

APPROVED

FINANCE COMMITTEE / BOARD OF SELECTMEN / BUDGET ADVISORY CTE.

Wednesday, April 4, 2018 – 6:00 PM - Town Hall, 1529 State Road

PRESENT: Bob Gniadek/Chairman, Pat Callahan, Steve Patterson, Eileen Martin, John Hanson, Neal Pilson/Selectman; Alan Hanson/BOS Chair; Roger Manzolini/Selectman; Mark Pruhenski/Town Administrator; Paul Lisi/Town Treasurer-Collector

GUESTS: Dewey Wyatt/RSC Chairman; Sharon Harrison/Business Administrator; Monica Zanin/Principal.

Mr. Hanson called the meeting to order at 6:00 PM.

School Budget – Operating and Capital Request: Mr. Pruhenski distributed updates arising from the previous Budget Advisory Cte. meeting having to do with the School Budget and a breakdown of the Town Clerk's expenses.

The school budget was reduced by \$114,780, for a new school budget of \$3,329,279; an increase of 4.3% or \$136,313 over last year. The overall budget, now that the school budget has been reduced, is down 0.2% for FY19 over FY18.

Approval of the Minutes of the BAC meeting for March 21st: Mr. Pruhenski distributed copies of the revised minutes that contained changes by Mr. Neal Pilson. Mr. Gniadek also had some suggested changes for the minutes, which he dictated to Mr. Pruhenski. Those changes will be made and the revised minutes redistributed. Approval was tabled until the next meeting.

Revised Article Sheet – Review: The revised sheet showed the break-up of the \$30,000 into two articles of \$20,000 for the town hall study and \$10,000 for the library application process, as per the Selectmen's request. A question was raised as to whether the \$10,000 for the application process needed to be expensed entirely by budget time next year, or could any remainder be kept available to use. Mr. Paul Lisi noted that, as the amount was a special article, it could be carried over for as long as the project is on-going. There was a discussion of the pros and cons of one article as opposed to two. There is more flexibility in one article and, as long as a full explanation is provided of how the money is intended to be spent, there should not be any opposition at the Town Meeting.

Articles: The various articles were reviewed and discussed.

Stabilization Account: Mr. Lisi noted that the stabilization amount, after the reduction of the \$200,000 for the articles, is \$687,942. There was a discussion of the source of the money being used for Town Hall repairs. The point of the discussion was that there were monies being put into the Town Hall Stabilization account, but that the money for repairs was not being taken out of that account, specifically the recent septic repair. One of the reasons for that was that it would have been necessary to go to a Special Town Meeting and get a 2/3 vote in order to take

the money out of the Town Hall Stabilization Account and the bills needed to be paid in a timely manner, hence the request for a transfer from the Reserve Fund at an earlier meeting.

The \$100,000 in the General Stabilization Account that is earmarked for Town Hall foundation repairs is expected to be needed to make the repairs that will arise from the Town hall study. It is known that the building has foundation problems.

Mr. Gniadek proposed that, should it happen that the town hall Feasibility Study does find that it is necessary to make repairs to the foundation that will cost hundreds of thousands of dollars, that those repairs not be made, and the money used instead to build a new town hall. Mr. Pruhenski noted that any expenditure would have to be approved by the Board of Selectmen who would need to sign the contract for any repairs, so another review of expenses would allow the BOS to re-think this.

Mr. Gniadek noted that when you exceed, in spending, some percentage of the value of a building, that automatically triggers the need to bring the entire building up to code. Mr. Manzolini said that until the feasibility study is complete, we don't know what repairs are immediately necessary and what that amount would be. Even if that triggers the need to bring the building up to code, he felt that it would still be less expensive than a new building. Mr. Lisi pointed out that, because municipal buildings are exempt from some code requirements, it is not necessary to upgrade the building to full code compliance.

Ms. Callahan noted that the money for the library will most likely not be available in-hand before 2022, even if everything went perfectly with the application process. Mr. Lisi noted that, with the improvements that have been made to Town Hall to date, this is a workable building and he sees \$600,000 to bring it up to code is still a lot less than \$6 million to build a new one. Mr. Manzolini said it is, therefore, prudent to have some money available once the Town Hall Assessment is completed, so that some necessary improvements can be started.

Town Clerk's Request for Voting Equipment: The next item is the \$5,400 requested by the Town Clerk for a new voting machine. There was no discussion.

School Bond and two Enterprise Articles: These show only a minor change from last year, a reduction in the debt service only.

Fire Department Mini-Pumper Balance: This article is necessary because there is a \$2,800 gap between the Federal Grant for a new pumper, the \$10,000 appropriation from last year, and the final cost of the truck as designed.

Radar Trailer: \$7,000 for a radar trailer. Mr. Pruhenski contacted West Stockbridge, as requested, to see if Richmond could borrow the one that West Stockbridge has. He has had no luck in reaching anyone. He will continue to reach out to West Stockbridge. The impetus to use a radar trailer arose from complaints about speeding on Lenox Road, on Summit Road and on Swamp Road.

Cemetery, Tree Removal and Stone Repair: This article was deleted last year as there had been adequate funding in the budget. This year it will be needed again.

Miscellaneous Articles: \$30,000 for the Library/Town Hall. \$15,000 for the Richmond Pond Weed Treatment. \$100,000 to replace the Town Cold Storage Barn behind the Post Office.

Flashing Solar Speed Signs: This was proposed to provide two solar radar signs for the entry into and exit out of the school zone on Route 41.

Playground Upgrade: \$20,000 will be discussed when the School Committee arrives.

OPEB Trust: Standard Article of \$100,000. Mr. Gnaidek asked whether an Investment Committee should be created. Mr. Lisi noted that once the budget process is complete, that will be the next consideration. The Selectboard has passed an Investment Policy and an Investment Committee will be set up.

At this point, the School Committee arrived. Introductions were made.

Ms. Sharon Harrison went over the details of the changes made to the school budget to decrease it by \$108,000. Mr. Manzolini had a discussion with Ms. Harrison as to whether she was comfortable with the changes made. She replied that her only concern was whether at some point the school may acquire a student or students that would require special professional services that are now underfunded. Mr. Manzolini advised her that, in case something of that sort should happen, the Selectboard and the Budget Advisory Board could be called in for a special meeting.

Ms. Callahan asked how much of the over \$100,000 reduction in the budget was applicable to that concern. Ms. Harrison said it was about \$20,000. Mr. Patterson asked whether in the School Choice Reserve amount it would be possible to move funds around to cover any suddenly required special education costs. That would be possible, if necessary. There was a continued discussion concerning the School Choice Reserve and the school playground upgrade.

If unexpected Special Ed. Costs came to more than the school was able to cover, it would come back to a Special Town Meeting. Question about the school's pre-K program and the rate of tuition. Ms. Zanin reported on the extraordinary success Richmond's Pre-K program has in preparing children for their entrance into Kindergarten.

Mr. Manzolini congratulated the School Committee for the excellent job they did in reducing the size of the school budget for 2019 and moved that the budget be accepted as presented. He also asked that, in the explanation of the school budget to the townspeople, it be made clear that part of the increase in the town's support of the school, is due to more and more of the students at the school being Richmond residents, which reduces the income from School Choice.

The School Committee hasn't met to approve this budget yet and would like to know before they do so that it will be approved by the Finance Committee. The Finance Committee is scheduled to vote on the school budget either tonight or on April 11th. Although no absolute guarantee can be given before that vote is taken, it was noted that there seems to be no cause for objections or arguments. As soon as there is a vote, Mr. Pruhenski will let the School Committee know the outcome.

Capital Requests: There is a \$20,000 request from the school for repairs to the playground surface. It was discussed at the last meeting, which resulted in the possibility that a more significant repair project using a poured-in-place surface may be preferred, which would be more in the range of \$100,000 to \$200,000. The School Committee Chair has spoken to the Highway Superintendent and has done some research on his own about the viability of a poured surface in this climate. He has questions about whether that kind of surfacing will last well and be worth the extra expense. Mr. Wyatt believes that the original job was mis-handled and that is why it has not lasted more than a few years. If the same process is done by a competent vendor, he believes it will prove to be a better solution. The use of wood chips would create an on-going maintenance situation, but Steve Soules has assured him that it is viable. Mr. Lisi raised practical objections to the use of wood chips, which must be replaced every two years. The addition of rubber mats in the high traffic areas has been shown to decrease the wear on the wood chips. There was a discussion of possibly creating a fund-raising or donated work event for the repair of the playground. Perhaps as a class project.

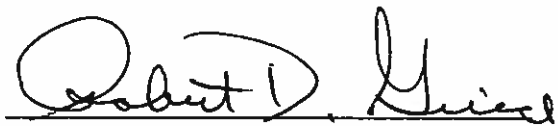
The Committee will be voting on those capital request items either at the conclusion of this meeting or on April 11th.

Marketing for FY'19: Mr. Pruhenski noted that Marketing does not appear in the budget and he felt it was something that needed to be discussed. This year it was funded with a Special Town Meeting Article. Did the Committee want to continue to fund marketing for FY'19? If so, a place for that funding will need to be found in the budget. The Special Town Meeting approved \$3,500 for 2018, some of which was used for marketing materials. An additional \$9,000 was taken out of the Consulting budget for the contract for Ms. Laura Brennan's salary. A discussion resulted in the consensus that the article for the radar trailer be deleted from the list, \$10,000 be added to the \$30,000 article for the Town Hall study and the school application for a total of \$40,000 for the Long Range and Master Plan and the Town Hall Stabilization Fund be reduced from \$15,000 to \$10,000.

Mr. Gniadek said he would entertain a motion to approve all the Articles above as modified. Mr. Hanson so moved, was seconded by Mr. Patterson and the motion was adopted by unanimous vote.

There being no further questions or discussions on the line-item budget, Mr. Gniadek entertained a motion to approve the budget, Ms. Callahan so moved, was seconded by Mr. Hanson, and the motion was carried by unanimous vote.

There being no further business before the Committee, a motion to adjourn was made by Mr. Hanson, seconded by Mr. Patterson and passed by unanimous vote.

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Robert D. Guice", is written over a horizontal line.

Chair