

Minutes of the Plainfield Finance Committee Meeting of April 4, 2018

The meeting was called to order at 7:12 p.m. in Town Hall. Present were Lew Robbins, Robert Baker, Robert Persing, Tim Walter, and David Kramer. Absent was Roberta Wooldridge.

The minutes of the March 28, 2018, meeting were approved.

Lew Robbins presented the budget form that is being prepared for the May 5 town meeting, showing for each line item the amounts spent in the two previous fiscal years, the amount budgeted in the current fiscal year, and the amount requested for the coming fiscal year, along with a column for the Finance Committee's budget recommendation.

At 7:25 p.m., David Alvord and Claude and Ellen Dupont arrived to discuss the Board of Health's, Buildings Committee's, and Board of Assessors' budget requests.

Representing the Board of Health, Ellen Dupont discussed the capital request of \$12,000 for a retaining wall in front of the trash compactor and a roof over the compactor. The Board of Health is seeking additional bids for this work in the expectation that the job can be done for less money.

The Board of Health also discussed their proposal for an increase in stipends for each of the three board members from \$500 per annum to \$750. The Finance Committee expressed some reservations on three counts: First, the Board of Health was unable to justify the increase with more precision than the general notion that the workload has been increasing; the committee would like to see a more detailed justification. Second, the Finance Committee expressed the opinion that as is the case for other boards and committees that receive stipends, the chair of the committee or board should receive a greater stipend than that received by the other members due to the larger workload and greater responsibility.

Claude and David Alvord discussed the Buildings Committee's proposal for capital expenses, which includes \$50,000 for a new roof for the highway garage, \$10,000 for repairing or replacing the Town Hall fire escape, and amounts as yet undetermined for insulation for the highway garage (which would likely be paid for by a Green Community grant) and repair or replacement of the Town Hall elevator. In the event that the cost of repairing or replacing the elevator should turn out to be prohibitive, the second floor of Town Hall would likely be closed, in which case the fire escape would not need to be repaired or replaced.

Claude Dupont then spoke for the Board of Assessors. He explained that the reduced salary expense and increased operating expense in the budget request are due to the retirement of the salaried assistant assessor in the middle of FY 2019 and the

subsequent engagement of a firm to which most of the assessor's duties will be outsourced.

After David Alvord and the Duponts left, The committee discussed the Board of Assessors' proposal for a 3% increase in the assistant assessor's salary. It was unclear whether some of that increase was to be part of a COLA increase, and Lew delegated himself to speak further with the assessors to work out the details of the suggested increase.

The committee then returned to the question of raises for the Board of Health and decided to recommend, with some trepidation, a raise for Ellen Dupont to \$750 and to leave the other stipends at \$500, all of this pending the report of the firm that will be conducting a review of all town salaries and stipends. Lew will discuss this proposal with Ellen Dupont.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:43 p.m.

Submitted by David Kramer, secretary