

**WHATELY FINANCE COMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES
April 2, 2019
5:00 pm**

Finance Committee Attendees: Paul Antaya, Dan Kennedy, Tom Mahar, Jim Kirkendall, Fred Baron, Bob Fydenkevez, and Roxanne Dunn. Other Attendees: Brian Domina (Town Administrator) and Amy Schrader (Administrative Assistant).

The meeting was opened at 5:00 pm by the Chairperson Paul Antaya.

The Committee voted to approve the meeting minutes of March 26, 2019.

The Committee welcomed their new member, Roxanne Dunn and introduced themselves to the new member.

FY 2020 Operating Budgets

General Government – Paul Antaya discussed the FY20 general government operating budgets. There was a brief discussion regarding the following increases: Town Buildings (salary line item) and the Assessor's budget.

A motion was made and seconded to approve the FY20 General Government operating budgets. Vote was unanimous. All in favor.

Cultural, Recreation, Services - The Committee had a brief discussion regarding the Library's operating budget with specific attention to Comcast services and the reimbursement from C.W. Mars. No action was taken at this time.

The Committee discussed the Recreation Commission's previous FY18 budget expenses and its revolving account. No action was taken at this time.

The Committee discussed Whately resident's utilization of the South County Senior Center. A brief discussion ensued regarding the condition of the building and lack of transportation. The Committee stated that having this information from the Senior Center would be beneficial for future budget reviews. No action was taken at this time.

No vote was taken on the Cultural, Recreation, Services FY20 operating budgets

Public Health - The Committee discussed the Foothills Health District budget increase paying specific attention to the salary line items and expenses. The Committee questioned if the Health Agent's hours were being increased or wages increased? The Committee also questioned how many other towns the Health Agent provides services to? No action was taken at this time.

No vote was taken on the Public Health FY20 operating budget

Public Safety - The Committee suggested that the Fire Chief needs to be more accountable for his budget line items. The Committee recommended level funding the Fire Department's general expense line item. A motion was made to level fund the Fire Department General Expenses at \$41,500. The total Fire Department FY20 operating budget will be \$62,933. Motion was seconded. Vote was unanimous. All in favor. (A reserve funds transfer can always be requested if needed).

South County EMS – No action was taken at this time.

Police Department's budget – The Committee questioned the Police Chief's request for an additional full-time police officer. Brian informed the Committee that the Selectboard will be discussing this request at their April 10th meeting. The Committee had no other questions regarding this request.

No vote was taken on the Public Safety FY20 operating budgets.

Public Works – The Committee had a brief discussion regarding the Highway Department's budget increase with specific attention to the salary line item. This increase is due to the Highway Superintendent's increase in salary, commensurate with the additional responsibilities that have been assigned to him and a 2.5% COLA increase. A motion was made and seconded to approve the FY20 Public Works operating budget. Vote was unanimous. All in favor.

Insurance & Benefits – Brian informed the Committee that the insurance cost went up for the Whately Elementary School and the Center School. The Town Hall is also back on the Town's policy (last year it was on a Builder's Risk Policy). Brian informed the Committee that there is \$4,000 included in the proposed budget to renew the Center School's vacant building policy and this amount may not be needed if decisions about the building are made within 12 months. The Committee decided to remove the \$4,000 from the budget. A motion was made to revise the Property and Liability insurance line item to \$75,000. Motion was made and seconded to accept the revised amount. Vote was unanimous. All in favor.

Franklin County Retirement – A motion was made and seconded to approve the FY20 Franklin County Retirement assessment. Vote was unanimous. All in favor.

A motion was made and seconded to approve the Insurance and Benefits FY20 operating budgets. Vote was unanimous. All in favor.

Unclassified – A motion was made and seconded to approve the FY20 Unclassified operating budgets. Vote was unanimous. All in favor.

Schools – The Committee had a lengthy discussion regarding the Whately Elementary School FY20 budget increase. This increase reflects keeping the existing full-time guidance counselor position at a cost of approximately \$37,000, rather than reducing the position to part-time. Brian stated that

the teacher contract negotiations have not been finalized and that both the Frontier budget and the elementary school budget will be affected. The School Committee's meeting is scheduled for April 10th to resume contract discussions. The Committee decided to table the Frontier and elementary school budgets due to the pending teacher contract negotiations.

A motion was made and seconded to accept the Franklin County Technical School budget. Vote was unanimous. All in favor.

A motion was made and seconded to accept the Smith Vocational budget (\$0.00). Vote was unanimous. All in favor.

Debt Budget - A motion was made and seconded to approve the FY20 Debt operating budget. Vote was unanimous. All in favor.

Enterprise Fund - A brief discussion ensued regarding the Water Department Enterprise Fund budget and their capital projects. The Committee feels that it's their responsibility to suggest to the Water Commissioners that the Enterprise Fund be operated in an independent and sustainable manner. The Committee recommends that the Water Commissioners start to save some capital reserves.

Brian suggested that the Committee wait to vote on the Water Department Enterprise Fund budget. No action was taken at this time.

FY 2020 Capital Projects

Brian presented the Committee with an overview of the proposed capital projects. Brian discussed the line items and the proposal for how these projects are going to be paid for. Brian informed the Committee that the water infrastructure items will be discussed at the joint meeting at 6:30 pm later that evening. The baseball field design will be funded by the CPA administrative funds. Softball and baseball fields are CPA eligible projects. The CPC deferred the request for construction funds for this project and asked that the Recreation Commission come back in June or July with a design and more firm project costs.

A brief discussion ensued regarding the Fire Department hose replacement request, siding repair, and the elementary school carpet replacement. Whately Fire Chief, John Hannum, requested estimates to replace the siding from a Butler Building representative and will hopefully receive those estimates before April 16th. The Committee is waiting for the cost estimates for the Fire Station siding replacement. No action was taken at this time.

Brian reviewed the proposed sources of funds for the proposed projects. Brian informed the Committee of the Town's current outstanding debt. The Town's outstanding debt is for the fire truck, water meters, and the manganese filtration project, as well as the Town Hall project. There is a \$43,000-place holder for CPA funds which will be used to pay the debt service for the Town Hall loan.

Brian reviewed the current balances in the Town's accounts. A brief discussion ensued regarding the Town Hall's mechanical systems, Herlihy Field's design plans, the status of the funds for the dug-outs, and the Highway garage furnace. Tom Mahar questioned if the sidewalk reconstruction and crosswalks project can be done at the same time as the water merger project? Brian explained that there isn't a lot of excavation for the water merger project, but it's possible that these projects can be done together.

Brian reviewed the miscellaneous spending articles. Two of the items are the Frontier capital plan and the 250th Committee request.

In terms of appropriating free cash to reduce the tax levy, Brian informed the Committee that the amount in prior years was \$200,000. Brian suggested that in the long term this is something that the Town should try to get away from; however, with the shift of school expense from the school choice funds to the town this might not be the best year to do that. The Committee had a brief discussion regarding tax increase, the elementary school revised budget without school choice funds, and the amount of available Free Cash. The Committee questioned what the Town's stabilization account balance is? Brian estimated that the stabilization account is over \$300,000 and he will get the Committee the exact number at its next meeting.

Brian informed the Committee that the current budget projection includes the \$200,000 free-cash appropriation to reduce the tax levy.

Items Not Reasonably Anticipated 48 Hours Before the Meeting

Next meetings – April 16, 2019

The meeting was unanimously adjourned at 6:14 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Brian Domina, Town Administrator

Document List

Meeting minutes dated March 26, 2019
FY20 General Government Operating Budget
FY20 Cultural, Recreation Service Budgets
FY20 Public Health Budgets
FY20 Public Safety Budgets

FY20 Public Works Budgets
FY20 Insurance & Benefits Budgets
FY20 Unclassified Budgets
FY20 Schools Budgets
FY20 Debt Budgets
FY20 Enterprise Budgets