

TOWN OF EGREMONT, MASSACHUSETTS
JOINT MEETING OF THE SELECTBOARD & FINANCE COMMITTEE
MINUTES

Date: April 6, 2022
Time: 1:00pm
Place: Via Zoom Meeting & Town Hall
Egremont

Present at the meeting in person were Selectboard members Chairman George McGurn, Vice-Chair Lucinda Fenn-Vermeulen, Board member Mary Brazie, and Finance Committee members Laura Allen, Chair, Bruce Turner, Dan Blitzler and Frank Penglase. Others present via zoom were Finance Committee member Tom Berkel.

The meeting was audio and video recorded.

The Special Article for the French park Forest Stewardship grant match will be \$5,000 as the grant maximum award is \$20,000 and the required match is 25%.

Department heads have expressed concern over the still increasing costs of fuels and the affect on budgets submitted in December. The Board and Committee agreed that any overages in FY 23 could be dealt with in the Reserve Fund.

The Water Department has received a capital improvement plan that shows improvements needed amounting to \$6,889,000 over a 20 year period. Upgrades to water lines are estimated to cost \$2,583,000. Selectboard Chairman McGurn reported that Aquarion has expressed interest in purchasing the Water Department and is sending someone out to conduct a study to determine a price. Town Meeting would need to act on selling the plant and then procurement laws would need to be followed. It was proposed that maybe the structure of the governance be looked at. The engineers for the Main Street reconstruction project have also been contacted to give an estimate on upgrading the water lines from the Old Mill to the Great Barrington town line as MassDOT is doing the repair from Route 41 to the Old Mill. The group voted to place a special article on the Annual Town Meeting Warrant to borrow \$2,000,000 specific to the Main Street water line upgrade. Payment of the debt will be in the FY 24 Water Department Enterprise budget.

IT was agreed that Free Cash will be used to fund the \$50,000 increase in the Road Repairs article and for the Buildings and Grounds building. If the Building and Grounds building fails Free Cash will be used for other items. Tom Reynolds will be asked to be present at the town meeting and to bring pictures or a model.

Discussion revolved around the possible need to pave the Transfer Station driveway before doing the Town Hall parking lot.

In discussing road repairs, it was questioned as to how much money has been spent on Mount Washington Road over the last 5 years.

A special stabilization fund for the Water Department will be considered next fiscal year.

Town Clerk Juliette Haas joined the meeting for a short time to discuss where the election will be held in light of the fact that the Fire Department has reluctantly agreed that the election can be held in the North

Fire Station again. Town Clerk Haas feels that due to parking issues and the need to access the state voter registration computer which is in Town Hall, the election should be held at Town Hall as it has been for the past two years. Selectboard member Brazie moved to go back to the Fire Station as the town's election has historically been held there. Selectboard Vice-Chair Vermeulen seconded. Town Clerk Haas asked for a vote but as the statute gives the authority to the Selectboard she was denied a vote in the matter. The Board voted unanimously to make the location for upcoming elections the North Egremont Fire Station.

Disappointment over the increase in the school budget was expressed. The cost of educating a student is \$25,000. Egremont has 9 more students that it had the prior year. There is a large increase in the cost for transportation, though final bids are being reviewed later in the week. School Choice and a possible merger were also discussed.

Meeting adjourned at 2:36pm.

Mary Brazie,
Office Administrator

minutes.22/apr6sbfc

The recording of the minutes is on record at the Town Hall for 90 days. Anyone who wishes to may obtain a copy or listen to the recording at Town Hall. Attachments are on file at Town Hall.