

**MINUTES ADVISORY COMMITTEE
MARCH 12, 2008**

Meeting called to order at 7:00 PM by Chairman Wilson with Robert Barnes, Nick Thomo, David Holdcraft, Greg Burnham and Beverly Lund in attendance. Selectmen James Allen, Cindy Scott, Chief of Police Ross Ackerman and Highway Superintendent, Herb Chaffee were in attendance as well.

MASTER PLAN RESERVE FUND TRANSFER

Ms. Scott advised the committee that they were looking for an additional \$5,000 to fund the Master Plan. They have requested an article for the Annual Town Meeting in the amount of \$10,000 but in order to enter into a contract with Central Mass. Regional Planning more funds are needed. It was noted that there is currently \$10,000 that was previously approved plus a donation of \$5,000 for the creation of the open space portion of the master plan that has not as yet been received. The CMRP Commission has agreed to reduce their charge to do the work by \$6,000 to do the work. They are looking to combine the combine the committees so that all the funds can be utilized for the plan.

No action was taken until more information could be gathered as Ms. Scott was not sure if she was looking for a Reserve Fund transfer or an addition to the Annual Town Meeting Article. She will do more research and get back to the committee.

SNOW & ICE REQUEST TO OVERSPEND

Mr. Chaffee advised the committee that he is looking for an additional \$50,000 for Snow and Ice which will bring the total expenditure to \$100,000. He advised the committee that he has spent additional funds and the \$50,000 will be used to offset what has been spent leaving a balance of approximately \$8,000 to the end of the year.

Mr. Chaffee advised that he has no idea what each storm cost as each storm is different. He explained that he uses the piggy back system using one plow which is 9 ½ feet wide which does not cover the clearing of a road and using a second plow to finish clearing the road. Most roads are 24” wide and he feels that the same amount of passes would be necessary whether he used one plow or two plows. He further feels that the only way to cut back would be on materials. He stated that he piggy backs Rice Corner Road, Allen Road, Webber Road and Route 148. It was noted that some of the streets that are plowed with the piggy back system are less then 24” wide. The committee asked Mr. Chaffee to come up with some suggestions to cut back. It was noted that the roads have been in excellent condition during storms but there might be some way to reduce expenditures. The committee was of the opinion that they would not want to see anything done that would compromise the condition of the roads.

It was suggested that the \$50,000 that was previously appropriated for engineering work for Route 148 could be transferred to fund the additional \$50,000 that is necessary and

the amount would not have to be deducted from the Cherry Sheet. Mr. Allen advised that the Transportation Improvement Program which would fund the work to 148 is behind and funding for Brookfield will probably not be available for four years. Ms. Lund questioned whether or not the transferring of the \$50,000 to Snow and Ice would require that the account be level funded at \$100,000 next year. Once the account is increased according to law it cannot be reduced. Mr. Allen stated that he will look into this and get back to the committee.

Ms. Lund moved; Mr. Thomo seconded to authorize the Highway Superintendent to overspend the Snow and Ice Account in the amount of \$50,000; so voted. It was further noted that the Selectmen had previously voted to allow the overspending of \$35,000 and they would need to go back and approve the additional \$15,000.

SPREAD SHEET – BUDGET FISCAL YEAR 2009

The draft spread sheet was presented to the members of the committee for their review.

LEVY LIMIT CALCULATION

The draft Levy Limit Calculation was presented to the committee for their review and was presented to Mr. Allen for distribution to the Accountant, Assessors and Treasurer. It was noted that these figures may change but this was a start in determining where the town is financially.

COLA INCREASE CALCULATIONS

Estimates of COLA increases based at 1, 2 and 3% were presented to the committee for their review. A decision regarding this will be forthcoming.

BUDGET REVIEWS

Board of Health

Ms. Lund advised the committee that the wages/stipends requested for the Title V Administrators, the Health Agents and the Transfer Station Monitors were level funded for Fiscal Year 2009 and was just miscalculated on the budget request sheet.

Ms. Lund moved; Mr. Thomo seconded to approve these line items as submitted by the Board of Health; so voted.

Police Department

Chief Ackerman advised the committee that the current 2002 cruiser has 115,000 miles on it and by the end of the year it will have 125,000 which is pushing it to its limit. This is 15,000 more than other towns use their cruisers. He has found leasing not to be viable. A number of repairs have been done but only as temporary patches. This included the

radiator and a number of others. He advised the committee that one hour of idle time is approximately three hours of travel. The cruisers need to idle during traffic stops to keep the communication system open and for safety purposes as well.

Chief Ackerman advised the committee that his expense budget has decreased by 7%.

Ms. Lund moved; Mr. Thomo seconded to approve the clerk wages at \$8,722 and the expenses at \$68,500; so voted.

CONTINUATION OF MEETING

Mr. Burnham moved; Ms. Lund seconded to extend the meeting beyond 9:00 PM; so voted. Mr. Thomo opposed.

BUDGET REVIEWS CONT.

Central Massachusetts Regional Planning

Ms. Lund advised that the estimate from CMRP has come in at \$718 and not the \$930 as originally expected. Ms. Lund moved; Mr. Burnham seconded to recommend the \$718; so voted.

FUEL REPORT – HIGHWAY DEPARTMENT

The monthly fuel expenditure report was provided to the committee by the Highway Superintendent for their review.

APPROVAL STAPLES BILL

Ms. Lund presented a bill for supplies for the clerk and the secretary from Staples in the amount of \$75.94. Mr. Thomo moved; Mr. Burnham seconded to approve and sign the bill; so voted.

ELEMENTARY SCHOOL BUDGET HEARING

Mrs. Wilson announced that the public hearing for the Elementary School budget would be held on March 19 at 7:00 p.m. All members were asked to make every effort to attend.

ARTICLE REVIEW

It was noted that the Selectmen would be reviewing the articles for the warrant at their meeting of March 18. Ms. Lund was directed to post a meeting for the 18th and to advise the members to attend the meeting to review the articles.

ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Thomo moved; Mr. Burnham seconded to adjourn the meeting; so voted. Meeting adjourned at 9:15 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Beverly A. Lund, Secretary

Date approved by committee: March 26, 2008

Date submitted to Selectmen: March 27, 2008