

Whately Finance Committee Meeting

Town Offices

Open Session via Zoom

May 4, 2021

6:00 p.m.

Finance Committee Attendees: Paul Antaya, Dan Kennedy, Bob Fydenkevez, Jim Kirkendall, Fred Baron, Tom Mahar, and Patricia Devine; Also present via Zoom was Selectboard member, Joyce Palmer-Fortune, Town Administrator Brian Domina and Administrative Assistant, Amy Schrader.

The meeting was opened at 6:06pm by the Chairperson Paul Antaya.

Review and vote to approve the meeting minutes from April 20, 2021

The Committee voted to approve the meeting minutes from April 20, 2021. Roll call vote: Paul – yes, Jim – yes, Fred – yes, Thomas – yes, Patricia – yes, Roger- yes, and Bob- yes.

Review, discuss and possibly vote on all fiscal year 2022 operating budgets, capital budgets and miscellaneous spending articles

Paul Antaya (Finance Committee Chair) inquired if the Committee members have any questions regarding FY22 expenditures? The Finance Committee had no comments at this time. Brian informed the Committee that he adjusted the appropriate FY22 budgets to reflect the COLA and salary adjustments. Brian stated the House Ways and Means Committee came out with their budget and he made the appropriate budget adjustments in the projections.

Brian checked with a member of the Community Preservation Committee regarding the eligibility of the cemetery gates for CPA funding. The CPC member stated that the cemetery gates are not CPA eligible. Brian informed the Committee that the cost of the oven at the Whately Elementary School does include the cost of installation.

Brian informed the Committee that there will be some staff changes/reorganization within the Town Offices. Brian discussed the Town Offices positions with specific attention to the Treasurer/Collector, Town Clerk, potential new payroll clerk, and Assistant Town Administrator positions. Lynn Sibley (Treasurer/Collector) discussed the history of the Town's positions. The proposal is to return the Treasurer/Collector position back to a 30-hour per week position and the Assistant Treasurer/Collector position to 10 hours per week. The Town Clerk's position would not change at this time. This would create a \$9,000.00 increase in the budget however, the current Assistant Treasurer/Collector would no longer qualify for benefits so the savings in health insurance should cover the increase. The Committee had a brief discussion regarding previous Town positions, potential changes, Payroll clerk position, outsourcing/payroll challenges, and appointed vs. elected Town Clerk positions. Brian discussed his proposal for additional staffing with specific attention to lack of staff, Boards/Committee needs, volunteer challenges, long-range planning, grant opportunities, and town growth. Brian is still waiting on the American Rescue Plan Act Funds details. The Committee discussed the proposed new position with specific attention to the proposed salary and non-contracted vs. contracted positions. The Selectboard and Personnel Committee will make the final decision regarding the Community Development/Assistant Town Administrator job description. Brian recommended that the Committee table voting on the warrant articles until a future meeting once the final budget numbers are in. The Committee had a brief conversation regarding the American Rescue Plan Act funds, budget modification time-period, and the availability of free cash.

Discuss future budget tracking and reporting

Paul Antaya (Finance Committee Chair) discussed the importance of transparency regarding the Town's budget. Paul strongly feels that communication with town residents on how their tax dollars are being spent could be improved. The Finance Committee has a page on the Town's website that displays previous fiscal year budgets. Paul suggested that the largest budgets in town be reviewed with specific attention to schools (dollars per student), highway department (dollars per mile), public safety (dollars per life), and Water Department (dollars per gallon). This information would be displayed on a tracking and reporting spreadsheet which taxpayers would have access too.

The Committee had a lengthy discussion regarding budget tracking and reporting with specific attention to time-period, number of employees, compensation costs for employees, tracking pros/cons, residents' concerns, school budget inquiry concerns, and the budget tracking process. Paul Antaya (Finance Committee Chair) stated that he will put something together and send it out to the Committee for discussion purposes. After much discussion, the Committee decided to table this discussion until a future Finance Committee meeting.

Brian suggested that the Finance Committee monitor the proposed Police Reform bill and entertain the idea of appointing a Finance Committee Representative to keep track of any changes. This bill could significantly impact the Town's future operating budgets. Patty Devine (Finance Committee member) suggested that FRCOG provide regional assistance for moving this forward. The Committee discussed options on how to handle the Police Reform bill expenditures with the potential of regionalizing the Police Department.

Brian informed the Committee that there is a marijuana retail establishment at the Sugarloaf Shops that will be opening likely by the end of the summer. There is a proposal for a second retail marijuana establishment at the same location. The Town anticipates 9 months of potential revenue which would be monies that go into the General Fund.

Items not anticipated within forty-eight (48) hours of the meeting

Paul Antaya (Finance Committee Chair) stated that the 250th Motor Parade was a huge success and thanked the Whately Fire and Police Department for their parade planning efforts.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:10 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Brian Domina, Town Administrator

Next meeting – May 25, 2021

Document List on File in the Selectboard Office

Finance Committee Meeting Minutes dated 04.20.2021

Town of Whately – Total & Enterprise Fund Budgets – FY22

Memorandum from Brian Domina, Town Administrator, dated 04.30.2021

Proposed Staffing – Reorganization FY22

Town of Whately – Position Description (DRAFT) – Community Development Administrator/Assistant Town Administrator
FY22 Budget Review Tool Version #2 – dated 04.29.21
FY22 All Budgets books – updated 04.30.2021