

Finance Committee Meeting

January 19, 2011 7:30 PM
Veterans Memorial Building, Room 229
900 Main Street
Millis, MA 02054

In Attendance:

Chris Smith, Chairman
Craig Schultze, Vice Chair
Jennifer Soule, Clerk
John Burns
Peter Jurmain
Rick Manburg
Jim Smith
Susan Vecchi
Charles Aspinwall, Town Administrator
Charles Vecchi, Board of Selectmen
Steve MacInnes, Oak Grove Farm
Chief McGowan, Police Department
Patty Kayo, Council on Aging
Tricia Perry, Library
Jeff Cannon, Treasurer/Collector

Chris Smith called the meeting to order at 7:31 PM

Oak Grove Farm Revolving Fund:

Steve MacInnes:

The fund cannot exceed \$10,000.00 in expenses, the expenses to date are approximately \$7,000.00 and they are holding approximately \$4,000.00 in bills. They are requesting \$4,000.00 in anticipated tree work expense. The onetime \$4,000.00 has been approved by the Board of Selectmen. The Revolution War reenactment increased some of their costs for extra mowing and preparation.

Craig Schultze made a motion to increase the spending limit to \$14,000.00, Jennifer Soule seconded.
Vote: 8/0 motion carries.

Budget Review: Council on Aging:

Patty Kayo:

Staff:

Director (20 hours per week)
Department Assistant I (12 hours per week)
Outreach Worker (12 hours per week)

The transportation program is a revolving fund. A requested donation of \$1.00 is suggested each way for local trips. Surrounding towns \$3.00 or \$5.00 per round trip is request depending on the distance involved. For medical trips to Boston, a donation of \$25.00 is suggested, with the patron being responsible for tolls and parking. These donations help offset transportation related funding for expenses not covered in the budget. The town funds \$7,844.00 for driver wages, fuel and repairs for the three vans.

The Center serves as a liaison to many state and federal assistance programs and provides education and tools for self-advocacy. They provide a newsletter to residents with upcoming events, a Meals on Wheels program, and a Tax Work Off program.

The FY12 Budget is level funded. The salary increase of \$1,060.92 is due to step increases and longevity. A small increase in Supplies and Expense of \$150.00 is requested.

Any cuts to staff would be detrimental to the Center and its programs.

The Senior Tax Abatement Program qualification criteria include:

- (1) One homeowner 70 years of age or older
- (2) Home must be occupied for more than 6 months
- (3) Applicant has lived in Millis 10 consecutive years
- (4) Income for a single less than \$20,000.00 and less than \$30,000.00 for a married couple
- (5) The assessed value of the home is less than or equal to \$333,520.00
- (6) The real estate tax bill must be more than 10% of the total household income.

There are three ways to terminate the program:

- (1) Ballot Vote
- (2) Board of Selectmen Vote
- (3) Town Meeting Vote

The program would give seniors an option of staying in their home. It's a better option than a reverse mortgage. The number of seniors 70 years of older as of January 31, 2012 is 740. Of the 740, 240 would be eligible for the program. The definition of "income" and "household" will be available for the next presentation.

Budget Review: Police/Dispatch:

Chief McGowan:

The station is located at 885 Main Street.

Dispatch provides communication services for the town 24 hrs a day, seven days a week, and 365 days a year for Police, Fire and EMS. It is also a point of contact when other town offices are closed. Staffing is one dispatcher per 8 hour shift. There are two open shifts per week covered by part time dispatchers. The salary line increase is due to step increases, an increase in part time wages, an increase in overtime wages and longevity. The expense line item is frozen.

The Police Department staff is currently 14 officers: 3 Sergeants, 1 detective and 10 patrolmen. They are operating as close as possible; many nights there are only two officers on the 3:00 – 11:00 PM shift. On many day shifts, the traffic officer is reassigned to patrol to cover a vacancy. The FY12

expense line request is approximately \$7,500.00 less than FY11 due to the consolidation of expenses, such as janitorial contracts, use of the Town's website and utilizing a community notification system offered through the Norfolk County Sheriff's office. The FY12 budget is requesting one additional patrol position, \$62,312.00, and restoration of the Mobile Data Terminals in the cruisers, approximately \$11,000.00 initial startup and \$4,000.00 annually after that. The gas line item is level funded at \$45,000.00 actual costs for FY10 were \$25,663.98. Current rates are less than paying at the pump.

Update on the Town Meeting Articles: The first cruiser is in service and the second cruiser has been ordered. The dispatch console has been delivered and is waiting for installation.

Training of new officers would include the additional officer and the replacement of Leo Acerra. The next academy begins in May. After the officers are appointed they will seek a waiver to put them on the road before the academy begins. Twenty five weeks are spent at the academy.

Budget Review: Library:

Tricia Perry:

The mission of the Millis Public Library is to inspire lifelong learning by providing services, materials and activities that engage the imagination, foster literacy, inspire intellectual curiosity and advance the pursuit of knowledge for all members of the community. To carry out this mission the library provides all users free and open access to its physical and electronic collections, information and services. Some of the new programs include an overdrive collection (e-books, downloadable audio books) and the Free gal collection (downloadable music). Speed Reads and large print materials have been added. There are 4,035 registered borrowers in the Minutemen Library Network; this number includes 403 new registrations in FY10. Circulation continues to increase. In FY12 the addition of a self-service checkout station is being explored. They would also like to explore adding delivery to homebound residents. The library's roof is leaking and cannot be repaired until it dries. This cost will impact the FY11 budget. The FY12 budget request includes an increase in weekly hours for the Library Director position from 35 to 40 and an increase in weekly hours for the two part-time Library Assistants from 15 to 21. The Library Director works approximately 50 – 60 hours per week with additional hours for the new library construction. The committee had some concern with moving employees from 15 to 21 hours per week. Those employees would then be eligible for benefits. Also, with the construction of the new library the committee was assured additional staffing hours would not be needed.

Budget Review: Debt Service & Treasurer/Collector:

Jeff Cannon:

Staffing

Treasurer/Collector (37.50 hours per week)

Assistant Treasurer (35 hours per week)

Collection Clerk (15 hours per week)

Water/Sewer Clerk – Funded from the water & sewer program (28 hours per week)

The salary line item was increased due to step raises. The expense line item was increase due to additional postage and printing. The FY12 budget is requesting funds for a security/payment window (\$7,500.00) and or drop box (\$2,000.00). Currently all visitors come through the main office entrance. This promotes congestion and confusion and does not foster a secure environment. At times there are large amounts of checks and cash on hand and only one staff member on duty. The proposed payment

window will keep visitors outside of the office unless they have asked for access to meet with one of the staff. We will utilize a locked office door that can be opened electronically by one of the office staff. A panic button has already been installed.

The delinquency rate is approximately 2.5 % of everything billed out and there has not been an increase in bounced checks.

The long term debt payments for FY12 will decrease due to some items coming off and refinancing done in August 2010. School debt is exempt from Proposition 2 1/2. Millis' Debt to Valuation Ratio is very good. The Massachusetts General Law allows for borrowing 5% of the Debt to Valuation Ratio. He will provide the Debt to Valuation Ratio for the surrounding towns.

The proposed Short Term Borrowing:

Library:	\$ 800,000.00
Transfer Station:	\$ 73,690.00
Increase Sewer:	\$ 149,086.00
Pleasant Street Main:	\$ 120,000.00
Culverts & Drainage:	\$ 465,000.00
Sewer Infiltration:	\$ <u>75,424.00</u>
Total:	\$ <u>1,683,200.00</u>

Federal funds will decrease the Culvert & Drainage amount.

Open Meeting Law:

Chris Smith: Asked the committee to read and understand the Open Meeting Law Guidelines issued by the Attorney General.

The exceptions to the definition of a meeting are the following:

1. Members of a public body may conduct an onsite inspection of a project or program; however, they cannot deliberate at such gatherings;
2. Members of a public body may attend a conference, training program or event; however, they cannot deliberate at such gatherings;
3. Members of a public body may attend a meeting of another public body provided that they communicate only by open participation; however, they cannot deliberate at such gatherings;
4. Meetings of quasi-judicial boards or commissions held solely to make decisions in an adjudicatory proceeding are not subject to the Open Meeting Law; and,
5. Town Meetings are not subject to the Open Meeting Law. See G.L. c. 39, § 9.

FY12 Revenue Review:

The reporting format has changed; water and sewer enterprise debt is reported separately. The Transfer Station project was added over five years and will not be bonded. Flood Damage has been added in FY12, FY13 and will be bonded in FY14. Free Cash cannot be used for recurring projects. FY12 revenue is flat. Reductions in some expenses were offset with revenue decreases. A 10% decrease in State Aid is anticipated

Old Business/New Business:

Charles Aspinwall:

The sidewalk plow, also known as the holder, broke down 8 times in the last two storms and was ultimately sent out for repair. It's an essential piece of equipment in that it fits into tight spaces and has several attachments. The sidewalk contractor's equipment is used for larger sidewalks such as Main Street. A new holder would cost between \$100,000.00 and \$120,000.00. The equipment cannot be rented.

Upcoming Meeting Schedule

January 26, 2011 7:30 PM
Veterans Memorial Building, Room 229

February 2, 2011 7:30 PM
Veterans Memorial Building, Room 229

February 9, 2011 7:30 PM
Veterans Memorial Building, Room 229

February 16, 2011 7:30 PM
Veterans Memorial Building, Room 229

Minutes Approval:

Craig Schultze made a motion to accept the January 5, 2011 meeting minutes as written, Jennifer Soule seconded. Vote: 8/0 motion carries

Adjourn:

Jennifer Soule made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 9:51pm; Susan Vecchi seconded, Vote 8/0.

Respectfully submitted,
Deirdre Gilmore