

**Joint Meeting  
Finance Committee  
Selectboard  
February 4, 2020  
Town Offices**

Meeting Attendees (Finance Committee Members) Paul Antaya, Dan Kennedy, Tom Mahar, Jim Kirkendall, Fred Baron, and Bob Fydenkevez; (Selectboard Members) Joyce Palmer Fortune and Jonathan Edwards; (Town Administrator) Brian Domina and (Administrative Assistant) Amy Schrader.

The meeting was opened at 6:00 pm by the Chairperson Paul Antaya.

**Discuss and vote approve meeting minutes of January 21, 2020.**

The Committee voted to approve the meeting minutes from January 21, 2020.

**Discuss and review proposed FY 2021 operating budgets for:**

Paul Antaya (Finance Committee Chair) informed the residents of Whately that this meeting was scheduled to be a joint Finance Committee and Selectboard meeting; hopefully the Selectboard will be joining the meeting soon. Paul stated that one of the Finance Committee goals is to hold the current tax rate of \$15.67 per \$1,000 in that range and try to give the town residents a relief from excessive taxation.

**Public Safety** - John Hannum, Whately Fire Chief, presented his FY2021 budget. John reviewed and discussed the previous FY20 budget along with projects that have been completed; fire station siding and replacement of fire hoses. John reviewed his FY21 budget with specific attention to salaries, expenditures, extra funds requested, and a new radio system grant. The Committee inquired about the budget's high appropriation and low expenditures, salaries, utilities, and budget increases. After much discussion, the Committee agreed to take no action at this time.

Zachary Smith, South County EMS, presented his FY2021 budget. Zachary informed the Finance Committee that the town's assessment decreased by \$676.00. Zachary stated that there was a 4% call volume increase for the four towns and a decline in mutual aid calls. Zachary reviewed his FY2021 budget with specific attention to other post-employment benefits, salary/wages, billing, expenses, town of Deerfield indirect costs, retained earnings, and the overall budget amount requested. The Committee had a brief discussion regarding the South County EMS response time for Whately residents, medical billing/insurance, the Director's salary, the South County EMS rent to the town of Deerfield, transport services, and vehicle maintenance (ambulance levels). Zachary stated that the average response time for a Whately EMS call is 7 minutes. Joyce Palmer-Fortune (Selectboard) discussed the potential of the electric vehicle market which could include ambulances

in the near future. No action taken at this time.

**Highway** - Keith Bardwell (Highway and Building Superintendent) reviewed the Highway Department's FY21 budget. Keith reviewed and discussed the Highway Department's capital expenditure for purchasing a rubber-tired excavator. Keith informed the Committee that in 2019, Massachusetts amended Chapter 149 section 6 ½, mandating municipalities to comply with OSHA regulations. In an effort to assist municipalities with compliance, the town was awarded a MIIA Safety Grant to purchase a trench box. In order to use the trench box, the Highway Department needs a machine larger than their 580 Case backhoe. The Committee had a brief discussion regarding the town's equipment needs, sharing equipment with surrounding towns, anticipated town projects, lease to own options, and previous lease/rental costs. The Committee requested additional information showing the monetary amount spent on leasing/renting equipment in previous years.

Keith reviewed his FY21 budget for the Highway Department with specific attention to salaries, general expenses, road machinery, and winter roads. The Committee had a brief discussion regarding the Highway Department's vehicles and vehicle maintenance line item. Keith also presented the Committee with the Tree Warden's budget. This budget remained the same as previous years. The Committee inquired if the Water Department old truck is going to the Highway Department? Keith stated that last year the town appropriated \$10,000 to purchase the truck. There has been discussion that the \$10,000 would be used to go towards the purchase of the excavator. No action was taken at this time.

**Water Department Enterprise Fund** – Wayne Hutkoski (Water Department Superintendent) reviewed the Water Department budget and revenue forecast for the upcoming year. Wayne discussed his capital expenditure which coincides with the Highway Department's purchase of an excavator. The majority of the budget items remained the same with a few projected increases due to the water merger project and salary line item. The Committee had a brief discussion regarding the water merger project and inquired if the manganese filtration project is finished? Wayne stated that the manganese filters are operating but there are still a few administrative duties to complete. No action was taken at this time.

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

Paul Antaya (Finance Committee Chair) expressed concerns regarding the Fire Chief's inability to explain his expenditures related to his budget. The Committee had a brief discussion regarding the clerical needs for the town's Departments, the Fire Chief's administrative duties, and the Fire Chief's job description.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:33 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

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Brian Domina, Town Administrator

**Document List on File in the Selectboard Office**

Finance Committee Meeting Minutes dated 01/21/2020

MA Department of Revenue – Division of Local Services, Preliminary Municipal Cherry  
Sheet Estimates Data current as of 01/22/2020

Rubber Tired Excavator request from Highway and Building Superintendent, Keith  
Bardwell, dated December 2019

FY21 Public Safety Budget

FY21 Public Works Budget

FY21 Enterprise Fund