



Town of Fairhaven

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Town Hall - 40 Centre Street - Fairhaven, MA

2021 MAR 24 A 11:33

MEETING NOTES

FAIRHAVEN,
MASS.

Date, Time, Location:

March 4th, 2021 @ 7:00 P.M., Remote through ZOOM

Meeting Overview:

1. Meeting called to order
2. Past meeting minutes approval
1. Overview of Sewer Department budget and capital project requests.
2. Overview of Parks Department budget and capital project requests
3. Overview of Highway Department budget and capital project requests
4. Overview of Water Department budget and capital project requests
5. Overview of Sanitation Department budget and capital project requests
6. Overview of BPW Administration Department budget and capital project requests
3. Closing Remarks
4. Vote to adjourn

-Key-

BOLD = Issue being discussed

● = Notes, indentation for more notes

○ = Questions and discussions below

◆ = Votes (Nom/Second)

! = Change in attendance

Member Attendance (10):

- Padraic Elliot, Lisa Plante, Chris Fidalgo, Bernie Roderick, Carolyn Roberts, Tracey Diggins, Jessica Dwelley, Rob Grinrod, Kathi Carter (joined late), Jennifer Dupras (joined late), Kevin Gallagher (joined late)

Town of Fairhaven (5):

- Wendy Graves (Collector/Treasurer/Finance Director), Vinnie Furtado (BPW), Linda L. Schick (Sewer), John M. Charbonneau (Highway), Jeffrey Furtado (Water)

Meeting called, 7:01 PM

PAST MINUTES

- Finance Committee 2.25.2021

◆ Rob, Lisa, (8 - 0 unanimous)

TONIGHT'S AGENDA

! Kathi Carter joined the meeting

! Jennifer Dupras joined the meeting

SEWER

- Salaries and wages
 - Contractual increases
 - Payouts for Linda and Secretary
- Increase in small tools, to match the spending rate
- Increase repairs and maintenance, equipment
 - Waiting for upgrade, need to maintain the existing plant
- Decrease in training is down
 - Free training offers
- Gasoline is set by the town
 - Rob: Do we file for a rebate on the road tax for fuel when putting in compressors and non-road machinery? Linda: Not that I'm aware of
 - Rob: You can reclaim the tax from the state
- Rebuilding a UV bank
 - There's 4, one gets rebuilt every year, on rotation
- Actuator for the UV
- Spare pumps for smaller stations
- Comm line parts for hydraulic parts
- Sludge was up
 - Need to renegotiate the contract, likely to go up
- Pad: What about Capital Plans?
 - Pump station improvements (design) for remaining pump stations
 - Infiltration of inflow for force mains - back from the original pipes, want to use cameras to check them
 - Roof for a building, too many leaks, cannot repair further
 - Truck with a plow
 - Currently have a Prius; Truck would allow the pump stations to get plowed out
 - Will retain the Prius
 - Can be used for basic transport

PARKS

- Salaries and wages up for step increases
 - Vinnie: Did you (Wendy) eliminate the summer position? Wendy: Haven't changed from the original, but will change all at once
- Vinnie: Budget was cut by \$4,000, so the elimination of the summer position instead of the cuts would benefit the department
 - Typically hire 3 people for grass cutting. Would rather cut a person or half instead of the \$4,000

- Parks, Misc, Repairs, Supplies, and Beach were all cut and would rather keep the budget as is
- West Island Beach expense \$7,000 less because of a failed system, but the line item is level funded
- Capital Plans
 - Overlay of the bike path
 - Crushed stone needs to be brought in, which had an increase, and the \$90k may not cover the overlay, "biggest increase in 20 years"
 - Paving of the West Island beach parking lot
 - \$620k, which is part of the 5 year plan
 - Went before Conservation, have an engineer, preliminary designs
 - Would eliminate man hours spent on the parking lot now

! Kevin Gallagher joins

- Capital items haven't gone before the selectmen yet, but should be at the next FinCom meeting

HIGHWAY

- Increase in salaries and wages
 - Step increases, retirement payout
- Tools were cut
 - Not sure how to cover this
- Building and equipment maintenance have been 0'd out, but will not be able to function without this
- Inspection stickers were up due to large trucks
- Advertising and printing up \$200 (increasing costs)
- Contracted services up contractually
- Increase in stormwater management
 - Mandates by EPA
- Vinnie: Initially, vehicle repair and maintenance took a heavier cut, which was brought back in after moving money around
 - John: One motor for a door is \$2,000
- Vinnie: Signs were down, but signs are put up constantly
- Wendy: Appears that money is coming for schools and towns
 - Wendy: I'll work with Vinnie to figure this out
- Vinnie: We have a contractual obligation with salaries
- Pad: I'd like to better understand the impact to the town
 - Chris: This seems like we're cutting needs vs. wants
 - Vinnie: Definitely need to revisit
- Reduction on road materials
 - John: \$4,000 cut would be more bearable than \$10k
- Reduction for signs and lines
- Supplies were cut
- Carolyn: For Wendy, for YTD Expense, which date? Wendy: End of January
 - Carolyn: But electricity doesn't seem to match

- John: Expended amounts are not correct
- Carolyn: So this is done on a cash basis vs. accrued? Wendy: Correct
- Curbing and hard surface, hoping to cut this more to cover the other budget cuts
- Reduction in street resurfacing to cover other cuts
- Subdivision management fees, paid by developers for for 20 yr maintenance on subdivision catch basins, sweep streets, detention ponds
- Rob: Could we divide the resurfacing into a longer time period? John: Need to look at the numbers, but needs to be broken down further
 - The increase in materials might require breaking down further
- *Vinnie gives Rob an overview of the plant changes required*
 - Topic was heavy covered in last year's meeting minutes¹
- Capital plan
 - Roads, 2 sets of roads, because 4 streets were approved with the allotted amount
 - Because of a typo in the warrant, only Chase Road was approved
 - Requires we enter them once again
 - Want to get the earmarked money back and pay for the streets that were intended
 - *FY 22 roads listed by Vinnie*
 - Lisa: Did you have a carryover form FY20? It looks like there was a remaining balance.
 - Vinnie: The money that wasn't approved last year wouldn't be used until now
 - Vinnie: Money hasn't been paid out just yet
 - John: Binder, then top are placed, and then we payout
 - Lisa: Any idea what will be left after paying out? John: Need to check
 - Chis: So that 19% increase in material cost would affect the appropriated amount? Vinnie: Yes, but we want to use Chapter 90 to supplement
 - All based on engineering estimates
 - Vinnie: Chapter 90 money (\$500k) usually tackles other streets
 - Lisa: It looks like there will be a \$50k buffer. John: Might be based on savings that are found when doing work, but cannot be counted on.
 - Pad: There's only one bucket for capital budget, but that committee will have less money than usual
 - Pad: There might be difficult choices here
 - Vinnie: Will do what I can to cover those streets regardless of the typo
 - Front-end Loader, \$220k
 - 2002 Loader in use now, heavily used, many functional problems
 - One of the main plows for the center of town
 - Lisa: What's the cost of fixing it vs. repairing? John: It would be \$60k but it would be a waste of money
- Carolyn: Overtime pay doubled over the last couple of FYs, why? John: Need to check on it
 - Vinnie: Highway doesn't get much overtime pay in general
 - John: A lot of gatherings were cancelled, so maybe the overtime pay won't be used

¹ See June 4th, 2020 minutes:

https://www.fairhaven-ma.gov/sites/g/files/vyhlf3131/f/minutes/6-4-20_fin_com_minutes.pdf

WATER ENTERPRISE

- Rob: Other department revenue & indirect costs from general fund, can you explain those?
 - Wendy: Indirect costs are the charges that the town charges for services such as accounting, health insurance & other department revenues would be user fees, connection fees, hydrant fees
 - Vinnie: That is money collected not from the water meters. For indirect cost, it's against the law to do general fund work in an enterprise fund. The water department donates to the general fund.
- Increase Salaries and wages
- Increase in water testing
 - Company increased their backflow testing
- Water meters is going to a new system, so likely to change
- Increase for hydrant parts maintenance program
- Raw water cost down, because a new well is online
- Capital planning
 - 1 street main that needs to be replaced, starting to show its age, leak is present now
 - Water towers need to be investigated to understand the impact
 - Upcoming, another main needs to be repaired
 - Truck for FY23
 - Rob: Is it possible to spread out route 6 and scoticut out? Jeff: yes, but the mains and valves need repairs/upgrading

SANITATION

- Simply contractual increases
- Landfill services, gas monitoring, state requirements - contractual increases
- Electronic disposal cost went up
- Scarp costs went up
- Pad: Brush chipping on the transfer station, what is that? Vinnie: There's only brush pickup a small period of the year, so a second period is asked for, material is paid to be chipped and taken away, used to be given away

BPW ADMINISTRATION

- Salaries and wages
 - Office manager has a step increase
- Increase requested for repair of office equipment, but was cut (for new printer)
- Advertising cut
- Phone cut
- Misc. for Dig Safe & legal fees
 - Joined Dig Safe but weren't part of it before
 - Didn't have the opportunity to mark out utility lines
- Dues and gatherings cut ~\$900, but not really needed
- Minor equipment was for new printer
- Capital planning
 - \$33k Tile floor needs replacing

CLOSING REMARKS

- Pad: Wendy, can you elaborate on the extra money coming? Wendy: State said money is coming, will be posted on the website, but haven't clarified when
 - Pad: From the federal bill or the state? Wendy: Unclear
- Bernie: What about the progress about investigating Free Cash not in use? Wendy: Checked with the Town Moderator, can be done to use the money, but can be very complicated, due to signed contracts, which could open up legal actions
 - Rob: Have the contracts already been signed? Wendy: Can check on the bigger ones to start
- Pad: What's your contact level with department heads on a week-to-week basis? Wendy: Not every week unless requested
- Pad: Need to be cautious about mixing General Fund and Capital, because Capital is 1 time
- Wendy: Tree Warden was level funded from last year
 - Pad: I want to understand how the budget works, the challenges involved
- Pad: Wire concern is about the lighting, every other pole, want more insight
- Articles would be the week after, Wendy can provide a draft for next week
- Next week is IT, Capital, hopefully Wire & Tree
- Want some general discussion as well
- Votes likely start on the 18th, with the 25th being the last meeting for the recommendations to be posted
- Pad: Would like to see how we're adjusting for changes. Wendy: Can do.
- Pad: When are the selectmen posting? Wendy: May not be until June
 - Pad: Would like to follow them, but are bound to the timeline
- Rob: How is the capital planning given to FinCom? *Wendy explains the format*
 - Rob: I totalled some of the projects and it seems really high
 - Wendy: Not all are done, needs prioritization
- Pad: What's the total capital plan project? Wendy: \$715k, with 2 borrowing projects

◆ Motion to adjourn, Chris, Lisa (10 - 0, unanimous), 8:55 PM



Christopher Pidalgo, Secretary