

Pepperell Finance Committee

Minutes

January 29, 2009

MEMBERS

Present: Diane Gaspar (Chair), Burke Bero (Vice-Chair), Christopher DeSimone, Stephanie Cronin, Jeanne LeBlanc, Theresa Walsh (Town Accountant)

Absent: Shaun Cummings and Christopher Johnson

Guests: Scott Butcher and Virginia Malouin – Board of Health
Patrick McNabb – Board of Selectmen

OPENING

Ms. Gaspar called the meeting to order at 7:07 pm

APPOINTMENTS

Board of Health (51100)

Health Agent

- Mr. Butcher and Ms. Malouin were present to discuss the Board of Health's budget request for a full time Health Agent.
- The BOH has not unanimously agreed upon this request (although Mr. Butcher said he is in favor of it), yet for budgetary preparation the line item has been added under payroll.
- Ed Wirtanan (former Pepperell Health Agent) was receiving a \$62K salary.
- The requested FY10 salary, appointed position, is for \$65,100.
- The previous BOH had looked into hiring a full time Health Agent, and there were two possible candidates who would not take salaries in the high \$50K.
- If a full time Health Agent was acquired, then the line item for 'consulting services' would not be needed anymore.
- Bob Lambert is currently working 10 hrs/wk @ \$27/hr while BOH member Ginny Malouin is volunteering about 5 hrs/wk.
- Mr. Lambert's budget will run out before June 30, 2009 due to an increased number of complaints that must be investigated.
- Diane Gaspar asked whether the current BOH will be resurrecting the subject of hiring Nashoba Board of Health.
- Mr. Butcher is wary of this option due to the vocal group of residents who are steadfast against Nashoba (this has grown from a core group wanting to keep a local nurse to include workers in the septic industry who feel they would not receive timely responses on inspections).
- Pepperell is currently without a food inspector, yet Mr. Lambert (as a retired certified Health Agent) can investigate complaints and Ms. Malouin is helping out when needed.
- The BOH is establishing criteria to post the positions for a full time Health Agent and Food Inspector.
- Jobs are listed with the Massachusetts Association of Health Boards.
- If Nashoba Board of Health was retained instead of hiring a full time Health Agent, the net saving to the Town would be about \$59K.

Hazardous Waste Day

- The Board of Health has been seeking alternatives to the cost of a local Hazardous Waste Day (FY10 budget request \$12,500).

- Ten local communities are looking at a regional system in Devens, but this alternative would not be available within the next fiscal year.
- The initial start up cost per Town was to be \$10K (for facility upgrades) then about \$5K per year over a 20 year term.
- Another benefit to using Devens would be the ability of residents to dispose of hazardous waster multiple times per year, instead of just annually.
- The current cost of upgrading the Deven's site has grown to \$200K which puts the initial investment outside the reach of most towns.
- The State has been trying to get towns to regionalize projects and services, so the BOH is participating in a joint letter to the State Capital asking for help in getting this endeavor started.

Food Recalls

- The Board of Health is considered the State's local enforcement agent regarding health issues.
- Mr. Butcher and Mr. Lambert have currently visited local establishments to disperse information from the State.
- The most recent item on their agenda is to check local stores and restaurants for items which have been recalled due to the salmonella outbreak linked to tainted peanut butter.

Landfill (49200)

- The current landfill monitoring contract with GZA is up this year.
- The BOH is hoping the bids will be lower this year due to the economy.
- The possibility of reducing monitoring requirements is being looked into as a way of reducing this cost.

Revenues

- Terry Walsh noted that revenues from inspections and permits are extremely low for FY09.
- Mr. Butcher replied that with the 56 units being built on the Hollis line the Spring might bring a bump in revenues.

Lipton Center (52300)

- Current information from the Lipton Center shows 4,018 visits from 158 Pepperell residents for calendar year 2008.
- The Pepperell budgets for Lipton: \$12,375 ('07 actual), \$9,900 ('08 actual), \$5,000 ('09 budget) and \$5,000 ('10 budget).
- The Fin Com reviewed past years discussions that State mandatory heath care requirements should provide coverage for the same services that Pepperell is paying for.
- The BOH's next meeting with the Lipton Center is set for 2/17/09.

DISCUSSIONS

- The Fin Com acknowledged the cost reality of a full time versus part time Health Agent.
- A full time position brings with it extra costs for training, certifications and Health benefits which have not been built into the FY10 Health budget.
- The Board of Health is worried that using a variety of part time staff members and counting on volunteer time is setting the Town up for problems - with adequate inspection coverage, timely resolution of complaints and miscommunication issues (which are already happening because we lack a single 'go to' person).
- Patrick McNabb joined the Fin Com to discuss the FY10 Budget constraints.

- It is necessary to identify which departments are essential versus non-essential.
- Some departments made cut backs in their FY09 budgets, and this should be taken in to account (if possible) when discussing budget reductions for FY10.
- Unemployment cost of \$0.33 on the dollar must be taken into account when suggesting staff layoffs.
- The Central Telephone budget (15700) will not make it through June '09 – FrankQuattrochi, Communications Director, will be out until March on medical leave.

MEETING SCHEDULE

- February 5th – Determine essential vs. non-essential departments
- February 9th – Meet with Selectmen
- February 12th – Invite School District to lay out NMRSD FY10 budget
- February 14th – Public meeting called by the Selectmen with invitations given to the Fin Com and School Committee

MINUTES

Minutes from December 4, 2008 – Motion by Mr. DeSimone, Second by Ms. Cronin.
Accept (4) – Oppose (0) – Abstain (1 – Ms. LeBlanc)

CLOSING

Ms. Gaspar moved to adjourn at 9:30 pm.

Respectfully submitted by:
Jeanne LeBlanc