

## **Minutes of the Plainfield Finance Committee Meeting of April 12, 2018**

The meeting was called to order at 7:08 p.m. in Town Hall. Present were Lew Robbins (chair), Robert Baker, Robert Persing, Tim Walter, David Kramer, and Roberta Wooldridge.

The minutes of the April 4, 2018, meeting were approved as amended.

Lew presented a spreadsheet providing an overview of the town budget, showing a comparison of the 2018 and 2019 budgets. A question arose regarding how much money the town should be keeping in free cash and the stabilization fund. The committee suggested that this be a topic for future discussion. In the meantime, Lew delegated himself to determine whether there is a limit to the amount of money that can be held in free cash.

Kimberly Longey arrived at 7:28 p.m. to discuss the MLP budget. Kimberly noted that the MLP is focused at present on the design and construction of the town's broadband network, with many projects about to be put out for bid under the guidance of the MLP's agent, Westfield Gas and Electric. The details of network operations, including policies that will affect Plainfield subscribers, have yet to be worked out. There is a possibility that the network might "go live" before July 2019. The MLP budget request for FY2019 includes stipends of \$3,000 each for the manager and assistant manager. Kimberly stated that the stipends were approved by the Select Board. The Finance Committee did not discuss whether it concurred in that approval.

David Kramer discussed the Council on Aging's (COA) budget request. There is still work to be done on their budget, which will be presented next week, but David noted that unlike other committee budgets, that of the COA comes from four sources: a state grant of approximately \$5000 per annum, a Highland Valley Elder Services grant of about \$200, contributions totaling about \$1000 per year, and an appropriation by the town, which last year was \$700. Moreover, the account holding contributions is now at about \$3000.

David also noted that in speaking with the COA, it became apparent that not everyone on town committees and boards is sufficiently fluent in mathematical and critical thinking to put together a budget and perhaps the Finance Committee should be more proactive in the future in assisting committees and boards in preparing their budgets.

A motion to recommend to the town a cost of living increase (COLA) for salaried employees of 2.5%, based on a consumer price index of 2.1% for calendar 2017, was passed unanimously. Lew then charged committee members with reviewing the budget spreadsheet and reporting next week on any items that need to be reviewed further by the committee.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:56 p.m.

Submitted by David Kramer, secretary