

Minutes

Finance Committee

March 16, 2022

Meeting called to order at 7:01 PM by Jim Sullivan

Present by ZOOM Meeting: Jim Sullivan, Brian Cusack, Dan Sherman, Bill Boodry, , Tarae Howell and David Mastroianni, Zachery Sletterink, Edward Bean, Doug Butler, Dennis Hogan, Stefan Chase, and Joseph Bertrand,

Absent: Don Ravenelle, Aimee Forsythe and Evan Kenney

Also, in Attendance: Town Administrator Stephen P. Maio, Town Accountant Kevin Gill, DPW Director Joseph Conway, DPW Business Manager Ann Waitt, and Town Engineer William Renault

- 1) Public Participation: None
- 2) Approval of the minutes for the February 24, 2022 Town Hall Budget Subcommittee meeting was tabled.
- 3) Motion to approve minutes of the minutes for the March 3, 2022 Full Finance Committee meeting by Bill Boodry Seconded by Dan Sherman and so voted.
- 4) Budgets were reviewed with the following noteworthy comments:

I) Department of Public Works, Water Enterprise and Sewer Enterprise Budgets

Chairman of the DPW Subcommittee Jim Sullivan reported on the DPW budget. Mr. Sullivan stated that the budget was generally in excellent shape and noted that the budget contained no new Full Time Employees.

Director Conway presented the FY 2023 DPW Budget in the amount of \$7,507,369 an increase of \$151,034 over FY2022 (2.32% increase). It is noted that the laborers union contract has not been settled but the effect of the anticipated cost of living increases should result in an additional \$90,000 to the overall budget. The budget does contain contractual increases for the other union and non-union members of the department. Other areas of increase noted were fuel costs for buildings and vehicles (due to the overall increase in fuel costs as well as the use of the Hurd School for swing space during the construction of the Public Safety Building) as well as increases in the Highway division for line painting and catch basin cleaning. The Snow and Ice budget is level funded however, this is an area we may want to consider increasing over the next few years. It was also noted that the filling of positions has become difficult in the current market.

Director Conway presented the Water Enterprise budget. The Water Enterprise Budget in the amount of \$6,182,001, a decrease of \$95,748 from FY 2022 due to reduced consumption. Ed Bean requested information on how the water/sewer rates were set. Doug Butler expressed concerns over the tiered rate system.

Director Conway presented the Sewer Enterprise Budget. The FY2023 Sewer Enterprise Budget of \$9,130,721 represents an increase of \$148,588 over FY 2022 (1.65%).

Both the Water and Sewer Enterprise Budgets are structured to ensure a well- maintained system which is funded by the rate payers not the tax levy.

5) DPW articles were Reviewed with the following Noteworthy Comments:

i) Drainage Improvements Town-wide

Town Engineer Bill Renault presented the \$900,000 drainage article which will be funded via a bond. It was stressed that the long-range plan for drainage improvements was to coordinate these improvements prior to any repaving. Doug Butler questioned the White Circle to Daniels Road area. It was noted that the area included a mixture of pipe diameters that effects the entire area.

ii) Broadway Quiet Zone Improvements

Town Engineer Bill Renault presented the \$2 Million bond request for quad gate upgrades to the crossings in town particularly the Broadway crossing. These upgrades are necessary to maintain safety and the Town's Quiet Zone Status. It was noted that the Town has been awarded a Federal grant of \$1.25 Million for the project and is applying for other discretionary grant opportunities. Stefan Chase expressed a desire to eliminate some of the crossing issues by elevating the roadways or tracks. Other expressed a desire to approach National Grid to pay for the difference.

iii) Harts Hill Water Storage Tank Improvements

Director Conway presented the \$5 Million request to replace the nearly 100 year old Harts Hill water tower. The project would be funded from Water receipts. Ed Bean questioned the timing on the bonds and asked to be included in the discussions. It was noted that the plan was to create a bond payment schedule for the Water Tower that coincided with other bond payments retirement so the impact on the rate payer would be minimal.

iv) Refuse and Recycling

Director Conway presented the FY2023 Refuse and Recycling Article in the amount of \$2,292,046. It was noted that the amount of recycling was trending higher.

v) Eminent Domain

Director Conway presented the annual \$1 eminent domain article, necessary for the acquisition of minor easements for public works projects

6) Committee Comments:

Chair Sullivan reminded sub-committee members to complete their minutes in a timely manner.

Bill Boodry reminded the Committee that we should expect metrics regarding the Health and Human Services Budget.

Ed Bean requested an accounting for the School department's use of Grants and Federal funds through ESSER.

Dan Sherman presented his forecast for FY2023 and beyond. The forecast contemplates budget surpluses over the next few years if the revenues and expenses match. If anyone wants a copy please contact him.

Doug Butler reminded the Committee that current the Police, Fire and Teacher contracts expire June 30, 2023.

Chairman Sullivan wished all a happy Saint Patrick's Day!

Next meeting will be March 31, 2022 @7PM and will include Wakefield Public Schools and the Vocational School Budget presentations

7) Motion to adjourn at 8:38 P.M by Bill Boodry seconded by Dan Sherman and so voted.