



Franklin
MASSACHUSETTS

Finance Committee

Meeting Date: April 3, 2017

Present: Dufour, Dowd, Conley, Fleming, Moses, Dewsnap, Huempfner, Smith

Absent: Wiech

Call to order: 7:00 PM

Citizens Comments: None, no citizens present

Approval of minutes: Minutes of March 29, 2017 were reviewed and approved. Vote 8-0,

Items for Action:

- Budget Departmental Reviews
 - **IT** – Minor increases in expense primarily due to licensing. Consistent backup of data allows quick recovery – no formal disaster recovery site. E-Permitting to expand to other departments.
 - **VETERANS** – Salary primarily from Norfolk County with small contribution from Town of Avon which is also supported. Required by law – reimbursed about 75% from state.
 - **INSPECTIONS** - minor salary adjustments for part time inspectors. Fees collected cover expenses. Proceeding slowly with e-Permitting while attempting to make web site more user friendly.
 - **ZBA** – Budget is covered by fees assessed to applicants
 - **POLICE** – Primarily contractual increases only. Staffing still below levels in 2000 by 4 officers despite substantial growth in population. OT has been increased to allow for money allocated to training is actually used for training.
 - **FIRE** – No staff increases but have hired 6 firefighter/paramedics this year so we should at or near full budgeted staff by mid-year. Training is difficult due to call volume increases but training officer does good job with in house training considering staff availability. Currently running multiple calls 2-3 times a day leaving town very vulnerable during those times. So far has not hurt us but certainly will as volumes continue to trend upwards. On pace for 200+ mutual aid requests. Health, wellness program is a goal that needs to be met. It will

most likely pay for itself over time in reduced on the job injuries. Department “chases” all available grant opportunities with in house staff.

- **REGIONAL DISPATCH** – Up slightly – Executive Director expected to be hired shortly. Potentially in operational in fall of 2018. Still need to get \$3M state grant money to complete buildout.
- **FACILITIES** – Small increase due to contracts. We have 1.2M square feet of space to maintain with a staff of 3 managing the whole process. Electric costs are up, gas costs are down, water costs are up due to expanding fields and high school fields. Schools particularly hard to get good predictions due heavy use – days, nights and weekends. All schools have been converted to LED lighting with remaining 4-5 town buildings finished soon. Due to growing sophistication of systems in the buildings (high school in particular) adds to complexity and repair costs.
- **STREETLIGHTS** – No significant changes.
- **DPW** – Adding 2 members to staff representing first addition in about 17 years. Workload increasing due to new/expanded fields at High School and downtown street scape with numerous plants/shrubs. Road repair is major issue. Due to lack of available funds the “score” on roads has dropped slightly. Major arterial roads need attention as well as many of the 70’s, 80’s and 90’s subdivisions. Constant use of technology and improved equipment has helped defer staff additions. Summer staff is essential in getting the job done. Currently have about 14 people.
- **WATER, SEWER and TRASH** – All are self-supporting via fees. Water system facing large expenses to build water treatment facility for wells on Grove Street. Currently they are used sparingly due to water quality – still potable but have a rusty appearance. Overall system in excellent condition due to continuing commitment to maintenance. Sewer system in good shape with the hope that the Beaver Street collector does not fail. Trash costs under control. Bins now about 9 years old and may require starting a replacement program several years from now.
- **EMPLOYEE BENEFITS** – Our unfunded county retirement liability stands at \$42M. On a schedule that will reduce to zero in the 2030’s. Health insurance is a constant battle but with the help of the town’s bargaining units every effort is made to keep increases at least reasonable.
- **LIABILITY INSURANCE** – Up slightly due to expanded library, and additional recreation department buildings as well as multiple large claims in the last several years.

Actions Taken: None

Meeting adjourned: 8:50 PM

Next meeting: Wednesday April 5, 2017