

Savoy Finance Meeting - March 19, 2025

Present: Justin Kaczowski, Allen Haskins, Ross Kunzmann, Brenda Smith, Kathy Luczynski

Guests: Arleigh Cooper, Principal Tracey Tierney, John Choquette

Meeting called to order at 5:04.

Brenda stated that she has a question regarding the assessor's software costs for FY26 budget questioning the timing of installation this fiscal year or next. She needs to confirm and will advise.

The school representatives presented budget totals they have developed to date noting that school transportation is going to be an issue due to the need for a second route related to the time difference for high school and middle school pick up and drop offs. Arleigh stated she is exploring options to include the possibility of the town purchasing its own vehicle for transportation and other town needs. FY 2025 appropriation for transportation was 88,430; FY26 will be \$82,860 without the additional bus route and an estimated total of \$156,000 with it. The Town of Windsor solved a transportation problem by purchasing their own vehicle. Costs included the purchase of a 6–8-seater sized vehicle, a driver and back-up driver that must be certified (7D training), insurance, repairs, and gasoline. Kathy suggested they prepare a document summarizing the options and present it to the Select Board at the next meeting. Arleigh will also provide dates for a meeting with both the Select Board and Finance Committee to discuss the overall budget.

The school budget at this point is \$915,533. Justin commented an increase of 2% seemed reasonable. It is forecasted the school will have 25 savoy children and 21 school choice. Kathy questioned the understanding that the town will be responsible for school choice for junior high and high school level for school choice noting the article regarding Hancock struggles and the letter from the superintendent. Arleigh explained circumstances are different due to the popularity of Mt. Greylock high school school- choice and parents school choice into Hancock. Savoy would direct parents to apply for school choice to Hoosac.

Arleigh anticipates the school budget to be completed by the first week of April. The committee discussed changes to the Annual Town meeting to include an informational introduction and invited the school to give a brief presentation as well. Arleigh asked if the preliminary budget submitted was reasonable. Kathy stated, similar to last year, there are numerous expensive improvements the town needs for FY 26 and not all figures are available yet. So, until everything is entered for consideration, it's impossible to say. Kathy stated she believes residents want a good education for town children and the State makes it very difficult to make it affordable for communities. She admitted she does not

understand all of the complexities of funding but thinks it would be beneficial to meet to discuss all school options and funding and town costs associated with the various options.

Jon Choquette, Highway Superintendent, requested changes to some budget items submitted by his predecessor for consideration.

Other items discussed: McCann and Smith, Police (combining two salary line items, increased phone expense), Admin Assistant and Transfer Station Attendant and other general expenses.

Still pending is the need to determine cost for town office foundation, clarify some Tax Collector items, final audit appropriation, final freightliner payment, VoIP system, changing internet to spectrum, Fire department roof repair, and various other general government expenditure estimates. The committee was able to review an up-to-date summary of year-to-date *expenditures to budget* from the accountant. The treasurer has provided Kathy with his Cash Book, and she will meet with him to obtain a better understanding of it to share.

Kathy stated that the Capital Improvement Committee (CIP) has met to develop a CIP plan. Marie reported that typically 5% of a budget is allocated to a CIP fund (\$125,000). The Town has extremely outdated highway equipment, buildings have been neglected and costs for numerous emergency repairs are not fiscally prudent. It was noted, however, that FY25 and FY26 preliminary figures are significantly higher due to earlier years' failure to update systems, technologies, and wages. The tax-payer burden to fund CIP may need to be deferred.

ATM is May 7th; warrant must be finished by April 16th; Select Board meeting for posting by April 22nd. Next two FC meetings are April 2nd and April 16th.

Meeting adjourned at 8:10.

Minutes approved at the April 2, 2025 meeting.