MEETING: A meeting was held on Thursday, February 7, 2019 at 7:30 PM at Town Hall Office Building, 50 Billerica Road, Chelmsford

PRESENT: J. Clancy, E. Chambers, D. Goselin, K. Duffett, A. Langford and V. Parks

ABSENT: A. Tanini


HANDOUTS: Cemetery Department Budget Request, Council on Aging Budget Request, Board of Health Budget Request, Veterans Agent Budget Request, Finance Department Budget Request, Finance Committee Liaison List

The meeting was called to order at 7:32 PM.

Approval of Minutes:

October 15, 2018:
Corrections were made to the minutes of October 15, 2018. K. Duffett made a motion to accept the minutes of October 15, 2018 as amended. E. Chambers seconded the motion. All voted in favor. The motion passed. The minutes were approved as amended.

January 24, 2019:
Corrections were made to the minutes of January 24, 2019. K. Duffett made a motion to accept the minutes of January 24, 2019 as amended. D. Goselin seconded the motion. J. Clancy, E. Chambers, D. Goselin and K. Duffett voted in favor of the motion. A. Langford and V. Parks abstained as they were not present at the meeting. The motion passed. The minutes were approved as amended.

February 4, 2019:
Corrections were made to the minutes of February 4, 2019. J. Clancy reported that there had been a document request from the Police Sergeants Union for documents regarding Finance Committee discussion including the meeting of February 4th. He stated that since there was not a quorum of members available to vote on the February 4th minutes he would table their approval until the next meeting. He noted that he would provide the minutes that had not yet been approved to satisfy the 10-day requirement for the document request.
Cemetery Commission - FY20 Budget:  
D. Boyle reported that the warrant article for the Cemetery Department was the regular annual request to move funds from the sale of graves and lots to the Cemetery Improvement Fund. He explained that they would be requesting $50,000 to be appropriated to continue with the improvements at Pine Ridge Cemetery. J. Clancy asked how this was going. D. Boyle replied that the improvements were tied to the available funding and they were doing as much as they could as funding would allow. He added that by fall he hoped that the roads and drainage would be completed, and they would be at the point where they could hydroseed. He commented that the Cemetery Department was also looking at adding two more niche walls. D. Boyle reported that the improvement fund currently had a balance of $69,000.

D. Boyle reported that there were not many changes to the FY2020 requested budget for the Cemetery Department. He stated that all of personnel services was level funded other than three union members who had an increase per contract. He added that all expenses were basically the same as the prior year with only minor fluctuations. K. Duffett asked what the cause of the large decrease in the longevity line item was. D. Boyle replied that this was due to a change in a foreman. J. Clancy asked how the Smartphone App was going. D. Boyle replied that it was going very well and had been well received. D. Goselin asked if the Cemetery Department was getting a new truck. D. Boyle replied that they were. K. Duffett asked what happened if someone purchased several plots and did not use them all. D. Boyle replied that they would generally sit empty and there was nothing the Cemetery Department could do about it. He added that lots could not be resold, but they could be deeded to someone as a gift.

Council on Aging/Senior Center - FY20 Budget:  
D. Siriani reported that she needed to make an adjustment to the Dues & Subscriptions line item increasing it from $1,700 to $1,900. She explained that this was due to an increase in the dues for the Massachusetts Council on Aging. She stated that there was nothing “wild” in her budget as the expenses were all based on FY2019 actuals. She said that she received quarterly reports on expenses from the town. She explained that she used these actuals to estimate that electricity and gas may decrease a bit whereas vehicle maintenance may increase as vehicles aged and needed to be fixed more often.

D. Siriani reported that she increased the Contract Services line item from $12,496 to $15,000 based on the costs last year. She explained that much of this is due to the building being older. She stated that the building was 30 years old and had a lot of wear and tear and they were just trying to catch up and fix things rather than keep up with maintenance. She stated that they wanted the facility to look nice. D. Siriani stated that the 20 hours per week which the current building maintenance supervisor worked was not enough to keep up with their needs. She stated that she proposed a method of solving the problem that would not require additional funding by using increased rental fees to fund an overtime budget of 2-5 hours per week for the current maintenance supervisor. She said that the estimated cost for this would be $8,190. She explained that the facility was open from 6:30 AM until 4:30 PM daily, as well as three nights per week for activities and many weekends for rentals. She said that most rental fees were waived for non-profits and town groups, but if these fees were not waived they could use the funds for the increased maintenance need. She added that she had a concern that some groups
would not be able to afford the cost of the building for their events. D. Siriani stated that the additional maintenance funding was not in the town managers budget and she asked the Finance Committee members to keep this in mind. She suggested that when the Facilities Department was in and if they asked for more money that this need be considered and help be provided to the Senior Center.

K. Duffett asked if the 20 hours per week for the maintenance supervisor was not enough to do the required work. D. Siriani replied that it wasn’t. She said that it would be better to have 40 hours per week. She said that he was already full time with benefits and split his time between Town Hall and the Senior Center. D. Siriani stated that her suggestion was to pay for overtime hours by charging the local groups and non-profits instead of waiving the fees for these groups. A. Langford asked how much the charge was for non-local groups. D. Siriani replied that the costs were much higher for outside groups and they would end up saying no to the rental offer.

D. Siriani reported that they were doing well with the various revolving funds and received over one-half a million per year in other funding. She said that this came from fees from programs and grant money. She added that the amount received from the state formula grant increased this year and she was able to use this funding for additional transportation drivers. K. Duffett asked if D. Siriani had included a listing of the balances in the revolving funds. D. Siriani replied that she did not bring it. D. Goselin commented that they had gone over the revolving funds when he had his meeting with D. Siriani. D. Siriani noted that there were currently 10 active revolving funds. She said that the Council on Aging had 7.5 FTE personnel which were paid for by the town general fund. She explained that the Council on Aging had 33 employees with much of the staff being paid from the revolving funds. J. Clancy asked D. Goselin if he could circulate to the Finance Committee Members the slide on the revolving funds. He asked if members had any questions on these funds if they could reach out to D. Siriani. She replied that they absolutely could reach out to her with any questions. K. Duffett asked if the Senior Center had a “Friends” group similar to the library. D. Siriani replied that they did and last year the Center had received $59,000 in donations through the “Friends”. She said that they received $3,000 per month on a regular on-going basis. She said these funds help to pay for activities, supplies or things like a “special meal”. D. Goselin asked if these expenditures had an approval process and were “signed off” on. D. Siriani replied that they all had to be signed off on by a manager. D. Siriani reported that that they had several successful programs such as the companion program which they were able to add four additional clients to this year by increasing the rate for companions.

E. Chambers asked about the increase in the full-time personnel services line item last year. D. Siriani replied that last year they had added the Assistant Director position. She explained that this had been the program director who was given an increase in duties and a corresponding increase in wages. She stated that other than that change there was the required step increases and a 2% COLA level-funded budget. She added that she had also cut expenses as much as possible.

K. Duffett commented that if anyone was home and looking for something to do, the Senior Center was a good place to go. D. Siriani agreed. She stated that all she wanted was a full staff and now she had it. She thanked the Finance Committee for their support in the past years and for their continued support.
Board of Health - FY20 Budget:
S. Rosa thanked the Finance Committee for their support last fall for the hiring of a second inspector for the Board of Health. She noted that the new inspector had called her before starting work to ask what she would be starting with. S. Rosa said that she had to tell her “chickens” and that is really all she has been working on. J. Clancy asked about the timing of the zoning article change. P. Cohen replied that it would be submitted to the Attorney General in a few days and usually they allowed for 90 days, but since this was not a busy time of year his best guess was that the change would be in effect in April. S. Rosa added that they were currently enforcing the new regulations from the Board of Health. She commented that two inspectors went out on every inspection and they still needed to get the sign-off from the building inspector if it was needed for the permit.

S. Rosa pointed out that R. Day had not continued in his position after July 1, 2018. She stated that one increase for FY2020 was the health inspector being budgeted for a full year next year rather than for one-half of the year this year. She stated that the Health Educator would continue to be split with half being paid for by the schools and half by the Board of Health.

J. Clancy asked if there were any other issues that S. Rosa could foresee the Board of Health devoting a lot of time to next year. S. Rosa replied that the two new requirements approved at Fall Town Meeting would be going into effect on July 1, 2019. She reminded the Finance Committee members that this would be the requirement of businesses to no longer use plastic straws, stirrers and Styrofoam. She said that they would need to notify all businesses in town and give them notice. She reported that C. Fiekers who had worked on the articles last year had reached out to her offering to help with the outreach efforts. S. Rosa said that she would gladly accept this help. S. Rosa stated that other things that would be taxing on the department were the state updates on pool code and food code. She noted that the food code had not been updated since the 1990’s and had just been updated. She said that the department would be going to training regarding the new food code. She stated that the goal of hiring the new inspector was to catch up on the restaurant inspections, but she said that they have not been able to even start that.

K. Duffett asked how long an inspection would take. S. Rosa replied that it would depend on the number and type of violations. She added that they also had to inspect and provide permits for events like Taste of Chelmsford, Farmers Market and food trucks.

A. Langford asked if S. Rosa had any information of Hepatitis A as she had heard of an outbreak in Southern New Hampshire. S. Rosa replied that they were watching Hepatitis A closely. She explained that there was a large increase seen in the segment of the population who were substance abuse users and the homeless. A. Langford asked if the age group seen was those over the age of 25 or 30 since the vaccine came about in the 1990’s. S. Rosa replied that it was often those who were older, but many people have not been vaccinated. She added that the MDPH indicated that they would like Boards of Health to go out into the community and vaccinated the homeless, however she noted that they were not paying for the vaccine. She reported that Lowell had tried this as they had a larger population of homeless, but a lot of times people want no part of this type of service. S. Rosa stated that they have not been able to even investigate this because of the time devoted to the chickens. She added that anytime there was an offer of free vaccines to towns they would “jump on it”.

S. Rosa reported that based on the suggestion from the Finance Committee last year they had compared the entire list of permit fees in Chelmsford to surrounding towns and found that Chelmsford was lower in many cases. She stated that if Chelmsford was the same or a little higher they kept the fees the same, but otherwise they increased them across the board.

S. Rosa stated that the chickens have been taking all her time. She stated that just the other day they had spent one and a half hours on a single permit. She explained that people were submitting hand-drawn maps for a site plan that did not match up with the location. She said that they were encouraging people to use the free GIS mapping software which has a measuring tool to create their plans. J. Clancy stated that going forward once the site plan was established there would not be many changes year after year. So, when people reapply they should just need to inspect and sign-off.

**Veterans Agent - FY20 Budget:**

R. Jackson reported that the Chapter 115 Veterans Benefits line item was decreasing for FY2020 from $165,000 in FY2019 to $145,000 in FY2020. She explained that due to the current case load they had decided that it was prudent to decrease the Veterans Benefits line item. She explained that there were still a lot of veterans in town at approximately 3,000, but there has been a decrease in the Chapter 115 residents over the last few years. She stated that the reason for this was the improving economy, veterans housing being available in town and getting those eligible off the 115 program and onto state programs.

R. Jackson reported that there was a significant increase in the actual VA benefits Chelmsford Veterans and/or family members received. She stated that in 2017 over $5,893,800 was received by 432 veterans in Chelmsford and over $800,592 was paid to 52 surviving spouses living in Chelmsford. R. Jackson stated that more federal money was flowing into town while less Chapter 115 funding was needed. She stated that there were still around 25 cases under Chapter 115 and the state would reimburse 75% of the funds. She stated that the last reimbursement was $91,788 received from $122,384 in Chapter 115 funding. D. Goselin commented that R. Jackson was asking for less money this year. R. Jackson replied in the affirmative adding that the Town would get 75% of it back too. J. Clancy asked when the reimbursement money came back. R. Jackson replied that they received reimbursement on a quarterly basis and it was about one year behind.

K. Duffett asked if the government shut down had any impact on her department. R. Jackson replied that national records were closed so things were slower, but she added that they were already extremely slow and far behind. She noted that she was at an appeal in Boston earlier in the day and that case was from four and a half years ago. She stated that other than records retrieval which take forever anyway, there was no impact from the shutdown. K. Duffett thanked R. Jackson for all she did for veterans in Chelmsford. D. Goselin seconded the thanks and the other Finance Committee members agreed.

R. Jackson stated that she wanted to put in a plug for the Veterans Memorial Park. She explained that this was not run by the town but was run by an independent committee. She said
that they were currently taking applications for veterans to be added to a new stone which they hoped to complete and hold a dedication for in November of 2019.

**Finance Department - FY20 Budget:**

J. Sousa reported that he, F. Reen, D. Lussier and T. Lutter had met with A. Tanini last Monday to go through the Finance Department budget. He stated that for FY2020 there were still the same 14 FTE positions shown in FY2019. He stated that under the Treasurer personnel increases were due to step increases and COLA. He stated that expenses were level-funded at $221,500.

J. Sousa reported that under Information Technology personnel there were two employees and the increase was due to step increases. He reported that under expenses there was an increase in the Computer Maintenance line item from $124,200 to $150,000. He explained that this increase included the work to upgrade to a different phone vendor. He stated that this approximate cost of $26,000 was being charged directly to the IT budget rather than to 15 to 20 different departments. He explained that it was really a cost shift and not an increase. He added that going forward this would be a more efficient. J. Sousa reported that the other significant increase in expenses was an additional $6,000 under contracted services. He explained that this was for software upgrades.

J. Sousa reported that under the Assessor’s office personnel increases were from steps and non-union COLA. He stated that the next year for a total revaluation in town would be FY2021. He explained that they were being proactive and increased the revaluation line item in FY2020 by about $16,000 so that they could hire a contractor and start in advance. He stated that they used a contractor for personal property in businesses and could get a start on this. J. Clancy asked if the revaluation was mandated for FY2021. J. Sousa replied that it was, and they would just get the ball rolling in FY2020. K. Duffett asked when the large revaluation was done. J. Sousa replied that it had been done in FY2018 and before that had not been done in some time. He explained that the DOR established that the full revaluation should be done every four or five years.

J. Sousa reported that in Accounting personnel increases were from non-union COLA and expenses were pretty much the same as FY2019 other than the $8,700 budgeted in FY2019 under GASB 45. He explained the actuarial update was on a two-year cycle and FY2019 had been an on year, whereas FY2020 was an off year.

E. Chambers suggested it would be helpful to Finance Committee members to get the budget materials for each department prior to the budget hearing. He stated that having the material in advance would allow the opportunity to review it ahead of time. J. Clancy agreed that this was more helpful, and it had been done in the past. He requested that the liaisons email the material to the Finance Committee members prior to the meeting.

**Reorganization Discussion and Vote:**

J. Clancy reported that almost the full board was present, and he had spoken with A. Tanini regarding moving forward with the re-organization in her absence. He said that A. Tanini was fine with the vote being taken without her. K. Duffett stated that she was happy and content with the board as it was. A. Langford and E. Chambers agreed. K. Duffett said that she understood that being the chairman was a lot of work and she was willing to offer any help that
she could. A. Langford stated that having J. Clancy as the Chair and A. Tanini as the Vice Chair had worked well. She said that she too understood the amount of work and suggested delegating extra work to others. J. Clancy commented that the letter took the most time. He added that with the last letter it had helped a lot when others had written a paragraph regarding their recommendations. He explained that when there is a majority vote it would help to provide the framework if members provided a “blurb” about why they voted as they did.

K. Duffett made a motion to nominate J. Clancy to be the Chairman of the Finance Committee. D. Goselin seconded the motion. K. Duffett said J. Clancy did an excellent job as chairman and she thanked him for all he has done for the committee. J. Clancy stated that while the members didn’t always agree they all did their homework. He said that he appreciated the vote of confidence the members had in him. He called the vote. K. Duffett, D. Goselin, A. Langford, E. Chambers and V. Parks voted in favor of the motion. J. Clancy abstained. The motion carried. J. Clancy remains the Chairman of the Finance Committee.

K. Duffett made a motion to nominate A. Tanini as the Vice Chair of the Finance Committee. D. Goselin seconded the motion. A. Langford stated that A. Tanini filled the role admirably. J. Clancy added that when he was not able to be there she has done fine. He called the vote. All voted in favor. A. Tanini remains the Vice-Chair of the Finance Committee.

Review Liaison Assignments and FY2020 Budget Review Schedule:
J. Clancy stated that there was a meeting scheduled with Chief Ryan on Saturday and then he could be scheduled to come in. A. Langford said that she would try to schedule Chief Ryan for the 28th. J. Clancy stated that the Finance Committee would not be meeting on February 21st and there may also not be the need for a meeting next week on February 14th. P. Cohen commented that the chicken article had been pulled and the Route 40 article would not be ready for the warrant. D. Goselin stated that they would be meeting with Nashoba on the 11th. He said that he would not be able to attend the meeting of February 28th. J. Clancy asked if he preferred to be present when Nashoba was in. D. Goselin replied that he was fine either way. He pointed out that V. Parks and E. Chambers would be present at the Nashoba meeting and he could send along any comments he had. K. Duffett said that she had sent an email to J. Lang regarding the school budget hearing. She questioned if the preference would be to have them in before or after the School Committee voted on the school budget. J. Clancy replied that there was an argument for both ways, so he would leave it up to the schools and the liaison. He stated that if the budget is already approved all the Finance Committee could do was vote it up or down. He said that if they came in before they would hear the comments of the Finance Committee and could potentially address them. K. Duffett noted that in the past they have taken some things from the Finance Committee into consideration. K. Duffett stated that she would try to target the schools to come in on the 21st of March. She added that she was meeting with the Library Department tomorrow and would ask when they were available. J. Clancy stated that they would target March 7th for the DPW and Sewer. V. Parks said that P. Pedulla from PEG Access had requested and was confirmed for February 28, 2019 if time was available. J. Clancy asked for confirmation that the warrant would be signed on the 25th of February. P. Cohen confirmed. J. Clancy stated that there were enough nights available such that no meeting would be needed on February 14. He said that the next Finance Committee meeting would be February 28, 2019.
**Public Comment:**
J. Clancy mentioned that there was a document request from the Police Sergeant’s Union for all Finance Committee discussion from the period of January 24, 2019 to February 4, 2019. He explained that this would include minutes, emails and texts. He stated that the Finance Committee members were required to produce these documents in ten days. A. Lanford commented that there had just been the one email from P. Cohen regarding the arbitration agreement. K. Duffett asked why as she had not been at the last meeting. J. Clancy explained that the Finance Committee had recommended against the collective bargaining funding and Town Meeting had voted it down, so the Police Sergeants Union will go back to arbitration.

J. Clancy requested that all members make sure they have taken the conflict of interest training and that they make sure that they have signed and returned the form on open meeting law. He asked that all members make sure that they are up-to-date with this.

K. Duffett made a motion to adjourn. A. Langford seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

The meeting adjourned at 9:01 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Pamela A. Morrison