

Lenox Finance Committee Meeting Minutes.

Date: February 13, 2024

Members Present: Kristine Cass (KC), Mindi Morin (MM), Blaise Gregory (BG) Josh Levin (JL)

Guests: Chris Ketchen (CK), Alison Brigham (AB), Rebecca Robak (RR), Kevin Kump (KK), Chris O'Brien (CO)

Absent:

Meeting called to order at 6:01pm

KC motioned to approve the minutes from February 6, 2024. BG 2nd the motion, MM 2nd and all in favor. KC Introduced our potential members and mentioned KK and AB will be brought forward to the selectboard on February 14, 2024. KC introduced Chief O'Brien to the meeting to discuss their budget and CK opened up the discussion. CO explained the higher costs for training due to increase in EMT coverage and state mandated. MM asked if it was felt we should consider an increase in staffing with the increase in additional businesses that have opened and will be opening. CO did explain that we are compliant but there is a demand for an increase in inspections with hotels, the affordable housing, real estate, etc. Ideally a 40 hour inspector position could be needed and the existing office space is limited for additional EFTE's. CK mentioned the move would be within 18 months. RR asked about increased staffing needed for the new building and CO explained what would be needed. Discussion around new ambulance and engine in capital. MM brought up recruiting now to place that EFTE into 2025. BG asked about succession within the department and it was explained that many are promoted within, explained CO. All group discussion around recruiting, training and retention.

KC asked about OT in fire going up but offset with parttime and this is due to EMT and Paramedic cannot be filled in with PT assistance. CO discussed a change in their software and it needing to be switched and the new software will increase by over 500% and discussion around pursuing other companies and this is currently not in the budget.

KC shifted the discussion to general government and we discussed the adjustment in salary going down and the reasoning behind that. CK mentioned the recruitment for the accounting position and we have someone that we hope will accept soon and start prior to July so they have a transition plan for the new person. Discussion around ensuring our salaries are competitive and talking a multi-year level approach.

CK asked about the compensation reserve and this is higher to allow for recruiting and competitiveness with competing communities. Discussion around items under B-10 and many of these charges are shifting back to what it had been previously, like envelopes. CK also explained the training that has been added to the budget. CK pointed out B-13 and there is a misprint under the EFTE's that will be adjusted and we are regionalizing inspections with 4 communities, therefore that is the decrease in salaries and we do have enough staff to share this position.

RR asked about the treatment plant in capital and it was explained this is for water. CK explained the Richmond Mt. Road line that was set in place 6 years ago and that process that has allowed us to not raise rates. CK discussed the east dugway capital (area behind brushwood for recreation).

KC asked the group about the annual finance committee report. KC motion to approve with the date change, MM 2nd and all agreed.

Discussion around the upcoming weeks meeting with each department and MM will reach out to Melissa with the school to review their entire budget for each department. KC encouraged once we received, we come prepared to discuss questions with the school committee.

JL motioned to adjourn, BG 2nd.

Meeting adjourned 7:08pm

Respectively Submitted,
Mindi Morin