

TOWN OF GREAT BARRINGTON
FINANCE COMMITTEE
GREAT BARRINGTON TOWN HALL
334 MAIN STREET, GREAT BARRINGTON, MA
MINUTES
SEPTEMBER 15, 2014
12:00 P.M.

PRESENT:

SHARON GREGORY, CHAIR

WALTER ATWOOD

MICHAEL WISE

LEIGH DAVIS

THOMAS BLAUVELT

CALL TO ORDER:

1. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES:**

A. Minutes of July 8, 2014

MOTION: Buddy Atwood to approve.

SECOND: Tom Blauvelt

VOTE: 5-0

Budget Policy for upcoming budget period. Tom noted that he would like to have the total debt service including Great Barrington's share of the school district. Sharon said she would like a history of the past expenses. A Finance Committee meeting was scheduled for 6:00 p.m. prior to the joint 7:00 p.m. meeting on the 22nd of September. A Finance Committee meeting was also scheduled for October 9th at 6:00 p.m. prior to the budget policy meeting.

2. **NEW BUSINESS:**

A. Wired West (Reserve Fund Transfer) Jennifer Tabakin noted she has a request to the Finance Committee to transfer from the Reserve Fund \$1,000 to cover an invoice from Wired West that was not anticipated or provided for in the 2014 budget. This is to cover membership in the efforts to bring Broadband to Great Barrington and the Southern Berkshires. The annual fee renewal amount was provided after the town meeting. Jennifer noted that the person who was the volunteer on Great Barrington's involvement has resigned so we are looking for another person to be involved.

MOTION: Tom Blauvelt to approve the \$1,000 transfer from the Reserve Fund to cover the invoice from Wired West.

SECOND: Michael Wise

VOTE: 5-0

B. Parks (Reserve Fund Transfer) Jennifer noted that during the last fiscal year an incorrect vendor was paid \$5,743.20 for parks supplies. The accounts payable had two vendors with the same name but a different address and the check was sent to the wrong address. The incorrect vendor cashed the check and now has refused to return the funds. Jennifer noted that Town Counsel has written a demand letter to return the funds. The request is for a reserve fund transfer for up to \$5,743.20 if the funds are not replaced in order for the parks to continue with their improvement plans.

MOTION: Buddy Atwood to transfer \$5,743.20 from the Reserve Fund to reimburse the Parks Supplies Account and for the Town Manager to contact District Attorney Capless to assist in getting the money back.

Sharon amended the motion: that any and all parts of that are returned to the Reserve Fund.

SECOND: Michael Wise

VOTE: 5-0

The original motion and the amended motion were approved unanimously.

C. Veteran's office – Jennifer noted that all of New England has an obligation to provide meeting spaces for our Veteran's Organizations according to Mass General Law. In the past and currently the Town of Great Barrington had funded rent at the American Legion in Great Barrington. There is a request for providing meeting space support in the form of rent in the VFW on Cone Avenue in Housatonic.

Andrew Moro, chairman of the American Legion explained that the VFW is the Veterans of Foreign War and the American Legion is veterans that served in the time of foreign wars but didn't go overseas. The American Legion in Housatonic has been reactivated and there are about 37 members. Andy said he has been in communication with the American Legion in Great Barrington and they are trying to decide how to go forth with their committee. In an agreement under Chapter 40- Section 9, it states that the communities have an obligation to support a place for the veterans. He note the request is for \$230 a month for rent which amounts to \$2,760 a year. Under Chapter 40 – Section 9 of the Mass Code, a town with a valuation of more than one hundred and fifty million dollars may annually appropriate ten thousand dollars, and in addition three thousand dollars for each additional \$150,000 after that. We have an agreement with the VFW in Housatonic who is allowing the American Legion the utilization of the building, office space, a meeting room and the grounds. The VFW is having a difficult time with their heating and utilities so this would assist them. Andy said the town has never asked them for taxes or anything. Lauri Hils, Veterans Agent, will be overseeing the payments.

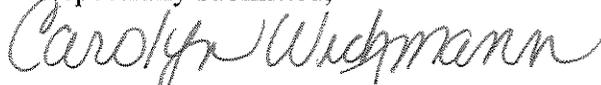
MOTION: Michael Wise that we enter into an agreement with the American Legion to pay \$230.00 a month for rent with the requirement that the organization is active and overseen by the Veteran's Agent.

SECOND: Buddy Atwood

VOTE: 5-0

The meeting adjourned at 12:40 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Carolyn Wichmann
Secretary