**Minutes of the Finance Committee February 28, 2018**

Members attending: Mr. Fenton (Chairman), Ms. Lennon, Mr. Love, Mr. Linton, and Mr. Runstrom

Members not attending: Ms. Herron

Additional Attendees: Carol Riches (Town Administrator), Cindy Love (COA Director), Curtis Hammer (Chairman, COA), Sue Stone (Town Clerk), Mike Putnam (DPW Supt.)

Meeting called to order at 7:40pm, after Mr. Love arrived from Capital Improvement Planning Committee meeting.

**Motion** to approve the minutes of the February 14, 2018 meeting made by Mr. Love, seconded by Mr. Linton.
**Approved unanimously**.

### Cindy Love (COA Director) and Curtis Hammer (Chairman COA)

Ms. Love and Mr. Hammer presented information to the committee on current Council on Aging programs, as well as the requested FY2019 budget for the COA.

* The goal of the COA is to keep our seniors safe, involved, and independent for as long as possible.
* There are currently about 1,050 seniors in town, and this population is continuing to grow through at least 2034.
* The Senior Center serves lunch 3 days a week (Tue, Thur, Fri). They typically serve 16-18 people. In addition, the meals-on-wheels program serves additional seniors in town.
* The COA hosts a large health fair in the Fall providing various services. 25 professionals attend.
* There are occasionally evictions of seniors, even in our town. We try to help them find somewhere to go. We often work with the police or fire department to help people who need it.
* COA van transportation runs M-F, taking seniors to medical appointments, errands, shopping, etc.
* The COA is asking for a new van this year. The current van has many miles on it. We have not seen any grants that would apply for a new van.
* Meeting expenses in the budget are for Mass Council or other information meetings.
* Event speakers budget is for $600, typically funds about 2-3 speakers.

### Sue Stone, Town Clerk

Ms. Stone presented information to the committee about the Clerk’s office and the requested FY2019 budgets for Town Clerk, Elections, and Registrars.

* Budgets have been kept pretty even.
* The only item that has increased is Elections due to going from one election last year to 3 this year. Also early voting for both election and possibly the primary.
* Last year we had approx. 600 people vote early.
* We may need to rent a voting machine for early voting.
* There could be funding available for early voting from the state, but has not been officially approved yet.
* Considering hiring an assistant town clerk. This position is currently unfilled. Would like someone who is interested in learning the job, and possibly stepping in to the Clerk’s job in the future.
* Hard to fill assistant town clerk position – not high paid, not a lot of hours. 10 hrs a week.
* Training budget is intended for attending conferences and other training. It could be used to train an assistant.
* Also asking to increase the salary of the elections workers. The current budget reflects the pay increase.
* We require a vault for record and ballot storage.
* Registrars are appointed by selectmen, there are 3, and the town clerk acts as clerk of the registrars. We ask for nominations from the republican and democratic parties.
* Registrars run the town census and help with voter registrations.

### Mike Putnam, DPW Superintendant

Mr. Putnam presented information to the committee on the highway department, and the requested FY2019 budgets for the Highway Department, Snow and Ice, and Cemetery Commission.

* We’re getting by, but it’s been a tough year.
* We’ve had a number of breakdowns and repairs with equipment. Some major repairs were unforeseen. I’m a bit worried about getting through this year with the current budget.
* There has been a 20% increase in maintenance costs so far this year. I have one truck that’s still running but not well, needs fuel system work. We’re trying the get through the rest of the fiscal year if possible.
* We have 14 large pieces of equipment (large trucks, etc.) The maintenance budget needs to be increased.
* We also have a continuing problem with septic at the DPW facility. This will need to be addressed in the future.
* Lighting continues to be an issue at the DPW facility – has not yet been updated. We’re getting by.
* Roof has some leaks in it. We’re repairing where possible, but there are long term problems. Water is pooling and causing leaks. It would cost $12k to repair one section of the roof. It’s in the budget.
* The DPW building was built in 1950s. Current wooden roof is from 1990s.
* Snow and Ice budget is level funded for FY19.
* We are right on the verge of running a Snow and Ice deficit for this year. It will be close – it’s the ice that kills the budget (salt). We’re pretty much out of money but our storage is full. Hopefully we’ll make it.
* Guardrails – Marshall St has old style guardrails. They’ve been damaged over time. They’re a safety issue at this point. We recently fixed one section. $12k in the budget to fund repairs to additional sections.
* Cemetery – Equipment Maintenance… is this DPW equipment or does the cemetery own their own? Equipment is shared between Cemetery, DPW, and Rec. This money is basically for lawnmower blades and stuff like that.
* Is water usage metered at the cemetery? Yes. We get a monthly bill.

### Carol Riches, Town Administrator

Ms. Riches answered questions from the committee about budgets that have no money allocated, and if they should continue to be carried on the books.

* **WRTA**? – No we don’t need that.
* **Forestry**? – No, I don’t submit it.
* **Master Plan Implementation Committee**? – It does have members but I don’t know the current status.
We will leave it in.
* **Personnel Advisory Board**? – It has 3 members, but they have not needed any budget. In the past, they budgeted for the employee handbook, but the town administrator does that now. Take the budget out.

### Budget Consideration

**1161: Town Clerk.** Motion to approve the budget for Town Clerk (#1161) in the amount of $50,083 made by Mr. Runstrom and seconded by Ms. Lennon. **Approved Unanimously**.

**1162: Elections**. Motion to approve the budget for Elections (#1162) in the amount of $26,850 made by Mr. Love and seconded by Ms. Lennon. **Approved Unanimously**.

**1163: Registrars.** Motion to approve the budget for Registrars (#1163) in the amount of $4,200 made by Mr. Love and seconded by Mr. Linton. **Approved Unanimously**.

**1421: Highway Department.**  Motion to approve the budget for Highway Department (#1421) in the amount of $649,393 made by Mr. Runstrom and seconded by Ms. Lennon.
**Discussion:** Are we going to reconsider the project for the new building? The estimated cost was approx $9M. The current building is in bad shape. It should be replaced. We think we need a stronger presentation for it. However, we don’t think this year is a good time to go forward because the budget situation isn’t good. The need for the building has not decreased. We need to see if there is an Article on the Warrant for it and reconsider at that time.
**Motion Approved Unanimously**.

**1423: Snow & Ice**. Motion to approve the budget for Snow & Ice (#1423) in the amount of $179,831 made by Ms. Lennon and seconded by Mr. Linton. **Approved Unanimously**.

**1491: Cemetery Commission**. Motion to approve the budget for Cemetery Commission (#1491) in the amount of $10,201 made by Mr. Runstrom and seconded by Ms. Lennon. **Approved Unanimously**.

**1541: Council on Aging.** Motion to approve the budget for Council on Aging (#1541) in the amount of $59,481 made by Mr. Runstrom and seconded by Mr. Linton.
**Discussion**: Mr. Love offers to recuse himself from discussion and voting due to a conflict of interest. Committee discussed whether recusal will cause the loss of a quorum for the meeting. Committee decided Mr. Love could abstain from voting which would maintain the quorum. Mr. Love will abstain from voting.
**Vote: 4 Approve, 1 Abstention. Motion Approved.**

**1192: Public Building Property**. Motion to approve the budget for Public Building Property (#1192) in the amount of $19,500 made by Mr. Love and seconded by Ms. Lennon.
**Discussion**: Town Hall furnace has been replaced, so is not in the FY19 budget. Flag was looking pretty ragged but was just replaced it this week. How many can we buy with this budget - basically 1. Repairs – nothing imminent, but we will use it over the course of the year. Snow removal – DPW is supervising/paying the person who does the town hall, library, and COA. We will transfer money from this budget if needed. We are maintaining this budget in case this changes for next year.  **Motion Approved Unanimously**.

**1910: Town Employee Insurance.** Motion to approve the budget for Town Employee Insurance (#1910) in the amount of $688,506 made by Mr. Linton and seconded by Ms. Lennon. **Approved Unanimously**.

**1911: Worcester County Retirement System Assessment.** Motion to approve the budget for Retirement (#1911) in the amount of $451,309 made by Mr. Linton and seconded by Mr. Runstrom. **Approved Unanimously**.

**1915: Central Purchasing.** Motion to approve the budget for Central Purchasing (#1915) in the amount of $182,290 made by Mr. Linton and seconded by Mr. Runstrom.
**Discussion:** Heating Oil is down. Cost of oil is down and it’s been a mild winter. Diesel same, price and usage down.
Telephone had a surplus last year; we found some redundancies which decreased costs. Electricity is up. This is probably due to underestimating in the past. The new budget is more accurate. Maple St. Pole – not sure what this is. We will hold off voting on this budget until we know. **No action taken.**

The next committee meeting is Thursday March 8, 2018. Chief Conte will attend, and perhaps Library and Treasurer.

Meeting Adjourned at 9:10pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Scott Runstrom, Secretary.