

Minutes

Finance Committee

March 26, 2020

Meeting called to order at 7:01 PM by Dan Sherman

Present by ZOOM Meeting #334-367-421: Dennis Hogan, Doug Butler, Stefan Chase, Don Ravenelle, Gerard Leeman, Jim Sullivan, Brian Cusack, Dan Sherman, Evan Kenney, Peter McManama, Joanne Reilly, Bill Boodry, Aimee Forsythe, Jan DiGiambattista, and Joe Bertrand.

Also in Attendance: Town Council Chairman Ed Dombroski, Town Administrator Stephen P. Maio, Town Accountant Kevin Gill, DPW Director Joe Conway, Assistant Director Ann Waitt, Town Engineer Bill Renault, Superintendent of Schools Doug Lyons, School Business Manager Christine Bufagna, School Committee Chairman Christopher Callanan, School Committee member Thomas Markham, Capital Planning Committee Chairman Frank Leone, WCAT Director Ryan Boyd and WCAT Board Member Paul Norman

1) Public Participation: None

1) **Approval of Minutes**

- a. February 13, 2020
- b. February 27, 2020
- c. March 12, 2020

All Minutes approved unanimously motion by Dennis Hogan and seconded by Joanne Reilly

2) **FY2021 Budgets for review including Subcommittee Reports**

Budget #33– School Department: Doug Lyons presented the School Department Budget for FY2021 in the amount of \$44,091,659 a 4.88% increase over FY2020. Peter McManama, Jim Sullivan, Gerard Leeman and Brian Cusack all members of the School Budget subcommittee commented on the budget and process. Superintendent Lyons and Business Manager Bufagna answered questions regarding special education costs as well as overall costs of personnel, supplies and contractual services.

Budget #35 – Northeast Vocational School: Town Accountant Kevin Gill presented the Vocational School Budget in the amount of \$1,574,273, a 9.19% increase over 2020.

Budget #46 – Group Health Insurance: Town Accountant Kevin Gill presented the Group Health Insurance Budget in the amount of \$11,658,291. Dan Sherman and Don Ravenelle offered a report of the Insurance subcommittee. The Tax Levy portion increased 1.166% over 2020. The total budget increase is 2.8%. The savings the town has received by entering into the State Group Insurance Commission was noted.

Budget #47 – Cable TV Public Access for WCAT Enterprise Town Accountant Kevin Gill, WCAT Director Ryan Boyd and WCAT Board Member Paul Norman presented the WCAT Budget. It was noted that this budget is not funded by Tax levy but consists of a pass through of the funds paid on individuals local cable bills. This budget is new. Concern was expressed over the recent FCC ruling allowing Cable providers to “renegotiate” the fee.

3) FY2021 Articles

Fiscal Year 2021 department capital requests: Capital Planning Chairman Frank Leone presented the FY2021 Capital Planning Article in the amount of \$2,018,119 for Tax Levy, \$112,500 for Sewer and \$82,500 for Water. The tax levy portion of this budget was reduced 5.7%.

Eminent Domain - DPW Director Joseph Conway presented the annual Eminent Domain article for FY2021 in the amount of \$1.00.

Refuse/Recycling/Yard Waste - DPW Director Joseph Conway presented the annual Refuse Article in the amount of \$2,274,241. This is an increase of 13.9%. It was noted that the increase in this article is primarily affected by the steep increase in Waste disposal from \$60 plus a ton to \$90 a ton. It was also noted that Recycling is no longer a revenue generator and has become a cost. In addition, the cost is expected to soon rival the Waste cost per ton.

Roadway Improvements - DPW Director Joseph Conway, Town Engineer William Renault and Town Administrator Steve Maio presented a PowerPoint aimed at improving the Town's Public Ways and sidewalks by bonding \$10,000,000 in repairs over a 4 year period. Town Council Chair Ed Dombroski noted that this program would dramatically reduce the overall total cost if we continued to adhere to a piecemeal approach. A rating of every public way in town is available on line.

Revolving Amounts – \$75,000 limit on expenditures from the Road Revolving Fund

New Salem Street Drainage Repairs - DPW Director Joseph Conway presented a proposed \$800,000.00 Bond for drainage repairs to New Salem Street.

Walton Lane Betterment - DPW Director Joseph Conway presented a proposed \$91,000.00 betterment for Walton lane which is supported by the abutters.

Greenwood Elementary School Roof - Permanent Building Committee Chairman Joseph Bertrand presented the Roof and American Disability Act repairs on the Greenwood School. This project is partnered with the Massachusetts School Building Assistance program and the Town could receive up to \$705,000 in State Assistance. The Permanent Building Committee is going out to bid so a solid number will be available for Town meeting.

Cable TV Public Access for WCAT Enterprise – Town Accountant Kevin Gill presented the need to create an Enterprise Account for Cable TV Public Access due to Massachusetts Department of Revenue requirements. He recommended that this Article precede Article 1 so that we have an Enterprise account established before providing it with a budget.

4) Committee Comments

Some members of the Committee as well as Town Administrator Maio expressed concern regarding local receipts and State Aid for FY2021.

Town Administrator Maio stated that we may need to meet on April 2nd and April 9th to complete a few Articles and vote on the budget.

Committee members questioned if any bargaining contracts were ready for approval and if Town Meeting will be moved. No contracts are ready as of yet and Town Meeting will be addressed by the Town Council on April 13, 2020

5) Motion to adjourn at 10:38 PM by James Sullivan seconded by Gerard Leeman and so voted unanimously