



Town of Middlefield Finance Committee

05/21/24 Meeting

In attendance:

Adair Laurel-Cafarella Gita Jozsef Ken Murray
Stephen Harris, Secretary Jonathan Freiermuth

Also attending:

Tamarin Laurel-Paine John Les Rick Breen

Quorum, call to order:

The meeting was called to order at 5:06 pm.

Review minutes from previous meeting:

Minutes from previous meeting on 05/07/24 were approved as written.

Chapter 90 funding and grant opportunities:

The balance in the town's Chapter 90 account is \$909,141.83.

Jonathan was advised by David Stokes – the District 1 engineer for the state who reviews project submissions for technical eligibility – that the town is eligible for a Mass Works grant of up to \$1M, for which the application deadline is June 30. Stokes believes Chipman Rd would be a great project to submit for this grant, much like the one that was used to fund the paving of Skyline Trail a couple of years ago. He also recommends that an appointed official, such as the town administrator apply for the grant, rather than elected officials, such as the selectboard or finance committee.

Committee members agreed that the town should give priority to Chipman Road in its grant applications, rather than Becket Road, since it would be of great benefit to residents in 58 homes along River, Clark Wright, and Chipman roads who feel cut off from the town center owing to the current difficulty in navigating the route. While it would be great to pave Becket Road as well, there are currently no homes along that route experiencing comparable hardship. The grant would add to the town's \$450K in planned Chapter 90 expenditures on Chipman Road.

Jonathan informed Sean on May 13 of his discussion with David Stokes, but had received no substantive response by the time of the meeting.

Town website and technology expenditures:

Continued frustration was expressed re the lack of information on the new town website and the inability of committees to post.

John said that Sean sets policy, including the insistence on a single point of contact.

Adair reported that Sean has not provided a writeup of tech plans, policies, and expenditures despite repeated requests. Also, the Website/Technology account is already overspent by \$450.74 for FY2024, with two months to go.

Any other business:

Adair reported that the continued lack of consistent accounting procedures leads to errors and inconsistencies. A glaring example is an undated, unsigned request for the Treasurer to transfer \$90K from “Stab to Gen”.

There is no clear paper trail for many transactions.

The timely transfer of various bank funds to higher interest-bearing accounts would yield an estimated additional \$34K in interest per year.

Discussed apparent continued lack of progress in transitioning from Springbrook to the VADAR Systems municipal accounting software.

Reviewed table of FY 2025 salaries for hourly employees to be signed by the Selectboard chair and the administrative assistant.

Copies of the committee’s petition demanding that the state compensate our town for its critical climate remediation role were distributed for the collection of signatures.

Next meeting:

The next meeting will be on June 4th 5 pm.

Adjournment:

Meeting was adjourned at 6:50 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

