

**TOWN OF NORTON  
FINANCE COMMITTEE**

RECEIVED  
NORTON TOWN CLERK  
2022 JUN 14 AM 8:56

**March 14, 2022**

**7:00 P.M.**

**Meeting held via Remote Participation**

**MINUTES**

**Call to Order**

The March 14, 2022 meeting of the Finance Committee was held via remote participation and was called to order at 7:02 P.M. by Ms. Aimee Sawyer, Chairwoman of the Finance Committee.

Finance Committee members present: Paula Daniels, Kevin Snyder, Joe Parker, Yelena Gordon, Zach Tsilis, William Rotondi, Kevin Bugaj, Bonnie Yezukevich, Steve Evans

Absent: Michael Fiore

**TURNBACKS**

Mr. Tsilis had asked a question regarding turnbacks in a previous meeting, Mr. Yunits discusses where the turnbacks came from and proceeded to break down the categories and the amounts.

Ms. Sawyer asks about the reimbursements from the state that the Town receives for some of the items for Veterans, she asks if those reimbursements show as turnbacks or does that get utilized somewhere else in the budget

Mr. Yunits says that he will clarify

Mr. Tsilis asks for a break down of what the Town gives to the Veterans

Mr. Yunits says that Veterans are entitled to benefits to help with some of their health bills, rent, etc.

**BUDGETS:**

**HIGHWAY DEPARTMENT**

The first budget that is discussed is for Keith Silva of the Highway Department

The budget stayed mostly the same except for Surface Treatment. The cost of fuel and the impact that could make on making asphalt, Keith has upped that portion of the budget

Keith is also looking to add another person to the Highway Department, the salaries will be increased due to that. The Clothing allowance was also increased slightly.

Keith explains that it is getting hard to keep up with the trees, they are falling behind on the tree department. There were also difficulties trying to keep up with the snow plowing during the past winter. Another person is necessary

Discussion on switching some additional ground maintenance over to the Highway Department, along with the Rail Trail construction and then having to maintain that.

Mr. Parker asks if there had been discussion about having the tree cutting done by an outdoor agency

Keith explains that the Highway Department has a tree truck, the Highway Department tries to do trees in house. The outsource is a Crane, if it is needed someone will come in and take the tree down and then the Highway Department will step in and handle the tree removal from there

Mr. Rotondi asks if all the new sidewalks on 123 falls under the Highway Department or the homeowner as far as clearing it

Keith explains that the Highway Department will be maintaining the sidewalks from the Red Mill Village to the Solmonese School

Mr. Tsilis asks where the funds are to repave roads is within the budget, Keith explains that there are no town funds for resurfacing roads. That all comes from what the State gives and then Keith will use that towards the roads

Mr. Tsilis asks about East Hodges Street, the Highway Department repaved the road a few years back and now the water department is ripping the road up to replace water main. Mr. Tsilis is asking if there is a better way to bridge the gap of communication between the Highway Department and the Water Department to avoid issues like this

Mr. Tsilis asks if it would be more cost effective to hire more people on the Highway Department so that they could take care of school grounds instead of having an outside party handle the school grounds

Keith answers that it could be possible if there was enough equipment and enough new hires

Keith explains that he looking to buy a new Bob Cat Machine for the Highway Department, it would be another machine for wintertime, and it would be used for sidewalks and the Rails and Trails maintenance

### **TOWN CLERK**

Salaries increase due to contract negotiations, expenses have increased slightly

Ms. Sawyer asks why they are increasing purchases and services. It was explained that due to bylaw changes, the general code, and other changes this increase was necessary

Lucia discusses that there will be State Elections this year, and all that is going into the elections this year, including a high-speed scanner and people to help

Mr. Parker asks about the postage and where it is on the budget, Mr. Yunits responds that it will be increased further down

Mr. Rotondi asks when a resident mails back a ballot where does it go, Lucia responds that it goes back to her office. They are all stored in the vault

### **LIBRARY**

Salary adjustments needed to be made

There is a lot of training involved with positions in the library

Lee discusses the Trust that was left for the library and how the money is allocated, there is also state aid available if the library meets the requirements

As the Library gets older there are things that need to be replaced and updated, that comes out of the trust

### **RECREATION**

One staff person averaging 25 hours/week

Mr. Yunits discusses the salary of the individual and the other costs within the recreation department

### **PLANNING AND ZONING**

Two staff people, director and clerk

Mr. Yunits discusses the salary of the two individuals and the costs within the planning and zoning department

### **CONSERVATION**

Two staff people, director and clerk

Mr. Yunits discusses the salary of the two individuals and the costs within the conservation department, there has been a slight increase in the maintenance of the conservation areas

### **CAPITAL BUDGET**

Mr. Yunits discusses the request for the renovation for the lodge and tree clearing

Looking to implement a three-year program of surveying in town conservation areas. There are about 30 location in town, looking to do 10 locations a year for three years

Mr. Evans asks if these surveys are new

Mr. Yunits replies that Sean cannot find records of it being done

Mr. Evans continues to discuss with Mr. Yunits if there are any potential encroachments, Mr. Yunits replies that there may be but that Sean will get out there and figure everything out

Mr. Evans asks if the rent the town is receiving for E3 is enough to offset half of these costs, Mr. Yunits replies that last year the town did not utilize it. Any revenue that the town pulls in will go towards the costs

Mr. Parker asks if there is encroachment on the parcel of land what type of remedies does the town have and will that incur additional costs

Mr. Yunits replies that it should not incur additional costs as long as people comply, the town would notify them

Mr. Evans asks Mr. Yunits if surveying is required to take those steps or should the town be proactive and notify people before surveying

Mr. Yunits replies that some of the properties may not need a survey but some of the properties may need a survey. John is hoping that he will be able to walk out with the consultants and look at the property to try to avoid some of the surveys. If something is debatable a survey would need to be done to set the property line so people would be able to see

Mr. Evans asks what the town has spent on legal fees on the other case regarding surveying and property lines

Mr. Yunits replies that he is not sure

Ms. Sawyer asks if some of the more recently acquired properties would have recent surveys

Mr. Yunits replies that the new properties would have recent surveys

Mr. Bugaj asks if the surveys have not been done for years, is there a chance that these lots of land could have changed hands multiple times and if there is any encroachment that the town could get protracted in a legally

Mr. Yunits replies that he does not anticipate that. People cannot take public property by eminent domain; the town would just need to make it clear to individuals

Mr. Parker asks if there was a situation that property had changed hands a couple of times what happens if the town cannot prove that whatever is there actually belongs to any of those abutters

Mr. Yunits replies that the town would be looking at things like structures

Ms. Sawyer opens up the meeting for discussion regarding how everyone would like to proceed with meetings going forward

Mr. Snyder suggests that the meetings are either all done in person or all done remotely, the hybrid option does not seem to be the best way to do things. Mr. Snyder prefers to do them remotely

Mr. Parker says that he agrees with Mr. Snyder's statement

Mr. Rotondi thinks that they need to figure out the technological issues that happened during the previous meeting, he does not feel as though it is fair to make people pick between only doing the meetings remotely or in person

Mr. Evans says that he was not present during the previous meeting and is asking to be filled in

Ms. Sawyer fills Mr. Evans in on the technological difficulties that took place

Mr. Parker agrees with Mr. Rotondi as far as not wanting to force people into situations, but Shane thought he had everything ready to go for the meetings and Mr. Parker does not want anyone to in the situation of not having control over the audio. Mr. Parker thinks for right now picking either fully in person or fully remote would be the best option, Mr. Parker wants to continue remote

Mr. Tsilis thinks there should be a decision made regarding the format for town meetings, and that there should be some effort to try to resolve the technological issues

Ms. Sawyer adds that she agrees that there should be some format for town meetings but due to the size difference of committees what works for one may not work for the other

Mr. Snyder says that it would not have been possible to conduct a meeting with technological issues if there were also town citizens that wanted to talk

Ms. Sawyer asks if everyone would like to have another vote regarding how to move forward with meetings

Mr. Evans asks if there is an IT consultant that could be contacted to fix that issue

Mr. Yunits says that Jason would be the one to talk to

Mr. Snyder asks if this is an issue of technology and do we need new equipment

Mr. Yunits answers that it falls under cable and they would have to address the issue of the feedback

Mr. Parker thinks the vote should be held off until someone talks to Jason to see if there is a solution to the issue

Miss. Sawyer says that for next week everyone should plan to meet on zoom unless she notifies everyone otherwise

Ms. Sawyer discusses the minutes and the format of the minutes

Mr. Evans makes a comment saying that the minutes should be re-written in a different format

Ms. Sawyer says that the voting on the minutes will be tabled until the minutes are re-written in the correct format

Ms. Yezukevich makes the comment that the minutes are too detail and that the minutes may not need to be as detailed given the fact that not everyone may remember those specifics

Mr. Rotondi asks if there is any time frame regarding the minutes and when they should be turned in

Miss. Sawyer replies that she is unaware of any time agreements for the minutes

Mr. Evans says there needs to be enough detail to remember the conversation but not so detailed

Ms. Sawyer entertains a motion to adjourn at 8:20 p.m.

Bonnie Yezukevich moves to entertain the motion to adjourn.

Motion is seconded by Joe Parker

Vote is unanimous

Meeting Adjourned at 8:22pm.

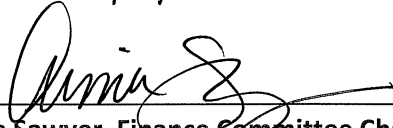
Respectfully submitted by

**Rachel Medas, FinCom Secretary**

Minutes Approved by Committee on:

6/6/2022

Signature:

  
Aimee Sawyer, Finance Committee Chair