

Merrimac MA FINCOM Meeting , Christine Berube

Date: 1/19/17

Location: Sargent's Hall

Attendance:

Carol McLeod, Finance Director – Town of Merrimac

FINCOM: Richard LeSavoy (Chairman), James Archibald, Ann Coulter, Stuart Egenberg, Paula Hamel, Michael Marden (Secretary)

Minutes:

- Meeting to order 6:59
- James Archibald to be capital planning representative
- Assessor's Office
 - Assessor representatives: Ed Davis, Bill Polman, Heather Roche
 - ED walked thru budget
 - \$1393 total increase: \$783 in salary, \$360 SW maintenance, \$250 office supplies
 - Evaluation money moved to Map Update item (\$6000)
 - Includes new program thru Merrimack Valley Planning Commission
 - New pictometry program,
 - Old program not friendly
 - New version seems better
 - 3 year program, \$4200 total
 - 2 payments, \$2100 1st 2 years
 - Built into \$6000 above
 - Training is free
 - Access to old pictures
 - Allows 5 views of homes
 - No other big increases
 - JA: concerned about Annual Update account increase from \$1500 to \$6000 between FY2016 and FY2017
 - HR: map update upcoming featuring new homes and developments
 - ED: combined different accounts into one single account
 - Previous years budgeted values not included in data
 - PH: questions about money spent 2017
 - CM: many big bills haven't come in
 - Assessors do most of their work in the spring
 - RL: questions about money spent last year: too low?
 - CM: money wasn't spent due to transition to HR as clerk
 - HR: money is targeted for new maps
 - ED: Pictometry, map updates, someone to take pictures will add up to \$6000 line item
 - CM: some training wasn't done last year

- Transition to new clerk
 - RL: so money will be spent every year?
 - ED: Probably, just not 100% sure of final amount
 - CM: budget is very bare bones considering work to be done
 - PH: Only spent small percentage of total budget
 - Can it be spent this year?
 - JA: new SW not part of SW budget?
 - ED: different SW for assessing vs pictometry
 - Only departments that have a need to know get access to the pictures
 - Town officials, planning board etc
 - RL: will we spend meeting money?
 - HR & ED: money needed for training
 - Wanted to go last year but it wasn't time permitting
 - \$180 expense is for dues
 - SE: is training every year
 - CM: yes, if it fits
 - MM: new pictometry is \$2100 out of FY2017 \$6000 line item
- Town accountant: Anne Jim
 - 2.5 % increase in salary
 - No longevity or stipend
 - Expenditures
 - Nothing new, just re-allocations
 - JA: total sum is the same
 - RL: what budgets haven't you received yet?
 - AJ: new SW is working out
 - Some departments using wrong codes
 - Requests modifications when necessary
 - PH: form to correct errors?
 - AJ: trying to get one
 - PH: will send a version she has used in past
 - PH: equipment maintenance
 - Only \$40 in FY2016
 - AJ: forgot to get machine services
 - FY2017 has not been scheduled yet either
 - PH: postage spent to date is low
 - AJ: a lot of mail going out soon
 - 1099's etc
 - Office supplies line item is running low
 - AJ: will need to monitor for remainder of year
 - PH: education line item year to date is low

- AJ: attending a spring conference so it hasn't been paid out yet
 - IT
 - Computer replacement
 - RL: is it a onetime fee?
 - CM: rather not so we don't get surprised
 - FINCOM books missing actual FY2016 data
 - CM: read off correct amounts
 - RL: website money?
 - CM: Minutes tracker was included but selectmen didn't like the new one
 - Old minute tracker was better so selectmen kept it
- Tax Collector: Michelle Barry
 - Salary increase is only change
 - With longevity
 - CM: longevity follows person
 - MB transitioning between departments
 - Treasurer Assistant is working 1 more hour than last year
 - Gerry Gozycki retired in Sept.
 - RL: do you see need to increase any expense line items
 - MB: wanted to get a year under her belt before increasing anything
 - Point Software expense needs to increase 5%
 - CM: didn't make it into the book
 - PH: training budget hasn't been spent to date
 - MB & CM: training is in spring and will be billed later
 - PH: postage budget hasn't been spent
 - MB & CM: excise bills haven't been sent yet – that bill will come later
 - MB: started in September
 - Salary was part of last year's discussion
- Finance Director: Carol McLeod
 - Only increase is salary: 2.5%
 - Contract says it's the same as other town personnel
 - CM: usually increases at contract renewal
 - AC: payroll service increased last year
 - Total amount will be spent this fiscal year
 - PH: most other employees are 35 hours while CM is 40
 - CM: most people are hourly but she is salary, as well as AK and MB
 - RL: salary study status?
 - CM: will forward as soon as it's available
 - AC: does FINCOM have representation on salary study?
 - RL: was involved and voted against it
 - Hypothetical: any changes from salary study, what happens?

- CM: new budget will come to FINCOM for approval
 - MB: special article was needed previously for retro pay
 - CM: new budgets would be published if salaries change
 - Current salaries are more in line with study
 - CM: explain financial management SW changes in finance committee
 - New growth, new requirements from state
 - New software would be helpful
 - Transitions between AK, MB and CM mostly done by spreadsheet currently
 - RL: new software was bought previously for water, sewer
 - CM: cost is onetime expense to set up new SW
 - It would take away the manual spreadsheet work currently being done
 - New software would replace KVS and Point
 - General ledgers is included
 - RL: do we need to keep old SW to maintains records
 - CM: we own old SW so records will be available
 - Old SW has gone thru many owners
 - RL: confirm onetime fee is setup only
 - CM: maintenance fees would transition from old SW to new SW
 - CM: asking for a special article to pay for upfront fees
 - RL: any risk for keeping records if SW is corrupted
 - AJ: we have backups of all data
 - RL: will we be able to see historical data if we convert to new SW
 - CM: it was \$10K for 2 years of historical data for Water Department
 - Will get quote for 2 years of migration
 - AC: are other towns happy with new SW?
 - AJ & CM: Yes, everyone they've talked to are very happy with it
 - AC: integrated security?
 - Yes, and no new hardware needed
 - CM: tax bills go from quarterly to bi-annual
 - Most nearby towns have made the switch
 - 1st year was confusing but afterwards it works
 - Planning on big communication effort
 - Save on postage
 - CM: outsourcing of tax bills
 - Save hours and office supplies for printing
 - AC: recommended Opportunity Works
 - CM: lock boxes
 - Boxes would be more efficient
 - Separate departments would have their own boxes

- Would save on payment delays
 - No quotes yet but hoping it would fit within savings from billing time frame change
- RL: PH made the suggestion to get a paid FINCOM secretary to do minutes
 - RL will work with CM to figure out if it's possible
 - Allows members to follow meeting without having to take notes
- AC: status of school budgets
 - No return call from Whittier yet
 - Pentucket says to scrap already published budget
 - Special education portion will change
 - AC will be able to attend FINCOM meeting for school presentation
 - May not have much time to prepare due to vacation
 - PH: can we meet early at previous meeting
 - Feb 16, we will start at 6:30 to go over school information
- CM: miscellaneous FINCOM meeting may include playgrounds, Essex Tech and Lake Attitash committee
 - BS: Lake Attitash meeting could be an opportunity to get agreement on lake level
 - They are looking for \$80K to accompany a grant to clean up lake
 - Amesbury isn't affected – they're properties are built higher
 - Avoids fine from DEP
 - They will be going to Amesbury as well
 - Amesbury will be paying more
- Move to adjourn: RL @ 8:37
- Second: SE
- Vote: unanimous