

Finance Committee Meeting December 13, 2017

1. The Weare Finance Committee met on Wednesday 13 Dec at 7pm at the Town Offices. Members present were Lori Davis, Matt Whitlock, Neal Kurk, Bill Anderson, John Vanloendersloot, Travis Corcoran, Gregg McDowell, Ellen Dokton, and Keith Erf. Also present were Town administrator Naomi Bolton, Finance Administrator Beth Rouse, and Police Chief Sean Kelly.
2. Business. Purpose of the meeting was to allow Chief Kelly to answer questions and provide background information on the proposed 2018 police operating budget. Member Whitlock, who was attending the John Stark default budget meeting also returned in time to give the committee a quick update of Stark's budget.
 - a. Police. Chief Kelly's briefing was very beneficial to the committee. The police budget is still under review and undergoing adjustments by the Board of Selectman. Since our committee's last meeting the proposed budget has been reduced from a 17% increase to an 11.6% increase. All expenses associated with new officer positions have been removed from the proposed budget and will be included in a separate warrant article. Wages for a part time secretary have been reduced. Wage increases for part time officers have been reduced. Communications, electrical and number of other line maintenance/supplies items have been reduced to reflect historical use. Police training has been reduced to reflect historical demand. Vehicle maintenance has been reduced in consideration of last year's purchase of 3 new cruisers. The animal control budget remains unclear pending action by the Board of Selectmen regarding staffing. Chief Kelly gave a detailed explanation as to why it was important to retain CALIA ((Accreditation). Not having nationally accredited standards has got our department into litigation problems in the past. Since Chief Kelly's arrival and instituting this program he feels the cost is well worth the benefit of warding off potential suits. Following standard nationally recognized procedures also results in successful prosecution and resolution of cases. As we approach 2018 the Chief's major concern is staffing. The Department has 12 uniformed positions (Chief, LT, 3 Sgt, and 7 patrolmen). Two patrolmen positions remain vacant; two other patrolmen are likely to be activated for an extended National Guard deployment. Salary, overtime, and part time budget line items will require flexibility for 2018.
 - b. John Stark. The Stark School Board met earlier the same evening to discuss their default budget. Vice Chair Whitlock attended and provided the finance committee a quick update on that budget review. The default budget is projected to be 2.1% lower than the 2017 approved operating

budget. Although higher, the maximum health insurance increase will be 5.7%, which is considerably down from last year's rate of increase. Electrical costs should remain flat under fixed contract through 2022. The default budget also has been adjusted down to reflect expected reductions in the proposed budget. This was a bone of contention with our committee last year; we welcome the change. The proposed 2018 budget is still under development; it currently reflects a 0.86% reduction over last year's approved budget. Five teaching positions have been removed from the budget. Student population is at the 660 to 680 range. A warrant article is under development for future energy services; it would be a 20 year lease with guaranteed energy savings projecting to pay for the leasing cost. Our committee still has concerns over what protections the district would have if the company defaults or energy costs fluctuate greatly. Both Weare and Stark School Districts are also developing teacher contracts which will appear as warrant articles.

3. Administrative. Member Jeff Brown has submitted his resignation from the committee citing personal reasons.
4. Adjournment. Meeting adjourned at 945pm. Next meeting will be scheduled after the first of the year at TBD time/date per the chairman.

Bill Anderson
Secretary