a [sic] on demand propane generator for the TOWN HALL complex that will run Town Hall, Fire Department, Highway Garage for Emergency Disasters Storm related, or take any vote or votes in relation thereto.

SUBMITTED BY THE SELECTBOARD FOR APPROVAL
FINANCE COMMITTEE

Erica said that the Town has received two bids for this project and cautioned that \$30,000 is insufficient for this project. Just the maintenance itself is very expensive. The evaluation for the needs of the generator is \$600. We wondered if we can use ARPA funds, but Michele G. is unclear about that. She says that there are four categories for using this money and that towns have to be careful. She said that we can put this article off until ATM in the spring. Nate agreed that \$30,000 can't be enough. Erica pointed out that the Town Hall complex does not have a generator that works and that the area is an Emergency Operations Center making a replacement a need. Bill wondered how much is in the Town building stabilization account and if we can't earmark money for the purchase of a generator. He noted that the Town Offices do not have a generator, either. Joyce recommended that we table this article. Michèle suggested that this be a part of long-range planning. Erica wondered if the \$600 couldn't be put into a line item,

and Nate reminded us that we need three bids. Ginger said that this idea needs more exploration but that we can support it. This article was tabled.

ARTICLE 11-

To see if the Town will vote to transfer from Free Cash \$2500 into the Emergency Management Account or take any vote or votes in relation thereto.

SUBMITTED BY THE SELECTBOARD FOR APPROVAL
FINANCE COMMITTEE

We believed this to be a repeat article of article 9 and dismissed it.

ARTICLE 12-

To see if the Town will vote to transfer from Free Cash \$30,000 to replace the roof on the Town Highway Garage or take any vote or votes in relation thereto.

SUBMITTED BY THE SELECTBOARD FOR APPROVAL
FINANCE COMMITTEE

Erica said that she believes that \$30,000 is insufficient to replace the roof on the garage and urged us to look into this. Bill agreed. Ginger said that we should get quotes and that this should go to ATM. Bill wondered if we could slide this into stabilization. Joyce said that we need more information. We agreed to table this article until we have more information, hopefully on the 31st.

ARTICLE 13-

To see if the Town will vote to transfer from Free Cash \$15,000 for relocation of Children's Playground Avery Field and Additions and Purpose of Tennis Court or take any vote or votes in relation thereto.

SUBMITTED BY THE SELECTBOARD FOR APPROVAL
FINANCE COMMITTEE

This was taken off the warrant after being sent.

ARTICLE 14-

To see if the Town will vote to transfer \$12,300 from Free Cash to the General Stabilization account, or take any vote or votes in relation thereto.

SUBMITTED BY THE SELECBOARD FOR APPROVAL
FINANCE COMMITTEE

Because of recommendations made on this warrant, the numbers will change. We will wait until the 31st.

Michele G. spoke about the Gill engineering report on the Coates Rd. culvert replacement project which is already going to cost at least \$100,000 more than the amount of the grant. There is a maximum \$200,000 on the grant. Michele reported that the cost of steel has gone up 700%! She said that she had been in constant contact with the DER all day to try to figure a way around this. The State actually wants to give Leyden more money for this project for two apparent reasons: there are protected species involved and the water goes to the Greenfield water supply. The DER would like to see if Leyden can come up with somewhere in the neighborhood of \$30,000 to contribute to this while they are looking at the possibility of granting an additional \$80,000 - \$100,000. We wondered if ARPA funds can be applied, or if ch. 90 funds can be applied to this. There is a time factor as this must be completed by the end of June. Bill suggested that we examine this carefully. We want to proceed and find money to put towards the DER's request, but Ginger also pointed out that even \$10,000 is a good bit of money for Leyden. Michele G. will keep looking into this.

Joyce made a motion to adjourn at 8:00. Nate seconded. In an unanimous roll call vote, the vote to adjourn was passed.

Our next meeting will be a joint meeting with the Select Board at 6:00 p.m. on Monday, January 31, 2022. Our next meeting after that will be on February 9, 2022 at 6:00 p.m.