**Joint Board of Selectmen and Finance Committee Budget Round Table Minutes**

**1/02/2019, Fire Department Training Room, 4:30pm**

**Present:** Selectman Pearson, Selectman Agoglia, Selectman Ribeiro, Finance Chair Trickey, Finance Committee Members Vanderbeck, Martell, Marriott, Loomis, Library Trustees Barton, Duda, Housing Committee Chair Lukas, Police Chief Thomann, Fire Chief Murphy, Highway Superintendent Adamcek

**Open:** Selectman Pearson opened at 4:30pm

Motion to proceed with budget round table, seconded, motion passes.

Finance Committee Chair Trickey noted that preliminary state budget numbers affecting our town should be announced next week. He also reviewed important factors affecting the town’s fiscal future:

* the town’s total property assessment has actually gone down in the past two years;
* the total increase in tax revenue for the town in FY 2018 was $11,000;
* the 1.5% salary increase in teacher’s contracts will cost the town approximately $90,000 that will have to be raised by increasing property taxes;
* regional school assessment is not yet known but will likely increase;
* insurance costs are manageable; and,
* the town can raise approximately $800,000 more in taxes before we reach the maximum allowed by state law.

A question was asked about how grant funds are reflected in the town budget. Answer: if the grant funds are paying for expenses that would otherwise be incurred by the town, such expenses are not reflected in the budget to be raised by taxes; if the grant funds are for new activities that would not otherwise be funded by the town budget, once again such expenses will not be in the town budget to be raised by property taxation.

Finance Chair Trickey passes out the budget forms to all department heads and committee/board chairs. He also passed out the schedule for each of their meetings with the Finance Committee to review their budget requests.

A question was asked about paying competitive salaries for town employees. Such salary increases should be included in budget requests. It was noted that most town employees can’t afford to live in Pelham at current salary levels and housing costs. A suggestion was offered about offering town employees special abatements on property taxes to make it more affordable to live here.

Finally, it was emphasized that the Finance Committee’s role is to create a proposed budget for Town Meeting’s consideration and ultimate approval. The Committee does not approve the budget but it is charged with taking a long view of the town’s fiscal sustainability in its recommendations to Town Meeting.

**Budget Round Table closed at 4:50pm**

Respectfully submitted, Bob Agoglia

Administrative Assistant joined the meeting.

**Proposal for Accounting Software from Collector/Treasurer, June Massee**

VADAR proposal for 6-year payment plan for software rental. VADAR would replace Point & SoftRight beginning July 1, 2019. Both Point and SoftRight are paid until July 1, 2019. Extra costs to the Town, not included in the VADAR proposal, would be for transferring old data on Collector/Treasurer’s computer into the new software and could cost around $2k-$5k. Proposal also includes cost of technical support, any upgrades to VADAR software, and the ability for users to access remotely. The purchase will be included in the FY20 budget to begin 7/1/19. The amount due each year to VADAR will cost the Town less than what will be paid 7/1/19, if the Town continued with both Point and SoftRight.

The Pelham Town Accountant currently uses VADAR at her other job in Orange. John Trickey, Finance Committee Chair, has reviewed the proposal and agrees with the payment plan spread out over a 6-year period of $14,258.17/annually.

Motion to approve the financial software proposal from VADAR, seconded, unanimously approved.

**Sign FY19 Council on Aging Grant Documentation**

Kathy Martell explained the annual grant from Health and Human Services and said it was ok to sign just the cover page, as there were no other pages to review. The COA’s budget is the grant funding amount. Grant this year is $6,000, which is more than previous years and is based on the Town’s population.

Motion to accept the FY19 Council on Aging Grant Documentation, seconded, unanimously approved.

**Country Lane Dog Complaint**

Complaint received from Mr. Brown. He was unable to attend. Item will be added to the 1/16/19 agenda. Cyd Reiman, Garden Committee Chair and Country Lane resident, has similar complaints about dogs in her yard and on trails in Pelham. There is currently a leash law in Pelham. Cyd is interested in bringing language to the Board of Selectmen for consideration on the Annual Town Meeting warrant about creating a leash law. The Board of Selectmen received a dog complaint in November 2018 from Bruce Laurie about an unleashed dog that attacked him in Cadwell Forest and what actions the Board could take.

**Annual Policy Review-Responsibility & Protocol**

Item from John Trickey and more information required for discussion, therefore tabled.

**Town Officials**-none

**Public Comment**- Cyd Reiman would like the Board of Selectmen to consult with MIIA Insurance about residents holding events and gatherings in Town buildings. If a 3rd party uses a Town facility for function/event versus if Town/Board/Committees use for function and the group’s ability to raise funds for Town/Board/Committee. What are acceptable uses of Town owned buildings and are there any annual fees associated or extra coverages required.

**Liaison Reports**

Highway; Selectman Ribeiro; none.

Town Offices; Selectman Agoglia; Collector/Treasurer and Administrative Assistant will have performance reviews on 2/6/19.

-Discussion regarding if Pelham Board/Committee Chairs are allowed to have access to public records on their own. With the Public Records Law enacted January 1, 2017, all public records must go to the Records Access Officer. That person determines what Town department/board/committee the request is forwarded to for completion. Kathy Martell recommended that Board/Committee Chairs not be granted access because all documentation is permanent records.

Fire Department; Selectman Pearson; see earlier 1/2/19 budget meeting notes.

Police Department; Selectman Pearson; Slate will include picture and description of new full-time officer, Robert Reyome.

Finance Committee; Selectman Ribeiro; see earlier 1/2/19 budget meeting notes.

Library; Selectman Pearson; nothing new.

Elementary School; Selectman Ribeiro; none.

Regional School; Selectman Agoglia; none.

Regional School District Planning Committee; Selectman Agoglia; Consultant has generated numbers that appear to have a significant potential savings for Pelham, but not for Amherst if Pelham were to regionalize with Amherst.

Other- During Accessible Meeting Spaces Discussion with PD, FD, School, Library, BOH, and Selectman Agoglia the teachers’ room in the School was determined to be usable space for meetings to help alleviate the strain on the Ramsdell Room for Library programming. The space looks to hold about 15 people. Bob will view the space for future Board/Committee meetings. The Board of Selectmen sent a memo to Departments/Boards/Committees about accessible meeting spaces that are available in Town. Language was included from AG Civil Rights Division to be added to all open meetings agendas in Pelham.

-Resident Carol Cherrington offered to make signage as a helpful skill. The Board of Selectmen would like her to construct a meeting signboard that welcomes public into meetings which has the ability to change out the name of which group is meeting. SC will be in touch.

-SGREE pilot program update is needed from the Principal, including when the program will begin.

-Energy Committee currently wrapping up relamp project by 2/1/19. Question posed to 30B hotline if Engineering Analysis exempt from 30B.

**Adjournment**

Motion to adjourn, seconded, motion passes at 5:50pm.

**Documents Examined**

VADAR proposal, FY19 COA grant documentation.

Respectfully submitted, Susannah Carey