Preston Board of Finance
Special Meeting
Wednesday, May 13, 2020 at 7:00 P.M.
Teleconference Call

Call to Order – John Moulson called the meeting to order at 7:02 P.M.

1. Roll Call

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Members</th>
<th>Alternates</th>
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<tr>
<td>John Moulson – Chairman</td>
<td>Matthew Davis – seated</td>
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<td>Bob Congdon – Vice Chairman</td>
<td>Vacancy</td>
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<tr>
<td>joined later</td>
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<td>Stacey Becker – Clerk</td>
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<td>Andy Depta</td>
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<td>Denise Beale – joined later</td>
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<td>Zachary Maurice</td>
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Also Present

Sandra Allyn-Gauthier – 1st Selectperson
John Spang – Financial Director
Jerry Grabarek – Selectman
Sean Nugent – PRA/ BoE
Kenneth Zachman – Selectman
6 other members of the public

2. Review and Approve Engagement Letter for Auditor

Members did not receive a copy of the letter, so item was tables until next week’s meeting on the 20th.

3. Review and Act on CT Governor Executive Order 7S –

Andy Depta stated that it was confusing and asked for clarification as to the process and who has the authority to set the budget without a referendum. Do the Board of Selectmen and Board of Finance have the authority to move forward and set a mill rate without a referendum?

Sandra Allyn-Gauthier answered that it is confusing with information coming out daily. She also shared that there are several Executive Orders that have come out on the topic; 7B, 7I, 7C, and 7HH, and that she will be summarizing the process into a Resolution that will be post on the Town’s website so that public will be aware of the process that will be followed.

4. Workshop for Review of Board of Selectmen Budget –

Stacey Becker asking about the 2% salary increased and how that was chosen.
Sandra Allyn-Gauthier shared that they looked at what the Board of Education, Social Security, and other towns were increasing salaries by and that the 2% seemed fair and in line with what others are doing. She also emphasized that small raises were better than the possibility of employees unionizing.

Stacey Becker asked if she felt this was fair in the current Coronavirus atmosphere.

Sandra pointed out that the present unemployment was due to a pandemic not economic difficulty. The raises amount to an increase of approximately $30,000.

John Moulson added that the Cost of Living increase this year is 2.1% and last year the Cost of Living was 2.8% and the town employees only received a 2% increase.

Andy Depta proposed to reduce all salary increases from 2% to 1.5%.

Stacey Becker stated that members of the community are negatively impacted by this pandemic and is just concerned about how they will feel about this increase.

Sandra Allyn-Gauthier acknowledged that might be a concern and pointed out that some people are making more on unemployment with the $600 additional money due to the unusual circumstances of this pandemic. She felt if salaries were a larger percentage of the budget it would be a concern, but it’s not a big portion.

Bob Congdon suggested that this discussion be held until a later time and to look through the budget now.

John Moulson asked Sandra Allyn-Gauthier would explain her budget.

Sandra shared that the Board held a variety of budget workshops with the various boards, committees, and commissions. In these workshops some areas were increased while others decreased according to the history of the different line items. We reduced overtime. Any line item or area that hadn’t been used was reduced or eliminated. Highway Maintenance was one area that was really looked at and increased. Adjustment were made in Recreation, Senior Affairs, and the Library. Many of the increases were external and there was no control over them such as the new online program.

Andy Depta asked about Health Insurance and Public Works Consultant increases.

Sandra explained that the town pays a broker to help seek out the best options for the town to buy into. Sandra also explained that sometimes a consultant must be used are certain projects that may come up during the year. The $300 is a nominal amount for that line.

Andy asked if the salt budget could be reduced at all. That perhaps with such a mild winter we have unused salt that could be used this year. He also mentioned that he felt that $90,000 for chip sealing was costly and that he’d like to see it cut by 50%. Mr. Depta also stated that it would be more prudent to repave roads rather than to continue chip sealing.
Sandra explained that the goal was to get back to previous amounts and really begin a concerted effort to repair roads. She has reached out to Ledyard’s Steven Masalin for his input and strategies to move forward to get roads repaired, $5000 will not go very far. If we do not have money, then we will not get roads repaired.

Bob Congdon stated that he felt $25000 is the bare minimum to keep our roads in good repair.

The next Line Stacey questioned was 1-102-3530-5510 Tree Removal for $10,000.

Bob Congdon explained that when the area was infested with gypsy moth that killed many trees that he was told to it would take 10 years to clear all the dead trees that were hazardous to roadways and that PW Tree Removal is still working on that.

Line 1-102-3560-5323-000 and Line 1-102-3560-5323-018 Gasoline and Diesel Fuel were the next to be discussed. Stacey asked if the this could be reduced to the current climate and reduced prices at the pumps.

The prices were locked in 2 months ago, and there’s no telling how long the current prices will continue.

The next Line that was looked at was Library Miscellaneous, which increased from $25 to $4250.

Sandra explained that because they are a separate entity that they need to be audited and that was the price for their audit.

Also, under Library was Line 1-102-3720-5468 Subscriptions increased significantly. It was explained that the increase was due to online subscriptions and online programs like inter-Library loans.

Next Matthew Davis questioned Line 3350 Cemetery Maintenance at 0.

Through several people adding information, it was discovered that Public Works crews mow and take care of the 3 cemeteries in town and the cost comes out of their Line items so there is no further need to have an amount in that Line item.

Matthew then questioned the $12 increase on Line 3400 for ZBA.

Sandra stated that was for recording fees.

Stacey brought up that CCM will be crediting the town $1700 after payment of dues this summer, the question is – is that credit for the town to use for CCM events/workshops or can that be used for dues next year?

John Spang was unsure of when that credit would occur.
Bob Congdon suggested that it would mostly likely happen after July 1st, which is when CCM dues are usually paid.

Bob Congdon then brought up Health Insurance and looking into paying employees a stipend rather than paying town employees insurance with continuous increases that we cannot control.

Stacey Becker suggested that because Board of Education has a presentation that people log onto their computers tomorrow so that they can see what is being spoken about.

Matthew Davis asked what the protocol was when a person is seated, and the regular member arrives late.

It was explained that the matter being discussed would finish and that the Chair would officially unseat the alternate.

5. Public Comment -

Bill Legler asked why the April 22nd Minutes were not posted and felt that the Board of Finance needs to make sure information is posted for the public to participate.

John Moulson referred to recorder Kim Lang to address the issue. Kim explained that typically minutes are turned in to the Town Clerk and then taken down to Leigh Pappas for posting to the website. However, when she arrived at the Town Hall, she was told to place the minutes in the drop box outside and the Clerk would get them. She was told to contact Leigh and have them posted on the website. Kim will follow-up on this tomorrow.

Jill Keith commented that there seem to be a lot of confusion on the Chairman’s part and that it doesn’t instill confidence when he refers to others about procedural topics. She also was disappointed that the newly purchased software seemed to be absent from this year’s budget process.

6. Adjournment -

Andy Depta motioned to adjourn at 8:43 P.M. Stacey Becker seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

Respectfully Submitted,

Kimberly Lang
Recording Secretary

RECEIVED
PRESTON, CT.
2020 May 12 at 9:00

PRESTON TOWN CLERK