

**Town of Sterling
Finance Committee Meeting Minutes
May 18, 2020
Butterick Building, Room 205**

Chairman Joe Sova called the meeting to order at 6:04 PM.

In Attendance:

Butterick Building - Joe Sova and Everett Heller
Remote Connection - Todd Chapman and Mary Cliett

Also in attendance in the Butterick Building were Town Administrator Ross Perry, Selectman John Kilcoyne, and Fire Chief David Hurlbut

In Attendance by remote connection: Selectwoman Arden Sonnenberg and Recording Secretary Elaine Heller

Approve Prior Meeting Minutes:

A motion to approve minutes of the May 4, 2020 meeting was made by Everett Heller and seconded by Mary Cliett. Roll call vote: Sova - aye; Heller - aye; Chapman - aye; Cliett - aye. Motion carried.

Discussion with Fire Chief re: Paramedic/Firefighter Position:

Chief Hurlbut explained his need for additional paramedic/firefighter positions. His initial request had been for 2 additional Full-time daytime firefighter/paramedic positions, working opposite shifts, which would allow the department to be staffed with four personnel between the hours of 7:00 AM and 6:00 PM daily. During those hours very few on-call personnel are available due to work or family commitments.

Chief Hurlbut noted that during 2019, there were 1,486 incidents and 1,024 of those incidents occurred between the daytime hours of 7:00 AM and 6:00 PM. Sterling paramedics also provide ALS services to Clinton and Lancaster, but 81% of daytime calls are to support the needs of Sterling residents.

Due to the unexpected financial impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Board of Selectmen suggested the warrant article request one position, instead of two.

During discussion with Committee members, Everett Heller observed that in his opinion, safety is paramount and he supports the 2 firefighter positions, 1 to be funded from ambulance receipts, and one from the budget (raise and appropriate). The approximate amount for this position would be \$80,000, based on salary and benefits.

Mr. Heller then made a motion to increase the request to 2 positions, with funding as noted above. Mary Cliett seconded the motion. Roll call vote: Sova - aye; Chapman - aye; Cliett - aye; Heller - aye. With all in favor, the motion carried.

All Committee members agreed that the firefighter/paramedic positions should be set up as 2 separate warrant articles, with one position funded from ambulance receipts and one position funded from raise and appropriate.

Update on ATM and FY21 Budget:

According to Town Administrator Perry, the omnibus budget stands at \$24,400,569.00. If a full-time firefighter position is added, the amount would increase to \$24,400,649.00. The total increase using the first figure would be 2.58%. With the addition of \$80,000, the percent would change to 2.84%.

TA Perry commented that the Annual Town Meeting is still on schedule for June 22, 2020.

Vote on Remaining Warrant Articles:

FY21 Town Operating Budget - Everett Heller made a motion that the Finance Committee recommend support of the Omnibus Budget amount and Todd Chapman seconded the motion. Roll call vote: Sova - aye; Heller - aye; Cliett - aye; Chapman - aye. Motion carried.

Reserve Fund Transfers, if needed:

Fire Chief Hurlbut submitted an RFT in the amount of \$15,000.00, to transfer that amount from ambulance payroll to ambulance expenses. A motion to approve the transfer was made by Everett Heller and seconded by Mary Cliett. Roll call vote: Heller - aye; Cliett - aye; Chapman - aye; Sova - aye. Motion carried.

Chief Hurlbut also requested a transfer of \$25,000.00 from fire payroll to fire expense, to cover repairs on fire equipment. Everett Heller made a motion to approve the RFT and Mary Cliett seconded the motion. Roll call vote: Sova - aye; Chapman - aye; Heller - aye; Cliett - aye. With all in favor, the motion carried.

Other Committee Business: None

Set Next Meeting Date:

The next meeting will be the Annual Town Meeting on June 22, 2020.

Adjourn:

A motion to adjourn the meeting was made by Mary Cliett and seconded by Todd Chapman. All members were in favor and the meeting adjourned at 6:46 PM.