



Finance Committee
Regular Meeting
02/01/22

- I. Call to Order
 - 1. Roll Call
- II. Board of Selectmen

Jennifer Penney, Executive Assistant

Salary is cost of living increase, the previous increases were from the last salary study over two years.

Expense increase is a new line item for the Lake Attitash Association testing and cleaning. It is falling under the Selectmen line items as the BOS will be the authority over spending the money. Software cost is Minutetraq, and IT expense is for the iPad's maintenance.

III. Library

Kelly Unsworth, Library Director

Salary increase of \$16,032 overall based on the salary study. Cost of living increase all around, in addition two raises for the Director and Youth Services Librarian. The current Director position grade is 10, recommended is 12 and Youth Services current grade is 3, recommended is 8. The person in the Youth Services position has been with the Town for years, this would bring her up to the professional position it truly is. The Director position has only received cost of living and as of July will be in the position for five years of service. Above cost of living the increase is \$5,499 for Director and \$3,560 for Youth Services.

Expense increase overall of \$4,122. Mainly due to the increase of maintenance costs. The membership for the network costs is based on a formula for the consortium, it had stayed the same for many years but it did go up this year. They are expanding their e-book collection, the holdings for Merrimack Valley is low in comparison to other regions. Collection materials must be 19% of the entire budget (expenses and salaries), which includes money from the trustees, friends of the library, grants and items that circulate. There is no revenue stream for the library. The current grounds upkeep line is overspent due to the retirement of the current landscaper, to offset that the plan is to use friends of the library funds.

IV. Commission on Disabilities

Chris Gaudet, Chairperson

There is no line in the budget for Commission on Disabilities. Asking for a Special Article for \$45,000 for sidewalk improvements which will be overseen by the Highway Department. The ADA Transition Plan which was recently finished as well as a Pavement Management Study done a few years ago points out the many deficiencies throughout town. The Commission has received many grants towards sidewalk maintenance, but they do not cover things such as police details and tree removal. Snow removal for the sidewalks continues to be an issue, guidance from the AAB puts the sidewalks as town owned although there are bylaws that can be passed to put the burden on the homeowner.

V. Fire/Ambulance/Emergency Management

Larry Fisher, Fire Chief

Fire Salary increase of \$32,962 and Ambulance Salary increase of \$117,839 for per diem. Currently the Admin Assistant works 19 hours, she is working approximately 28 hours a week and is requesting an increase in wages and hours. Assistant Chief increase for salary is wage correction to reflect actual work responsibilities and hours worked. The on-call and volunteer industry as a whole is declining, staffing departments with this type of coverage is no longer sustainable for response. The lack of staff has required the Chief and Assistant Chief to work significant hours, and even with that the overtime has been overspent. Calls have increased over 20% this year, with 221 mutual aid regional calls. Last year 4 people were hired, the revenues are there but there is still not enough coverage for the

calls. Merrimac is 60% medicare based, would like to get other calls to cover at a higher rate. The 55 and older building structure in town is increasing the call load drastically, and with the new 40B development coming up that will only add to already stretched staffing. Comfortably the revenue can support an increase of \$100,000.

Fire Expense increase of \$15,668 in Building Maintenance, Vehicle Maintenance & Supplies, IT Expense, Vehicle Fuel and Dues, Memberships and Licensing. All of these are estimates. Ambulance Expense increase of \$7,716 mostly in Billing & Collections and Medical Supplies. As revenues increase the billing expenses increase.