



APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE

MEETING MINUTES

Thursday, March 22, 2018
Selectmen's Meeting Room
7:00 p.m.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Chairman, Elaine Kelly
George Brenckle
Rick Nieber
Tony Poteete
Bob D'Amico

MEMBER ABSENT Janice Hight

ALSO PRESENT: John Coderre, Town Administrator
Ernie Houle, Assabet School Superintendent
Virginia Simms George, Assabet Regional School Committee
Kelly Burke, Senior Center Director
Adrienne Cost, COA Chair
Christopher Lindquist, Library Director
Michelle Rehill, Library Trustees Chair

APPROVAL OF MARCH 14, 2018 MEETING MINUTES

Mr. Nieber moved the Committee vote to approve the March 14, 2018 meeting minutes; Mr. Poteete seconded the motion. Vote 4-0-1 (Mr. D'Amico abstained as he was not present at the meeting).

ASSABET VALLEY TECHNICAL HIGH SCHOOL FY2019 BUDGET

Superintendent Ernie Houle and Assabet Regional School Committee Chair Virginia Simms George presented the FY2019 Assabet budget.

Superintendent Houle reviewed the vision and FY2019 Budget goals as follows:

Vision

Apply evidence-based practices and innovative thinking in Education and Career Development to inspire a school-wide learning environment where every student can discover their potential and acquire the knowledge, skills and resilience to thrive in life.

Assabet Valley Technical High School FY2019 Budget Goals

1. Close Curricular gaps between ELL and Students with Disabilities in order to move back to Level 1 Accountability status/shifting funds to maximize student impact.
2. With increased student enrollment, the Districts' goal is to maintain diversity in the Program of Studies.

Assabet Valley Technical High School FY2019 Budget Goals Cont. . .

3. To maintain appropriate class sizes and co-taught ratios to create the best possible learning environment for our students.
4. Maintain athletic and extra-curriculum activities to further enhance school culture and the overall experience for students.

Superintendent Houle noted that Assabet Valley Regional Technical High School is a vocational school composed of the member communities of Berlin, Hudson, Marlborough, Maynard, Northborough, Southborough and Westborough. Northborough's assessment is based upon the number of students from Town attending the school. The total FY2019 budget is \$21,064,000 which is a \$770,000 or 3.79% increase.

As of October 1, 2017, 41 Northborough students attend Assabet Valley, which represents 4.92% of the FY2019 overall Assabet budget, or an operating assessment of \$612,406. This is an enrollment decrease of 8 from the 49 Northborough students that attended Assabet Valley last year. Northborough's FY2019 share of the debt assessment from the completed building renovation project is \$145,316, which will continue to decline in subsequent years. The net effect of the combined operating assessment and new debt service is \$757,722, which is a decrease of \$135,171, or 15.14%.

SENIOR CENTER FY2019 BUDGET

Senior Center Director Kelly Burke stated that overall, the departmental budget is up 6%, or \$16,279 which includes an \$11,000 increase to reflect actual routine building maintenance costs, which were previously paid for from program revenues. This change will allow more program fee revenues to go directly to supporting actual services for seniors. Since opening the new center in 2010, the Senior Center has historically paid for most of its routine building cleaning and maintenance contracts through its program user fees. These costs have been slowly transitioned into the General Fund and in FY2019 that transition is now complete. The long-term goal is to use the programs fees to directly support the services provided to seniors and have the building maintenance costs supported as part of the base budget. The phased cost-sharing arrangement allowed the new center to open with minimal operational impacts to the budget during difficult budget years, but the time has come to complete the phasing initiative.

Ms. Burke reviewed the program and initiatives for the past year, including outreach efforts; transportation services; being recognized as a Dementia Friendly Community; offering an adult day program, as well as many other activities. The Bistro continues to serve lunch Monday through Thursday and Dinner on Tuesday evenings and remains self-sufficient from generated revenues.

LIBRARY FY2019 BUDGET

Library Director Christopher Lindquist stated that overall, the FY2019 Library Budget is up 2.36%, or \$19,244. The departmental budget as presented includes a 2% wage increase for Union or Non-Union personnel. The primary increases in the budget are for utility expenses (\$4,880) and Contractual services (\$5,095) which includes the increase for the C/W MARS library network membership fee. In FY2019 the Library will also receive an estimated \$22,745 in State Aid that goes directly to the Library and does not require Town Meeting appropriation.

LIBRARY FY2019 BUDGET CONT. . .

Mr. Lindquist reviewed a handout showing current statistics on usage and the various program initiatives. He noted the prevailing trend on Library buildings is to reduce the print collections by approximately one-third and to repurpose the space for other programmatic uses. The Trustees continue to fundraise and have begun the process of setting up a formal endowment program.

PRESENTATION ON CPC WARRANT ARTICLES

Town Planner Kathy Joubert reviewed the seven warrant articles, representing \$887,250 in CPA allocations, which have been approved by the Community Preservation Committee for inclusion on this year's Town Meeting warrant. Three articles relate to the historic preservation category and include work being done at the Gale Library; installation of a handicap access ramp at the First Parish Unitarian Universalist Church; and the first payment for the debt service relating to the purchase of 167 Main Street. Two articles for the open space category include Phase III of the town common and Phase I for the lighting of the Melican Middle School field. One article in the housing category for the Northborough Affordable Housing Corporation pertaining to the creation of affordable housing and one article for the annual administration of the Community Preservation Act.

Historic Preservation

- \$53,000 for the Gale Library for repairs and restoration of the slate roof and chimney masonry including interior painting necessary due to the damage caused by the leaking roof.
- \$52,000 for installation of a handicap access ramp on the west side of the Meeting House at 40 Church Street.
- \$255,000 for first debt service payment associated with the purchase of the White Cliffs at 167 Main Street.

Open Space

- \$115,000 for Phase III of the town common project. Funding is for the additional design and development costs associated with the donation of 20 Rear Gale Street.
- \$287,250 for Phase I of II for site investigation, engineering services, electrical service upgrade and surface restoration associated with the replacement of the field lighting at the Melican Middle School.

Housing

- \$100,000 for the Northborough Affordable Housing Corporation for the creation of affordable housing.

Administration

- \$25,000 for CPC administrative expenses associated with implementation of the Community Preservation Act.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT UPDATE

Town Planner Kathy Joubert briefly reviewed her March 15, 2018 memo of current projects that are either under construction or have recently been approved by the Zoning Board of Appeals or Planning Board. The Committee thanked Ms. Joubert for the thorough update.

NEXT MEETING DATE

The next committee meeting will be the Joint Budget Hearing with the Board of Selectmen on Monday, March 26, 2018 at 7 p.m.

ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Brenckle moved the Committee vote to adjourn; Mr. Nieber seconded the motion; all members in favor.

Meeting adjourned at 9:15 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

John W. Coderre
Town Administrator

Documents used during meeting:

1. March 22, 2018 Meeting Agenda
2. March 1, 2018 Meeting Minutes
3. Assabet High School FY2019 Budget
4. Senior Center FY2019 Budget and Program Materials
5. Library FY2019 Budget and Program Memo
6. CPC Warrant Articles Memo
7. Economic Development Update Memo