Select Board Meeting

May 13, 2025

5:03 pm meeting called to order by Neil Oleson.

Select Board members present: Neil Oleson, Mike Bedini, Tim Zelazo

Select Board members absent: None

Finance Committee members present: Lisa Brown, Stephanie Pare

Finance Committee members absent: Carlo Pellegrini

Others present: Vicki Winchell, Joan Lewis, Jim White. Judy Olsen and Mike Gleason are present for their budget portions only.

JOINT SELECTBOARD/FINANCE COMMITTEE MEETING

* Judy Oleson informed the board and finance committee that the school budget has been finalized at $1,426, 085.42. This is a decrease from last year by $14,195.45 or 0.99%. There are some higher paid teachers who are retiring this year. The contract negotiations have been completed with the school and both sides have settled on a 3% raise for 3 years.
* All board accounts were reviewed line by line and approved by all members. Discussion took place on the following line items:
  + Stacie had requested an additional $750.00 to the Accounting Officer position for FY2026. Stephanie added the same amount to the Treasurer and Collector positions to keep all accounts in line.
  + Treasurer Expenses increased from last year to cover the software expenses.
  + Town Clerk salary increased due to the extended working hours required for this position.
  + All boards agreed with these amounts.
* Highway Department Accounts Reviewed with Jim.
  + Building & Grounds Maintenance saw a requested increase of 29.7%. Jim explained he planned on doing work to the garage and salt shed and repairing drainage issues at the salt shed. Discussions centered on there still being $17k left in this year’s account as well as that Jim meant to request a 3% increase not almost 30%. Both boards recommended $65,000.00.
  + Telephone, Electric and Fuel – Jim requested a 9% increase due to unknown fuel costs for next year. The boards rounded the request to $72,000.00.
  + Highway Vacation Pay – decreased due to less employee’s and less earned vacation time due to newer employees.
  + Holiday Pay – removing this line and Jim will take any Holiday Pay expenses out of Road Maintenance.
* Highway Department Accounts Reviewed with Jim (Continued):
  + Sick Pay – increased due to the accumulation of sick time. The boards rounded this figure to $18,000.00.
  + Rental Equipment – Jim will be renting an over the guardrail mower that costs approximately $15,000.00 as well as a roller that costs $2,700.00. After discussing the costs Jim will try to utilize the current over the guardrail mower the department owns. Boards rounded the recommended total to $17,000.00.
  + Tractor & Machine – Jim increased this amount due to the talks of increased expenses and tariffs at the time he submitted his budget requests. All members agreed to $120,000.00.
  + Road Maintenance – All agreed to recommend $300,000.00.
  + Snow, Roads and Bridges – All agreed to recommend $290,000.00
  + Solid Waste Removal – Hauling prices have dropped however the monthly rental fees have increased. Boards agreed to $105,000.00.
  + Cemetery – Replacing equipment. Boards agreed to recommend $18,000.00.
* Fire Department Supplies & Expenses – Increase requested of 9.59%. Mike Gleason requested an increase due to maintenance on auto repair costs increasing. He also has concerns about tariff costs. The turnout gear costs have increased significantly, and he is trying to get each volunteer up to two sets of gear each. Boards agreed to the increase.
* Fire Department Equipment Expense – Air bottles need replacing. They are $1800.00 each. Boards agreed to the increase.
* Printing – increased to $9,000.00 due to increased expenses.
* Berkshire County Sheriff – removed from the budget as no longer any costs for this line.
* Board of Health supplies staying at $300. An additional $1000.00 for a computer has been moved to its own line.
* Stabilization – leaving this at $150,000.00. If more funding becomes available, then it can be changed at the town meeting.

Mike Bedini made a motion to adjourn at 7:05 pm. Tim Zelazo seconded. Unanimous.