

FINANCE COMMITTEE MEETING
TUESDAY, OCTOBER 9, 2018

A meeting of the Finance Committee (FC) was held on Tuesday, October 9, 2018 in the Municipal Center. Ms. Holmes called the meeting to order at 7:16 PM.

ATTENDANCE:

PRESENT: Pamela Holmes (Chair), Howard D'Amico (Vice Chair), Carol Gogolinski, Lynne Mussulli, Dick Vanden Berg

ABSENT: Michael Hutnak, Leigh Lahousse, Heather Morin

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

1. TOWN ADMINISTRATOR'S FISCAL 2020 REPORTS

Mr. Wojcik will send this report to the FC in writing. He has discussed with the chairs of the FC and Board of Selectmen (BOS) about providing regular updates on changes in the financial model in the Town. Included in the five-year projection on Town revenues in 2020 was the first payment of \$150,000 due of from the cannabis grow facility, however that payment may not be seen for a few years as the facility is not yet ready for a Certificate of Occupancy. A \$10,000 payment is due to the Town the day the facility plants its first seed. That payment is earmarked for the purchase of an ambulance.

For FY 2019, a large payment has been received from the grow facility for Building Permits.

One of the senators from western Mass. has successfully lobbied to have a one-year amendment to the budget to hold harmless all communities receiving payments in lieu of taxes (PILOT) for State forest land, therefor the projected reduction in the cherry sheet of approximately \$28,000 will not happen. Mr. Wojcik spoke about the meeting he attended in Peru, MA.

Regarding changes in projected expenses, gasoline prices were overestimated and diesel fuel costs were under estimated. These changes cancel each other out. Going forward, he suggested consulting the Energy Information Agency.

Dr. Fitzpatrick of Blackstone Valley Tech (BVT) informed Mr. Wojcik that Douglas' enrollment has increased by five students. Mr. Wojcik pressed Dr. Fitzpatrick for earlier notice of enrollment projections. Superintendent Kevin Maines feels the increase is closer to zero. Norfolk Agricultural has two fewer students attending than last year. Town Administrators from six communities met with Dr. Fitzpatrick to get cost containment built into the BVT budget. A discussion was held.

2. FIRE/AMBULANCE CONTRACT REIVEW

Mr. Wojcik stated that the Town has not fully negotiated the language of the Firefighters contract for many years. The whole contract has been rewritten, with the help of Labor Counsel. The Town pays overtime for time worked, not for time earned.

Mr. Wojcik stated that there were rate changes last year with respect to ambulance billings, which will be a monetary benefit to the Town.

Mr. Wojcik has asked the Firefighters' union to have the contract ready for Town Meeting.

3. REVIEW & VOTE RECOMMENDATIONS FOR SPECIAL TOWN MEETING (STM) DRAFT ARTICLES

The BOS have not closed the warrant, therefore the FC could not vote on the articles at this meeting.

Ms. Lovett stated that a couple more prior year's bills came to light today. Article 2 – Ms. Lovett thinks that she can remove Norfolk Agricultural, which will offset Transportation. The agreement on the Fire/Ambulance contract is still needed.

Mr. Wojcik spoke about the increase/decrease in Building Dept. Wages. Mr. Wojcik is going to put building inspection services out to bid on a trial basis. The inspection services will start January 1, 2019.

Article 8 will be different than was previously discussed. The Charter Communications service agreement will terminate this spring. Douglas has significant network issues and the architecture does not work. To get the best available pricing, they need a five-year contract. Mr. Wojcik is only authorized to sign three-year contracts.

Article 5 – there is no number available yet. A discussion was held regarding who should pay for technology upgrades in the community meeting room. This work would go out for procurement.

Articles 9 & 10 – these articles need to be approved in order to apply for grants. Currently, they are acting as placeholders. Ms. Lovett will reach out to Bob Sullivan tomorrow.

4. RESERVE FUND TRANSFERS/ VOUCHERS

There was a voucher for \$506 for delivery of the Town Meeting flyer.

Mr. D'Amico made a motion to approve the Reserve Fund transfer of \$425 to Landfill Maintenance. Ms. Gogolinski seconded the motion. Vote: Aye-5.

5. MESSAGE FOR SPECIAL TOWN MEETING (STM) FLYER

Ms. Holmes suggested speaking about the FY2020 budget, the override, introduce new members, and thank prior members. Ms. Gogolinski suggested stating that there is still one opening on the FC.

6. CHAPTER 1 TOWNS & TOWN GOVERNMENT FINANCE HANDBOOK

Ms. Holmes reviewed the contents of the handbook. A discussion was held regarding the timing of FC recommendations.

7. MEETING MINUTES: June 12, & September 25, 2018

Mr. D'Amico made a motion to approve the June 12, 2018 Finance Committee meeting minutes as presented. Ms. Gogolinski seconded the motion. Vote: Aye-4, Mr. Vanden Berg abstained.

Mr. D'Amico made a motion to approve the September 25, 2018 Finance Committee meeting minutes as presented. Ms. Mussulli seconded the motion. Vote: Aye-4, Ms. Gogolinski abstained.

9. OLD/NEWBUSINESS

New Business: Ms. Lovett will be accepting the refunding of the school bond on 10/22/18 and will present to the BOS on 10/23/18.

Mr. Wojcik stated that the Town has done very well in the competitive bid process for purchasing equipment. Only cruisers went over budget, but only marginally. The Police Dept. were able to transfer some equipment from the old cruisers to the new ones. There will be something in the budget for the next couple years for cruisers.

Ms. Holmes announced that the Association of Town Finance Committees meeting will be November 3, 2018 at the Devens Common Center. There will be six workshops. Ms. Holmes read the brochure. Ms. Holmes suggested that Mr. Wojcik attend. Ms. Lovett will email the brochure to the FC members.

Mr. Wojcik stated that one of his goals over the next two years is to build a budget presentation that is compliant with best practices according to the Government Finance Officers' Association. A five or six-year Capital Improvement Plan is a requirement, which is a goal for this year. The reasoning behind this is for transparency. A discussion was held.

Mr. D'Amico asked if the BOS has asked the FC for input regarding Mr. Wojcik's review. Mr. D'Amico feels Mr. Wojcik has done a fantastic job. Mr. Wojcik stated that the BOS is still working on the process of the review. Ms. Gogolinski made a motion that Mr. D'Amico write a letter of support of Mr. Wojcik to the Board of Selectmen. Mr. D'Amico seconded the motion. Vote: Aye-5.

Old Business: Ms. Holmes stated that Mr. Hutnak has stated that Tuesday meetings will generally not be a problem for him

Regarding the October 23, 2018 meeting, Ms. Morin is not available. Mr. D'Amico will be available after 8:00 PM.

9. ADJOURNMENT

Mr. D'Amico made a motion at 8:59 PM to adjourn the Finance Committee meeting. Ms. Gogolinski seconded the motion. Vote: All-Aye.

Respectfully submitted,

Mary Wright
Recording Secretary