Merrimac MA FINCOM Meeting
Date: 1/26/17
Location: Sargent's Hall
Attendance:

Carol McLeod, Finance Director – Town of Merrimac
FINCOM: Richard LeSavoy (Chairman), Christine Berube, Ann Crowell, Stuart Egenberg, Paula Hamel, Michael Marden (Secretary)
Bob Sinibaldi (DPW-Cemetery, DPW-Highway, DPW-Water, DPW-Sewer)
Hal Lloyd (Selectmen)

Minutes:

- 7:00 Meeting to order
- RL + MM not here next week. AC cannot be at 2/9 meeting
- Move to approve September minutes : SE
    - RL: second
    - All approve
- Move to approve Jan 12 minutes: SE
    - RL: second
    - All approve
- Move to approve Jan 19 minutes: SE
    - RL: second
    - All approve
- DPW Cemetery - BS
    - Move Harold White to DPW – His increase brings him to lowest DPW pay grade
        - Current cemetery pay is less than DPW minimum.
            - Want to get it adjusted before contract negotiations
    - AC: when does OT come into play?
        - BS: off-hours burials (weekends, holidays etc.)
    - RL: building maintenance increase
        - Couple of spots in buildings in need of repair
        - CB: could funding be taken from fuel?
            - BS: might need fuel for plow and lawn mowing and gas prices are going up
    - AC: Equipment and Repair increase?
        - BS: part cost and complexity of equipment repairs have increased
    - RL: status of cemetery committee records upgrade?
        - BS: last years budget for holding tank upgrade was not fully spent
            - $12K in savings from DPW doing extensive work
            - Looking to transfer that money to software and cemetery record input
    - PH: Office supply money not spent?
        - BS: Tom keeps an eye and basically stops when he's out
    - PH: still need a cemetery clerk if department is transferred to DPW?

    - CM: special legislation needed to dissolve cemetery commission
        - Request goes to statehouse after approval
        - No records have been found for creation of cemetery commission
        - Could take some time to happen
- Highway Department - BS
    - No big changes in salaries except 2.5% increase
        - Not contractual as of yet
        - Increases are anticipated values
    - Vacant position was filled short term but is open again
    - AC: boot expense?
        - BS: contractual value
    - Expenses
        - Tree removal
            - Long list of trees needed to come down
            - RL: is that work contracted out?
                - BS: Yes, Valley Tree Service
        - Parts
            - Older trucks are working well but parts are getting expensive
        - RL: Snow and ice budget
            - BS: estimate $150K per year
            - CM & RL: can overspend
            - SE: beneficial to deficit spend rather than have money left over
        - AC: parks expense? Field supplies?
            - BS: field maintenance and fertilizer, treatment for fields
        - PH: parks and rec committee doesn't pay?
            - CM: they only handle usage
        - PH: expenses not broken up so it's tough to follow
            - CM: Tom has a good spreadsheet, will bring it next time
        - PH: tree removal costs have fluctuated
            - BS: depends on prevalence of tree related issues in the news
        - RL: snow and ice increase?
            - BS: thought it would be good to cover everything
                - Impression that transfers didn't go over well at town meeting
        - PH: equipment maintenance spending has fluctuated?
            - Never spent over $2500
            - CM: budget is now completely over DPW
                - Previously under Parks and Rec budget
            - BS: showed list of equipment, usage and cost of replacement
        - SE: do we have a paving program?
            - BS: yes, working with selectmen
                - Based on need, condition of road
        - RL: roadwork addition to budget or special article?

            - CM: was a special article in the past, now increasing budget line item
            - BS: storm water regulations have increased, MS4 condition
                - Part of roadwork increase
                - Storm water bylaw reports to Planning Board
- Landfill – BS
    - The $30K expense will be with us for awhile
        - It wasn't capped correctly so now we need to monitor and report conditions to State for a number of years
- Water Department - BS
    - Salaries are contractual and DEP mandated
        - Increases are anticipated values for coming negotiations
    - A T1/D1 no longer employed by department
    - Currently have a T1 but may become a T1/D1
    - SE: standby?
        - BS: on-call guy
    - RL: out-sourcing (tongue in cheek)?
        - BS: waste water workers are tough to find
            - Replaced user water meters have been working out well
            - ¼ of town left to do
            - Found a great deal of "missing" water
    - AC: difference in Professional Engineering and SW?
        - BS: previously lumped together – now separated for tracking
    - CB: office expense increase?
        - CM: software for billing is included and is a major portion
    - RL: $5530 stock?
        - BS: fittings and hardware inventory
        - CM: expenses have only been in Water Dept. control for last year
            - Previously under Light Dept.
            - Starting to get a handle on exact amounts
    - PH: professional engineering request is decreasing, but 90% has already been spent of this year's higher budget
        - Do we have enough?
        - BS: we'll have to get developers to pay for professional engineering if needed in future
    - PH: what is the Ameresco Lease?
        - It helped but would not go do it again
    - Capital request
        - $125K for repair/replacement of water mains
        - $30K for additional meters
    - AC: new apartments effect on West Main Street?
        - BS: water pipe is already in place
            - Broke ground already

            - Town has capacity for added water usage
    - Retained earnings: $195K
        - Capital requests should come out of that
- Sewer Department - BS
    - Only request is 2.5% for salaries
    - Request to selectmen is coming for rate study
    - Expenses
        - Moving accounts around for better tracking
    - SE: debt service decrease?
        - CM: debt has decreased overall
    - SE: nice job keeping the budget level
    - RL: pump building maintenance fluctuates?
        - BS: money gets moved around depending on needs
    - SE: what happens to sludge
        - BS: shipped to Ipswich
    - No capital requests
        - CM: half of meter request above will come from Sewer
- Inspectional Services - BS
    - CM
        - Board of Health and Inspectional Services were both looking for more admin hours
        - Admin will be combined between the two departments
            - Instead of $12K increase it becomes a $3K increase
        - Now someone will be available all week for either department
        - Trial situation for one year
            - Will evaluate next year to confirm setup
    - RL: clothing and boot allowance?
        - BS: PPE equipment for inspectors
    - PH: inspectors only 5 hours/week
        - Hours vary depending on inspections needed
            - Paid by builder / contractor
            - Excess money comes back to town
    - AC & PH: software
        - Permit fee is used to pay for software
    - Special articles
        - Replenish revolving accounts
            - Authorized amounts is money allowed to be paid
            - Money is usually generated from inspections
- RL: expressed appreciation to BS for all the work he has done
- AC: update on schools

    - Proposed budget previously submitted by Pentucket has major changes – mostly due to subsequent changes in SPED – revision coming – Merrimac enrollments down by 3 students. CM: Governor's budget was not good to Pentucket
    - Whittier budget assessment preliminarily looks level for next year since Merrimac enrollment is down by 4 students.
    - Need to keep an eye on administrative costs for both schools
    - AC is scheduled to contact both schools for status when she gets back
- Motion to adjourn 8:21pm, SE
- Second: AC
- Vote: unanimous