

Finance Committee Notes
March 12th, 2025
Town Offices, 4:00 pm

Ginger called the meeting to order at 4:02p.m.

Finance Committee Members Present: Ginger Robinson, Carolyn Asbury, Pam Brown, Paul Hake, Nate Messer

Others Present: Bill Brooks, Katherine DiMatteo , Jeff Baker

Highway Department Budget

- Bill mentioned that the budget is pretty straightforward. The only increase in salary that's being reviewed with the Selectboard and it covers everyone on the team.
- Pam noted that the winter budget was higher than normal.
 - Bill noted that the overall annual budget covers the overage.
 - Bill estimated that they were over by about \$10k for the winter but are well stocked/fully-stocked.
 - We didn't run out of salt this year and have leftover (currently)
 - Bill noted they had \$69,000 for the 2026 winter budget.
- Ginger talked about the regionalization meeting from the previous night.
 - This is still very early in the conversation, but it might allow Leyden and Bernardston Highway Departments to share resources and staff.
- Carolyn asked about the extra labor costs on the budget outside of the core highway team.
 - Bill mentioned that this extra labor expenses was for contractors that are hired for special projects (ie culvert cleaning)
- Bill mentioned they will be building a roof over the shipping containers and cover some of the equipment that is being stored outside.
 - There will be some contractor support work they'll require for the roof.
- Bill also wants to build a fence along the property line so abutters do not have to be looking at the shipping containers and to reduce noise.
 - Bill noted they're having problems finding the corner pins and knowing exactly where the property boundaries are.

- Ginger brought up the recommendation from the Building Needs Committee to have an air quality filtration system installed.
 - Bill didn't know too much about these systems.
- There was some discussion about if and when they're going to be required to purchase electric vehicles and trucks for the town.
- Bill talked about how their newest Freightliner should be replaced soon so we should start planning on how we will replace that truck.
 - The FinCom and Bill reviewed the other equipment and the status of the equipment.
 - The Caterpillar Roller 863 should be covered so it lasts longer.
- The Finance Committee and Bill discussed different possible ways to get new equipment such as possible leasing trucks in the future.
 - Ginger asked about whether or not it would make sense to get a used Peterbilt truck.
 - Bill noted that if someone got their CDL on an automatic (vs manual) truck, they would not be licensed on a manual truck which an old used Peterbilt might be.
- Bill mentioned that they repaired the wall on the salt shed this past year as discussed.

Chair Updates

Motion: Carolyn made a motion to approve the minutes as written. Nate seconded. All in favor.

- Ginger and Katherine talked about the Regionalization Committee meetings that are, currently, once or twice a month.
 - The grant for this project lasts until Spring of 2026 and therefore, it's not something that would be discussed with the towns until after that time.
- The Finance Committee discussed various high-level possible configurations of the town services.

Carolyn made a motion to adjourn at 5:37. Pam seconded. All in favor.