

Finance Committee Notes  
March 19<sup>th</sup>, 2025  
Town Offices, 4:00 pm

Ginger called the meeting to order at 4:07p.m.

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

**Others Present:** Erica Jensen (Selectboard), Liz Kidder (Fire Department and Emergency Management), Susan Bobe (Treasurer and Tax Collector), Carey Barton (Fire Chief)

**Chair Updates**

**Motion:** Carolyn made a motion to approve the minutes as amended. Paul seconded. All in favor.

- Pam was leading the beginning of the meeting in Ginger's absence.
- The Finance Committee reviewed salary increases that are being proposed by the Selectboard.
- George Steffan, from Ashfield, is the new Town Clerk to replace Paul McClatchy III
  - The Town Clerks budget would be \$23,400 with their new salary.
- Liz began reviewing the Emergency Management budget
  - The Bernardston Police Department doesn't expect any major changes though the final budget is pending.
    - Not getting a fifth officer at this time.
  - Liz recommended we put in additional funds into the Leyden Police Cruiser stabilization account.
    - The cruisers could cost more than we had originally planned.
    - The cruisers need to be replaced every 5 years.
    - The Leyden Cruiser has another 4 years, roughly, on it.
  - Liz mentioned that the police force needs new tasers.
    - The current ones are from 2008.
    - They will buy 5 additional tasers and it will be a separate line item in the Bernardston Police budget.
  - Liz proposed moving the EMS Oversight/Training to general expenses plus \$1,000 for the EMS Coordinator Stipend.
  - Liz is proposing an additional role of Department Clerk for clerical responsibilities
    - This was originally proposed at \$25/hr however, this individual is currently on a stipend at \$19/hr. and should be paid at the same rate.

- \$21,370 was the Town Assistant salary previously and they are no longer here. The new Town Clerk salary is \$10,000 more meaning we have \$11,370 remaining that could be used for another role.
- 2024, 19 ambulance calls in Leyden \$10,125 (at \$375 per call) from 27 calls.
- The Finance Committee began discussing equipment with Carey
  - Vehicles and turn-out gear: they are all set for this upcoming year.
  - Carey mentioned that the fire hoses will need to be replaced soon.
  - Erica recommended considering setting up a development fund for larger equipment purchases.
  - Regarding the firehoses, Erica recommended that there is \$3,000 over leeway from 2025 budget to 2026 recommended budget that could be put towards fire houses.
  - March 14th balance of \$21,000 left in the Fire Development Fund
  - Ginger began reviewing the Capital Expenses to determine what kind of large purchases the Fire Department might need to make.
    - The Air Packs were one of the anticipated purchases that cost approximately \$10,000.
  - Carey mentioned they will be applying for the Fire Grant like they did this year.
    - The Fire Department Clerk that was proposed, Samantha Wood, would be the one to fill out the grants moving forward.
      - Janell Howard, Administrative Assistant put in her notice very recently.
  - Erica mentioned that it will be 3.5% across the board increase.

Tax Collector and Treasury Budget:

- Tax Collector
  - Expense Line is expected to increase by \$122.
    - Vadar is not expected to increase.
  - Tax Lien Expense is anticipated to stay the same.
    - This is used to pay the legal fees and form filing
- Treasurer Expenses
  - Certification is the same amount
  - Slightly more on Expenses (\$100)
  - Harpers (payroll service) would be increasing their costs by \$520.

Nate made a motion to adjourn at 6:18. Paul seconded. All in favor.