Warrant Committee  
February 5, 2020  
Blute Conference Room

Present: George A. Ashur (Chair), Brian Beaupre (Secretary), Rosemary C. Bouzane, Kathleen A. Cassis, Brian G. Foster, Douglas B. Scibeck, John E. Driscoll, Scott D. Johnson


Guests: John Grant (Chief of the Milton Fire Department), Scott D. Mackay (Chair of the Parks and Recreation), Regina Malley (Secretary of the Parks and Recreation), Theodore G. Carroll (Park Commissioner), Kevin B. Chrisom (Parks Manager).

Meeting called to order at 7:05 p.m.

1.) Chairman remarks:

7:05 p.m. The School Building Committee was not able to make it, as there was a conflicting meeting. On a motion from Douglas B. Scibeck, seconded by Brian G. Foster, the minutes from January 15th, 2020 were accepted unanimously.

2.) Warrant Discussions:

a.) 7:06 p.m. Chief Grant addressed the Warrant Committee. Chief Grant noted the Fire Department budget is 95 percent personnel. Therefore, there is no room for Fire Department budget cuts. Chief Grant noted it takes 11 fire fighters to keep the equipment running and ready for a call, less than 11 fire fighters means engine closures. Each fire truck has 3 fire fighters and the ladder truck is run by only one fire fighter. The National Fire Protection Agency recommends 4 fire fighters on a truck. The Warrant Committee inquired if the fire fighters assigned to ladder truck are trained differently. Chief Grant noted that there is only one Fire Fighters union, however the job of the ladder truck is ventilation and search and rescue and that is why it should be comprised of four fire fighters.

The Warrant Committee asked if Milton budget of 95 percent personal is comparable with other surrounding Towns. Chief Grant noted he did not have those numbers at hand.

The Warrant Committee asked Chief Grant if the 3 percent Town wide budget cut had happen (although it was avoided by State funding) what would that have meant to the Fire Department. Chief Grant noted they would have to cut the budget 3 percent that would mean the loss of three fire fighters. Chief Grant noted the Milton Fire Department had been cut in the early 1980’s and still has not recovered from that cut. Chief Grant noted if the 3 percent Town budget cuts were to happen, that there could be some injuries or perhaps deaths.
The Warrant Committee asked Chief Grant if ideally he would like three fire fighters on the ladder truck. Chief Grant confirmed that eventually he hopes there is room in the budget to have three fire fighters on the ladder truck (but does not see a need for four as the National Fire Protection Agency recommends. That would mean having an total of eight additional fire fighters because of scheduling.

Chair Ashur asked Chief Grant if he thought the amount of fire fighters was sufficient given: the Milton Academy, Beth Israel Deacons, Curry College buildings, as well as the amount of new homes being built in the Town, and the large construction projects (Hendries, Icehouse and Canton Avenue condos), the trend of new construction with open floor living that allows fires to spread at an exponential rate. Chief Grant noted that sprinkler systems work wonderful to help to prevent fire spreading, however they create a condition called cold smoke. Therefore it is important to have enough fire fighters to get people of buildings as soon as possible. Chief Grant said that he doesn’t think the number of Milton Fire Fighters is sufficient. Chair Ashur noted the Town is building three new stations, should the Town have two ladder trucks. Chair Ashur noted that it is important to build these Fire Stations for the future Town needs and not just current Town needs. Chief Grant noted he rather have one ladder truck, fully staffed with three fire fighters. Chair Ashur asked what the cost would be to have those additional personnel. Chief Grant noted he will get back to the Warrant Committee with that number. The Warrant Committee noted the ladder truck is a large truck to operate by themselves.

The Warrant Committee inquired why the sick day buy back number was bigger than last year. Chief Grant noted that the sick day buy back was only instituted when a fire fighter is retiring. There are some fiscal years that number is zero, however this year three fire fighters were retiring. Warrant Committee also inquired about the education budget lines and Chief Grant was able to confirm education is based on the individual. The Warrant Committee commented that Milton Fire Department does a wonderful job with the equipment and resources they have. Chief Grant noted the men and woman that service the department and the location of the stations help with response time.

The Warrant Committee asked if Milton Academy donated to the Milton Fire Department. Chief Grant confirmed Milton Academy had made a donation and believed the amount was $7,500.00 but would have to look back to see the exact amount.

The Warrant Committee inquired about an emergency, for example the gas explosions the North Shore experienced in 2018. Chief Grant noted there is a very good mutual aid plan with surrounding towns if something like that were to happen. Chief Grant noted even one engine shutting down is concerning, particularly in snow storms where the Fire Department can be very busy handling calls. Chief Grant noted that the department tries to put an additional fire fighter on the engines during snow storms.

b.) 7:38 p.m. Mr. Carroll, Mr. Mackay, Mr. Chrisom and Ms. Malley addressed the Warrant Committee. Mr. Carroll recapped the previous year Capital Project completed work which includes: moving street hockey court from Gile field to Cunningham Court, basketball court at Gile were redone, as well as drainage issue and fencing at Gile repairs, gave the softball field access to electricity, fixed the drainage at Kelly field, the
stairs Andrews park. Future projects the Parks and Recreation Department would like in the coming year include: laying turf on the lower field at Gile and permanent fix of Turners pond pathway.

Chair Ashur asked if the Parks and Recreation Department has been successful in engaging help from local companies and institutions that have helped in the past. The Board members noted they cannot fund raise, however, they were hopeful in the future to have a group for Parks and Recreation similar to what the Library Trustees have with friends of the Library (nonprofit group who solicits donations on behalf of the Library). The Parks and Recreation Department hopes to find a group similar to the Milton Playground Planners that have been so successful in making changes for the better in Milton.

The Warrant Committee asked if anyone from the Board had asked Milton Academy to take care of the grounds at Mary C. Lane (on Churchill Lane). The Board agreed this is a good idea, and there was some discussion among the Warrant Committee and the Parks and Recreation Board if they are allowed to solicit this request.

The Parks and Recreation board members gave a brief history of the need for a Town Teen/Youth Center. The teen center opened in January and Milton Academy made a donation to the Parks and Recreation Department in the amount of $5,000.00 for the center. The board members discussed the early success of the teen center, (it has only been open for four weeks). The center has an Xbox gaming system as well as pool table, ping pong and other games. The Warrant Committee asked how it was staffed. The board members noted there is one teen coordinator, and there are two high school students who work at the center. The board members also gave a brief history of the renovation of the room (located at the First Congregational Church). First Congregational Church spent $450,000.00 of its own funds and the Town was able to secure some additional funds to finish and furnish the space.

Chair Ashur asked if the Parks and Recreation Department had a wish list for the next two years what would that list include. The board members noted a dump truck and turf the lower field at Gile (approximate cost of 1 million dollars).

The Parks and Recreation noted they maintain 115 acres, including Pagoda Circle, Turners Pond, Popes Pond, Police Station, Crane Field, part of the Wharf.

Chair Ashur asked what was the condition of the mowers and other equipment. Mr. Chrisom noted the department is requesting for a capital expense of one new mower and an edger (used for baseball fields).

Additionally, Ms. Malley discussed the need for funding for special need programming. Currently the Parks and Recreation Department receive $1,000.00 annually. Ms. Malley explained one program offered is the Gym Buddy program, favored by adults, is staffed by some paid and some volunteers students from the High School. Ms. Malley explained the Parks and Recreation board members are looking on making all of the programs inclusive. Ms. Malley noted that Parks and Recreation will have to figure out a way to pay for additional staff that maybe needed to help individual children.

The Warrant Committee noted that the Parks and Recreation department budget is very low for all the services and work they provide. Mr. Mackay reiterated that the budget for Parks and Recreation department was approximately 1 million dollars: and only half
of the budget comes from the Town, the other half comes out of the revolving account. The programs the Parks and Recreation offer and charge for, 23% of that money pays for the operation budget. Mr. MacKay noted he hoped at some point the Town could pay for the personnel, operations and equipment, and Recreation surplus would go back into Recreation department. Mr. MacKay also discussed a need for a place for teens on weekends.

There was some discussion among the Warrant Committee and the Parks and Recreation about the popularity of the Teen Center. The Board noted that the hope is incoming 6th graders will make use of the space even more than the current students and each year the teen center will hopefully see the numbers grow.

c.) 8:12 p.m. There was some discussion among the Warrant Committee on the need for Fire Stations. Additionally discussed was the current Fire Station budget, and the overall Town budget needs.

d.) 8:15 p.m. No new business.

The next Warrant Committee meeting will be February 10th and February 12, 2020, 7:00 p.m. at Town Hall. (No meetings the week of February 17th because of School vacation week.)

8:19 p.m. On a motion from Douglas B. Scibek, seconded by Kathleen A. Cassis, the meeting is adjourned.

Respectfully Submitted,

Lynne Hoye

Warrant Committee Clerk