

**Holland Finance Board**  
**Meeting Minutes for Wed, March 10, 2021**  
**6:30 PM**

**MINUTES 3-10-21**

FB Members present:

- **In attendance:** Sharon Ashleigh, Ernie Fancy
- **Call In:** Kelli Robbins, Andrew Harhay

FB Members absent: none

Others present: Stacy Stout

Call in: Clelland Johnson, Dick Haller, Dawn Kamay

Meeting opened 6:30 pm

Trails Committee

Sichol property going forward level fund. Things to be accomplished in this fiscal year would be to have to establish trail head and parking area - gravel  $\frac{3}{4}$ " for parking area – acquiring gravel is problem prior gravel pit is no longer available. Sure they can acquire gravel with current funds have to put a kiosk – already purchased needs to be installed, have to lay out the trail, have to purchase signs stating provided by land grant, hunting allowed, no motor vehicles, existing bridge needs to be repaired. Another bridge will need to be built and will want to create a map and brochure – budgeted money can take years. Will apply for grant that has 20% grant, volunteer labor and machinery, which can count toward match (app due in February). Ms. Ashleigh asked where parking area will be located. Open field at end of Blodgett Road. Ms. Stout indicated time line – with Mass trail grant – done in 2 years. Work to be done is stipulated in the land grant requirements.

Discussion of Conservation budget

Conservation is seeking to hire a consultant – Ms. Robbins asked what the difference is between the job description for a hired agent and hiring a consultant as needed to paid for by the applicant. Mr. Harhay explained the statute has not been used in the past except for a very large project. The conservation commission also needs more help on a regular basis that will not rise to the expertise level engendered in the statute.

Mr. Johnson asked if Conservation receives any fees. Mr. Harhay stated that there are some fees, for filing a Notice of Intent, a fee is charged by the state and some comes to the town depending on the complexity of the project. The fees are established by DEP. Dawn Kamay, Conservation Committee member joined the meeting to speak on behalf of the Conservation Commission. Budget request is basically level funded other than the \$20,000.00 for the conservation agent. The position has been posted in multiple areas. Funds were approved at the special town meeting just moving the funding into the operating budget. Mr. Fancy asked if there would be 2021 funds

available? Dawn stated probably, because they have not been able to retain anyone to date. Ms. Ashleigh was asked if the article money would roll over. She stated it would stay in the article until the article is completed. Further discussion on whether or not the amount this year needs to be the full \$20,000 requested when there will be funds left for the same purpose in the article from 2021. Ms. Stout made the point that if we are looking to balance the budget, it would be prudent to only fund the difference between the article balance and \$20,000.00. This amount will be determined closer to town meeting. Mr. Johnson suggested looking more closely at using the statutory consultant whenever possible. The discussion revolved around the need for professional help due to the volunteer nature of the Conservation Commission and the need to protect the waterways while not being too burdensome to the applicants.

Discussion of off-duty police pay. Mr. Johnson stated the discussion would be picked up by the Select Board.

Tracie Scott, Library Director and Jennifer Gumlaw, Library Trustee, arrived via zoom on behalf of the Library.

Ms. Scott stated the Library budget increases are typical. Salary increases, 3%, programming and CWMARS remain the same, telephone and trash have increased due to cost. Repairs and maintenance increased. There is money available from another project that came in under cost. The Library would like to utilize the remaining funds to put toward an automated handicap door in the back where the handicap ramp is located. Ms. Ashleigh asked if the current funds were from a warrant article. It is an article. Mr. Fancy asked if anyone knows of any grants for handicap doors. Ms. Scott has not looked into grants as she was hoping to transfer the funds. Mr. Harhay inquired as to the accessibility of the remainder of the library. Ms. Scott said yes, there is enough room as well as a handicap accessible bathroom.

#### Expenditure report – Questions

Mr. Harhay noted an Expenditure Ledger line item, from a previous article, for computer upgrade funding available, which could perhaps be used to reduce FY22 expenses.

No other comments or questions.

Follow up from other meetings: Ms. Ashleigh reminded us that we were supposed to go over the budget to look for places to cut. Mr. Fancy asked to postpone that discussion until the following meeting and to discuss the annual town report.

Mr. Harhay provided the group with prior copies of town reports as examples. The annual Town Report has not been complete due to technical difficulties. Ms. Stout suggested major accomplishments. Ms. Ashleigh suggested anyone with something they want to be included to please send it in a text or email.

Correspondence: A snow and ice overage memo was received earlier this day but no one has had time to review. The actual amounts will be available at a later date as the bills were just received.

Mr. Harhay mentioned there may be \$110,000.00 in excess overlay. Mr. Johnson asked what the overlay account is used for. Mr. Harhay explained the purpose. Ms. Robbins clarified the way

the funds can be released. The Board of Assessors need to be asked as they are the ones to release funds from surplus overlay.

Capital Planning – Discussion of purpose re why there is a capital planning committee when this has been handled by other committees/boards effectively. Holland is too small for this committee to be necessary.

Mr. Harhay reminded the group that we had discussed asking James Whalen to be the alternate member of the group. Mr. Fancy suggested we focus on balancing the budget and discuss recruiting members at a later date.

Reviewed and updated the timeline for the Board.

- Comments were made on the need to see actual warrant articles to know if there will be enough funds for and to balance the budget.
- Overlay surplus, procedure for release and potential for use in the budget were also discussed. It was determined that the proper sequence of events would be for the Select Board to send a request to the Board of Assessors to review the overlay account, determine how much could be declared surplus, and if any to release the surplus.

#### Budget review

Mr. Harhay and Mr. Fancy both worked on creating a balanced budget independently. Both used a wage increase of 2%. Review of the items that were noted in red. Mr. Johnson questioned the reasoning for the increase in the Principal Assessor pay. The reasons give by the Finance Board were reflective of the reason provided by the Assessors when they met with the Finance Board to discuss their budget requests.

Discussion of Assessor requests – hours and wages of principal assessor. Current assessor works 9-4 Monday through Thursday with an hour lunch. Is there a reason to overlap with current assessor. Mr. Johnson noted it may be more cost effective to keep a clerk to assist the new assessor than to pay the larger wage to file field cards. It was determined this budget needs more work.

Discussion of Grant Writer wage request – Ms. Robbins asked about the terms of the contract and if the Grant Writer is paid by the hour, successes in procuring grants, etc. The grant writer is paid hourly at \$65.00 per hour. Research has discovered the rate for part time grant writers is around \$25-\$30 per hour. Ms. Robbins asked for the amount to be capped at \$20,000.00 in line with what Mr. Fancy suggested. The Board agreed.

Ms. Stout asked why the current budget spreadsheet reflected more funds for the All Boards Clerk payroll when it is not what was asked for. Mr. Fancy and Mr. Harhay stated it was so that all the wages were increased at 2 percent across the Board.

Ran through number comparisons and explanations pertaining to difference in what is sought by the department vs. what is suggested to budget.

Lake maintenance is up another \$20,000.00 from last year. Mr. Johnson explained the difference is due the use of a different chemical called ProcettaCOR™ that will be used to treat certain weeds. This should not need to be an annual application or it will be done less if the chemical works as advertised. This has not been used yet. The HRA will be treating a private pond upstream from Hamilton Reservoir to assist in weed prevention.

Discussed further changes,

- Building inspector clerk and how to fund, their revolving fund vs operating budget.
- Cemetery maintenance – mowing outsourced.
- Community Center – need for increase in postage.
- Conservation has \$20,000.00 in an article from a previous year they have not used, suggested to reduce current budget to \$5,000.00.
- Fire Department - Increase in calls, increase in minimum wage – need call volume to attempt to trend needs.
- Changed FB amount in Lake Patrol to match amount requested by PD.
- Town Clerk increase due to promise to work more hours.
- Use of stabilization and ways to fund articles, highway, roads and tree cutting.

Ms. Robbins asked if the current amounts in stabilization are where they should be as a percentage of the overall budget. Further discussion about purchasing a cruiser in FY 21 and its funding came out of Capital Purchase Stabilization Account in the amount of \$45,000.00. An additional \$80,000.00 from General Stabilization for Road Improvement and \$10,000 from General Stabilization for Tree Warden. Mr. Fancy questions the amount showing in the stabilization accounts as not reflecting the prior year meetings. Ms. Ashleigh noted that many accountants wait until the end of the fiscal year to make the journal entries showing the changes. Ms. Stout will send her analysis of the stabilization accounts.

Decided to continue the discussion to a further meeting. Mr. Harhay and Mr. Fancy will make the changes done this evening. Mr. Johnson will be speaking to the Assessors regarding the upcoming changes and salary requests after the Select Board discusses. Ms. Ashleigh saved the changes and shared with the FB, Ms. Stout and Mr. Johnson via email.

Motion to adjourn 9:20 PM Ms. Robbins, 2<sup>nd</sup> Mr. Harhay; all in favor by roll call vote.

Respectfully Submitted

Kelli A. Robbins