

FINANCE COMMITTEE MEETING
TUESDAY, MAY 19, 2020

A joint meeting of the Finance Committee (FC) and Board of Selectmen was held on Tuesday, May 19, 2020. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, participants were invited to join the meeting by video conference, although Mr. D'Amico, Mr. Morse, Mr. Cortese and Mr. Wojcik were present in person at the Municipal Center. Mr. D'Amico called the meeting to order at 7:10 PM.

ATTENDANCE:

PRESENT: Howard D'Amico (Chair), Sandy Kuipers (remote), Phil Landry (remote), Heather Morin (remote), Lynne Mussulli (remote), Dick Vanden Berg (remote)

ABSENT: Carol Gogolinski, Michael Hutnak (Vice Chair)

NON-VOTING: Matt Wojcik (Town Administrator), Jeanne Lovett (Finance Director-remote)

BOARD: Kevin Morse (Chair), Tim Bonin (remote), David Cortese, Hal Davis (remote), Mike Hughes (remote)

1. JOINT MEETING WITH THE FINANCE COMMITTEE & TOWN

MODERATOR:

Discussion on Town Meeting Date

Mr. Morse does not see a benefit to setting a date for Town Meeting as the State does not have budget numbers. Mr. D'Amico stated that Ms. Lovett advocated at the last FC meeting for setting a date for a late June Town Meeting. Logistics are still a concern. Mr. Wojcik stated that most boards have set town meeting dates and have posted warrants for the end of June, with some trepidation. One town has set a date of 6/30/20, with every intention of not having the town meeting and is preparing month-to-month budgets through July.

Only the BOS can set a date for town meeting. Once the warrant is posted, the town moderator can, with 7 days lead time, postpone town meeting for up to 30 days. Douglas has not posted a warrant. The Board of Health has the authority to shut down town meeting at any time.

Logistically, there must be a place for everyone who wants to attend town meeting, hence, if someone is COVID-19 positive, there must be a place for them. Mr. Menard would not support having Town Meeting in the high school auditorium. According to Douglas' bylaws, the Town Meeting should have already been held. It could have been set, and then postponed.

Ms. Lovett's opinion is that it would be better to have a town meeting in late June as opposed to after the start of the fiscal year. She would only propose "this" if she had some understanding that Free Cash could be used to stabilize the FY21 budget. Mr. Menard would not put the budget in the Annual Town Meeting (ATM), he would put it in a Special Town Meeting (STM), which would allow for more flexibility. Ms. Lovett asked the Dept. of Revenue (DOR) whether or not you could put financial articles on an STM, but she has not received an answer.

A discussion was held regarding holding town meeting at Soldiers Field. Mr. Bonin suggested forming a committee to help with those logistics.

Mr. Wojcik spoke again in favor of postponing Town Meeting because the State budget numbers are not known. He stated that, if the Town furloughs/cuts employees due to budget cuts, it is very difficult to recruit employees at the municipal government level.

If a Town Meeting is not held in June, a month-to-month budget would be presented to the BOS. The BOS would then request approval from the DOR for deficit spending until a Town Meeting can be held and the Town can raise and appropriate.

Discussions were held. Four of five of the BOS prefer to hold off on scheduling Town Meeting. Mr. Davis agreed, with the proviso that an STM be held in June for non-financial matters. Mr. Bonin prefers an ATM in June at Soldiers Field.

Mr. Cortese made a motion to postpone the date of the Annual Town Meeting to a tentative date of Saturday, September 12, 2020. Mr. Hughes seconded the motion. Roll Call Vote: Tim Bonin – No, Dave Cortese – Aye, Hal Davis – Aye, Mike Hughes – Aye, Kevin Morse – Aye.

After seeking input from the Town Clerk and Town Moderator, a firm date will be set at the next meeting.

Interdepartmental Transfers

Ms. Lovett stated that, since there will not be an ATM nor an STM in June, more transfers will be needed to take care of the FY2020 business. The first transfer is to provide funds for additional mowings for the cemeteries after Memorial Day.

Mr. Vanden Berg made a motion to approve the interdepartmental transfer of \$4,200 as presented, and authorize the Finance Committee Chair to sign. Ms. Mussulli seconded the motion. Vote: Aye-6.

Mr. Cortese made a motion to approve the interdepartmental transfer of \$4,200 as presented, and authorize the Board of Selectmen Chair to sign. Mr. Hughes seconded the motion. Roll Call Vote: Tim Bonin – Aye, Dave Cortese – Aye, Hal Davis – Aye, Mike Hughes – Aye, Kevin Morse – Aye.

Mr. Wojcik prepared draft FY2021 budgets with the following savings: \$400,000 and \$550,000. Most of these savings come from changing the status of employees. Now that there will not be a June Town Meeting, there are three months to see what will happen with revenues.

2. ADJOURNMENT:

Mr. Landry made a motion at 8:22 PM to adjourn the Finance Committee meeting. Ms. Mussulli seconded the motion. Vote: Aye-6.

Respectfully submitted,

Mary Wright
Recording Secretary