

Finance Committee Notes
February 26th, 2025
Town Offices, 4:15 pm

Ginger called the meeting to order at 4:18 p.m.

Finance Committee Members Present: Ginger Robinson, Carolyn Asbury, Pam Brown, Paul Hake, Nate Messer, Katherine DiMatteo, Jeffrey Baker, Paul McLatchy III (town clerk), Ken Medvetz (Building Needs Chair)

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

School Check-In

- Katherine gave an update on the Three Town agreement and noted that there is a legal review happening on the current agreement.
- Katherine and Ginger noted that the school budget was approved for 2026 and there was only a slight increase to Leyden.
- Ginger recommended that we begin a capital account for the schools; whether it's for a new school or for upgrades and repairs to the current school.
- Katherine gave an overview of the plan for the school renovations at the PVR school.
- Katherine gave an overview of the six town agreement as well, which would also affect the buildings.
 - If this were to go through, the high school would be at Gill Montague and the middle school would be at the current Pioneer Valley school.
- The feasibility study that was planned for the 2025 year was postponed another year.

Planning Board Budget:

- The Finance Committee reviewed the request from the Planning Board to increase their budget from \$500 to \$1,500.
 - Some of this would be for advertising expenses and part of it would be legal fees.
 - It was discussed adding the legal fees for the Planning Board into the Counsel Fees line in the budget and the advertising expenses should come out of the Board and Committee Fee Lines. This budget increase, then, would not be specifically on the Planning Boards expense line, but would be funds they could use for their expected increase.
 - The increased fees are related to legal reviews related to the ADUs in town.
 - Pam mentioned that there will also be additional legal fees related to the review of the two school agreements that are being discussed which will increase our counsel/legal fees.

- This should be factored into the overall Counsel budget.

Other Finances Numbers

- Michele shared some preliminary numbers for the PVR School for 2026, though the budget is not fully approved. The current operating expenses are budgeted at \$894,772 and \$3,105 for capital expenses.
- In addition, she shared the estimated budget for Franklin Tech School of \$122,418.00 for 2026.

Clerk Budget

- Paul M. began the budget discussion on reviewing the general expenses for 2026.
 - Overall, there is a decrease because of the reduced elections during 2026.
 - There is only the 1 June local election.
 - There is a slight increase in the election budget for June for food and drink for the election workers.
- Carolyn asked about, generally, who sends what items out by mail between the Town Clerk and the Town Administrator.
 - Paul M. noted the Town Clerk largely focuses on sending out the census and dog license requests.
 - Paul M. noted that getting completed census back from people in town has been difficult, though it has improved over previous years.

Building Needs

- Michele mentioned the town is expecting to receive \$126,540 from Green Communities but there is \$126,540 in the near future.
 - Roughly \$31,000 was quoted for the general energy efficiency of the town buildings. This includes general “buttoning up” of the buildings.
 - Michele is working to determine what of the remaining Green Communities funds can be used for various improvements to the town buildings.
- The budget to insulate the rest of the Town building was approximately \$35-\$39k.
 - This was quoted as high as \$45k by the Building Needs
- ADA Self Evaluation was done as well and we may need to build these improvements into our capital plan.
- Michele believed the rest of the Town Office roof will be completed in FY 2025.
 - The town used the \$53,000 from ARPA funds for the roof so far.
 - There is \$31,000 in the special fund for the remainder of the roof and the town will see if it can use the Green Communities funds for the rest of the budget because the rest of the roof will cost more than \$31,000.
- Building Needs Committee
 - Ken requested a budget for a laptop and added this to his budget.
 - In addition, Ken recommended a color laser printer for the town offices to use to print reports etc.
 - Things are currently being printed at home by members of the Building Needs Committee.

- Capital Improvements:
 - Ken quotes a budget of approximately \$35,000 to replace the roof over the Committees Room.
 - ADA Compliant Ramp on the Town Offices would cost \$30,000
 - Ken proposed having the ADA compliant ramp go to the front of the building with a longer ramp.
 - Nate noted that the location of the new location would require more maintenance such as shoveling.
 - The third capital improvement project the Building Needs Committee received a quote for was for an air filtration system for the Fire Department and DPW building. The initial quote was for roughly \$45,000 for these improvements.
 - There will also be an annual cost to replace the filters.
 - The Chair requested an increase for Building Repairs/Maintenance from \$10,000 to \$15,000 for FY2026.
- There was some discussion about the town purchasing a snow blower for various parts of town.
 - Nate mentioned the need for storage of the snow blower and general maintenance.

Salary Reviews

- Katherine reviewed the updated Employee Compensation Plan that the Selectboard has been updating.
 - It includes the expected increases for the FY2026.
 - This was shared with the Finance Committee so it can reflect the increases in its budget for 2026.

Carolyn made a motion to adjourn at 6:19. Pam seconded. All in favor.