

TOWN OF GREAT BARRINGTON
FINANCE COMMITTEE
TOWN HALL
334 MAIN STREET, GREAT BARRINGTON, MA
MINUTES
November 14, 2013
5:30 P.M.

PRESENT:

SHARON GREGORY, CHAIR

WALTER ATWOOD

MARK LEFENFELD

LEIGH DAVIS

THOMAS BLAUVELT

The meeting was called to order at 5:30 P.M.

Meeting was called to order by Sharon Gregory, Chairman, at 5:30.

Tom Blauvelt reviewed the first meeting with the CPA which focused on organization. Karen Smith was elected Chair and Jessica Dezieck, VChair. The estimated amount to be collected this year from the CPA surcharge is \$400K. Sharon asked if he could raise the possibility of funding a part of the Housatonic School renovation marketing as a CPA project. He said he would do so in the next few meetings when they address eligible projects.

Buddy Atwood reported on the progress of Main Street Reconstruction. They expect to go out to bid by November to pick a contractor. He confirmed that the load center would be moved from the original proposed location at Main and Railroad to somewhere near the Rubiner building.

Leigh brought up the School Committee dilemma and referred to the Eagle article reporting on its defeat. Sharon raised the question of possible further centralization. Buddy said the possibility needs to back by our local officials (Downing/Pignatelli) if it is to succeed. Sharon asked if it would be helpful if the BRPC could help advance the case of further centralization. Sharon said she would contact Nate Kearns.

Sharon will follow up with Steve Bannon to set up a meeting with the three town's Finance Committee to discuss key items with School District such as the sinking fund for large expenditures. We may need to have more than one meeting annually.

Buddy reiterated that Town Manager will be involved in Executive Session regarding labor negotiations shortly. This will impact the upcoming budget significantly. We need to know how they will go about the negotiation (e.g., through lawyers) and whether legal budget was sufficient. He remarked that he did not feel this was the best course of action.

Tom Blauvelt reviewed last year's budget issues to help us prepare for the upcoming budget cycle. These include the \$100 million "Other Post Retirement Benefits for employees and eligible family members. Liabilities were \$11 million last year, but are expected to be larger in the upcoming year. Other areas for review were public works, the town's previously proposed \$40K consultant, and a review of Police Dept. overtime expenses which were about 15%. With the department now fully staffed (17),

this should be expected to be reduced. One of the major expense issues might be raised again regarding a centralized dispatch service which should reduce overtime expenditures.

The Senior Center use was brought up as consisting of a large number of non-Great Barrington residents. Tom questioned whether we might be able to obtain funds from other towns by asking the Director to estimate how many attendees were using it from various towns. The group suggested we recommend Town Manager send letters to the other towns to request they budget for contributions to GB's Senior Center, based on GB's estimate of attendance. Sharon will send our recommendation to Town Manager.

Leigh Davis asked what is the annual cost of having the Fire Department in Housatonic. This is a question to ask our budget director (for unallocated overhead costs) and the Fire Chief.

Tom wanted to know what the Town's total outstanding debt is.

The meeting was adjourned at 6:45.

Sharon Gregory
Chair, Finance Comm.

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read 'Sharon Gregory', with a long, sweeping flourish extending to the right.