

**Town of Sturbridge  
Finance Committee  
Meeting Minutes  
January 31, 2009  
Sturbridge Town Hall  
8:30 A.M.**

Meeting was called to order at 8:40 am with the following members present: Kevin Smith (KS), Larry Morrison (LM), Mike Serio (MS), Mary Redetzke (MR), Priscilla Gimas (PG), Virginia Stallone (VS), Mary Dowling (MD), Bob Williams (BW), and Patricia Affenito (PA).

Also present were Jim Malloy and Selectmen: Steve Halterman, Ted Goodwin, Scott Garieri, Hal White and Mary Blanchard

Discussion of FY10 budget with Department Heads.

8:40am: Town Clerk

All seminars cut.

Discussed assistant: paid for the increased hours but at original pay. There has been no additional hours to the Town Clerks office with the increase in assistant hours.

#1 Priority if more funding = education.

9:10am: Library

Supplies cut below the usual 19% of total library budget. This does not include speakers, children's activities, etc that are funded through the Friends.

Supplies line is not mandated at the 19%; a waiver may be applied for. The % is based on population and # of hours open. At the current operating hours, we only need 16%.

Carpets will not be shampooed and have not been for a few years. Request for new carpets is scheduled for FY12 Capital. Must be careful that insurance will not be cancelled due to hazard.

#1 Priority if more funding = supplies

9:20am: Fire Department

Chief does not expect any service to be affected by the cuts.

Reserve Fund is available for maintenance emergencies.

Decrease in training does not impact labor hours nor accreditation.

There is an increase in ambulance rates. (+\$55,000)

On calls- only 2 on-duty firemen respond and may call the standby person for small call. They no longer call in the whole crew.

#1 Priority if more funding = ambulance supplies then training

9:35am: Department of Public Works

Cut in road work = 1/3mile less paving (\$32,000)

Bridge discussion: Champeaux Road will cost \$1 million replacement. It is inspected annually and rated the worst in Sturbridge. Weight limit has been reduced.

There is no immediate threat to buses or town safety equipment.

Farquahar Road Bridge is rated a 7.

Bridges are closed at a rating of 5.

Director is placing concrete blocks at the entrance by the Town sand piles in order to stop commercial trucks from loading sand onto the truck.

#1 Priority if more funding = Road maintenance then more men.

10:00am: Police

Cuts in budget do not affect core operation.

They are no longer accredited but all systems are still in place. They are in 'self-assessment' mode and the Chief acts as overseer.

Chief had to renegotiate with the Police Union in order to add a float person. This shift was eliminated in FY08 and only reinstated for FY10.

Off-site training has been eliminated; however, officers are able to continue some with on-line training.

On-duty officers only will cover special events; some OT is refunded through betterment.

#1 Priority if more funding = Overtime

10:40am: Planning Department

Training of Board members has been reduced but still allows for 1 session per person.

Town Planner will continue training with funds supplemented by personal resources.

#1 Priority if more funding = GIS then training

10:45am: Board of Assessors

This budget will change due to the attempt to reorganize the department. Assistant Assessor will be retiring. Concern over no 'corporate history'.

Looking at modifying Asst. Assessor position to a full assessor and bring more work inhouse. This would reduce consultant fees.

(This could save about \$40,000 over 3 years if residential reval is done inhouse and only CIP is contracted out)

State now requires annual revals if home values drop more than 10%.

11:00am: Parks and Recreation

Cut FT Lifeguard and PT play leader.

Summer 08 had 60 less children (150 total) registered than summer 07.

Fees increased last year and again this year: \$125/child/8 week session and \$75/child/the 8-4 extended care.

Registration only for 7+ years.

11:10am: Council on Aging/Senior Center

Discussion on TriValley Elder Services

#1 Priority if more funding = rug cleaning then newspaper subscriptions

11:15am: Board of Health

Discussion of Public Accommodation Inspector: request for higher pay.

All inspectors are paid on stipend.

All fees were increased 25% as of 1/1/09.

A new account has been set up called the 'Due to' account to hold fees due inspectors on long term projects.

12:00pm: Board of Health- Recycling Center/Landfill

Discussion of all detail items in budget

By postponing facility maintenance, does it affect accreditation? Uncertain...#1 priority is following the rules (equipment, labels, containers), #2 is safety of site.

Engineers and DPW are looking this next week at closing Cell#2 at the Landfill and will have a solid estimate then.

12:20pm: Town Administrator

Current budget is balanced to estimated revenues.

As of today....

1) House/Governors budget is \$83,450 higher than original estimate

2)Statewide Hotel/Meals Tax increase= + \$109,560 revenue

3)Assessment= +\$15,000 revenue

4)TRSD 0% increase in budget; Burgess 0% increase in budget but possible 10% cut in Ch.70 = +\$100,000

(cut in expense)

5)Telecommunications loophole closed= +\$65,000 in real estate tax

6)Local option 1% meals tax and 1% hotel tax= \$461,000 ( but most likely for FY11)

therefore (by end of February),

\$198,450 pretty definite revenue increase= restores budget cuts

\$174,500 good possibility of increased revenue= adds services

\$372,950 total

Meeting adjourned at 12:45pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Patricia Affenito