

**Joint Meeting
Finance Committee
Selectboard
March 10, 2020
Town Offices**

Finance Committee Attendees: Paul Antaya, Dan Kennedy, Jim Kirkendall, Tom Mahar, and Bob Fydenkevez; Selectboard members, Joyce Palmer Fortune and Fred Orloski; 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 to approve meeting minutes of February 25, 2020.

The Committee voted to approve the meeting minutes from February 25, 2020.

Discuss and review proposed FY 2021 operating budgets for:

Schools (Franklin County Technical School) – Rick Martin, Superintendent, and Russ Kaubris, Business Manager, appeared before the Committee/Board to present a PowerPoint presentation of Franklin County Technical School programs with specific attention to academic/vocational initiatives, additional staff (support special education/enrollment increase), FCTS advanced placement courses, new veterinary science programs, certified medical assistant and LPN program, welding shop renovation, football/basketball lighting, new cafeteria, skills USA competition, and community events. Russ Kaubris, Business Manager, gave a brief presentation of the School's past, present, and future student enrollment with specific attention to Whately's student enrollment, minimum contribution formula, and enrollment trends. Rick discussed Chapter 70 funds, sources/uses of funding, E and D surplus funds, potential enrollment growth, average town assessments, and capital assessments. The Committee/Board had a brief discussion regarding the town's zip code challenges for state formula contributions, administrative costs tracking, new veterinary program, and school of choice options. Paul Antaya (Finance Committee) inquired how the cost per pupil compares to other vocational schools in the state? Rick stated that the amounts vary by towns according to a formula. After much discussion, the Committee/Board took no action.

Public Safety:

New Radio System - Chief Sevigne and JP Kennedy (Whately Fire Department) appeared before the Finance Committee and Selectboard. Chief Sevigne gave a brief overview of the current radio system's failing infrastructure. Chief Sevigne discussed the importance of the new radio system with specific attention to funding changes and updating equipment. JP Kennedy presented the Committee/Board with the Whately CoMIRS Radio project cost estimates. The newest estimate for this project is \$42,849.08. JP reviewed the radio project with specific attention to portable radios, microphones, batteries, mobile radios and portable radios. The new radios should arrive between 6 and 8 months from now. The Committee/Board inquired about the new radio systems life span, pricing options, equipment needs, and installation costs. JP stated that the system should last at least 20 years and the radio life spans are 20-30-years. JP stated that mobile radios are used in the car and portable radios are physically on the officer. Fred Orloski questioned why 8 portables are necessary for the police when only 2 officers are on duty at the time? Chief Sevigne stated that it's the same idea of having one police cruiser, it would be used and used and would need to be replaced sooner than having 2 cruisers. Chief Sevigne stated that these prices are good for 3 years. JP stated that installation costs are listed on the bottom of the report, which are estimated hourly

rates. The Committee had a lengthy conversation regarding radio channels and portable radio options. After much discussion, no decision was made at this time.

Police Department - Chief Sevigne stated that the FY21 Police Department budget is level funded. The Committee inquired why there are no budget increases? Chief Sevigne stated that no educational or equipment upgrades are necessary at this time. Chief Sevigne discussed the Police Department's FY21 budget with specific attention to postage, part-time officer budget/training, utilities, and the FRCOG regional communication assessment. No action was taken at this time.

Chief Sevigne discussed his additional capital requests for speed/radar signs and improvements to the station. Chief Sevigne discussed the speed/radar signs with specific attention to the data collection and relocation options. If the Police Department does purchase the radar signs, they will reach-out to the residents for radar location suggestions. The Committee inquired what the end outcome would be besides data report? Chief Sevigne stated that the overall big outcome would be to slow people down for public safety. No action was taken at this time.

Chief Sevigne discussed his FY21 request for one additional full-time police officers. Chief Sevigne gave the Committee/Board a summary of his request with specific attention to his administrative burdens and town needs. The Committee/Board inquired why would a police officer need to do administrative work? Chief Sevigne stated that some of the administrative responsibilities are Chief responsibilities. Paul Antaya stated that he has trouble with the idea that these administrative responsibilities couldn't be handled by a clerk, secretary, or administrator. The Committee questioned what the proposed new Police officer's schedule would be? Chief Sevigne gave a brief overview of scheduling options. The Committee/Board stated that if the Selectboard feels, for the safety of the town, that an additional full-time officer is warranted, then the Selectboard should approach the Finance Committee. The Committee/Board requested a pie chart showing the data to justify his request. The Committee/Board had a brief discussion regarding the Police Department's call volume compared to other surrounding towns and expressed concerns regarding the one additional full-time police officer request. After much discussion, no decision was made at this time.

General Government – Brian presented the general government and insurance & benefits portion of the budget, with Lynn Sibley presenting those parts of the general government budget pertaining to Town Clerk, Accountant, Payroll, Treasurer/Collector and Tax Takings. General discussion occurred over the various parts of the General Government budget with a more focused discussion on tax taking legal expenses, OPEB account, workmans compensation insurance, and the Town's long-term debt. No action was taken at this time.

Tri- Town Beach – Bill Skroski (Tri-Town Beach Committee) appeared before the Board to discuss Tri-Town Beach's FY21 budget. Bill stated that the Committee will be increasing their budget by \$200.00 to stay ahead of minimum wage. The Committee/Board had a brief discussion regarding operation of the beach, utilization of the beach by town residents, water quality, and potential new programs/improvements at the beach. Bill stated the Committee is run by two towns 77% Deerfield and 23% Whately. Bill stated that they save the gate receipts to help maintain the property (water testing, gates, plumbing, wheel chair ramp, etc.). They receive very little money from the towns for insurance and other property expenses. Bill stated that around 19% of the users are Whately residents. The beach allows Deerfield, Whately, and Sunderland residents (Sunderland at a higher fee). Bill stated that the water quality is good, but there is a weed growing at the north end, that dies off, then travels to the south end which causes problems. The Committee questioned if there were any new programs? Bill stated that there are no new programs. The Committee strongly recommended that new programs should be thought about, and suggested coming back to the

Committee with new program ideas which could potentially be funded by the town. Brian inquired if there has been any discussion about new signage on route 116? Bill stated that would be a discussion with the State since it's their property. The Committee/ Board had a brief discussion regarding beach staffing, potential involvement by the Recreation Commission, and potential CPC funds. The Committee/Board sees Tri-Town beach as a resource and would like to see it revitalized. No action was taken at this time.

Insurance & Benefits - Brian informed the Committee/Board that there was one significant workmans compensation claim this year which could increase our FY21 premium. Motion was made and seconded to accept the FY21 Insurance and Benefit budget. Vote was unanimous. All in favor.

Unclassified - – A motion was made and seconded to approve the FY21 Unclassified operating budgets. Vote was unanimous. All in favor.

Debt – A motion was made and seconded to approve the FY21 Debt operating budget. Vote was unanimous. All in favor.

Warrant Articles for the next Special Town Meeting (03/25/20) - Town Administrator Brian Domina reviewed the seven articles included on the Special Town Meeting warrant for March 25, 2020.

Article 1:

To see if the Town will vote to accept G.L. c.200A, §9A authorizing the Town to dispose of abandoned funds held in the custody of the Town per the procedure outlined by the statute, or take any other action relative thereto.

Majority vote required

*Recommended by the Selectboard
Recommended by the Finance Committee*

Article 2:

To see if the Town will vote to accept the last paragraph of G.L. c.41, §111F to create a special fund to be known as the Injury Leave Indemnity Fund, to be expended by the Selectboard, without further appropriation, for payment of injury leave compensation or medical bills incurred under G.L. c.41, §§111F or 100, and to which appropriations may be made, and amounts received from insurance proceeds or restitution for injuries to firefighters or police officers shall be credited, provided, that said Board may, if the amounts therein are not immediately necessary or required in the foreseeable future for the purpose of the Fund, release specific amounts to the General Fund, or take any other action relative thereto.

Majority vote required

*Recommended by the Selectboard
Recommended by the Finance Committee*

Article 3:

To see if the Town will vote to transfer the sum of \$9,000 from available funds (FY19 Free Cash) to the Police Department General Expenses account (001-210-5400), or take any other action relative thereto.

Majority vote required

*Recommended by the Selectboard
Recommended by the Finance Committee*

Article 4:

To see if the Town will vote to transfer the sum of \$20,000 from available funds to the Off-Duty Police Detail Revolving Account to facilitate the timelier payment to police officers for details worked, or take any other action relative thereto.

Article 5:

To see if the Town will vote, pursuant to G.L. c. 44B, to appropriate and transfer from the Community Preservation Fund Unreserved Fund Balance the sum of \$28,130.92 to make an additional payment on the one year note for the Town Hall Historic Rehabilitation Project, or take any other action relative thereto.

Majority vote required

Recommended by the Selectboard

Recommended by the Finance Committee

Article 6:

To see if the Town will vote to transfer the sum of \$50,000 from the Capital Stabilization Fund to pay for costs associated with the replacement of two bridges on Williamsburg Road, or take any other action relative thereto.

2/3 Majority Vote Required

Recommended by the Selectboard

Recommended by the Finance Committee

Article 7:

To see if the Town will vote to transfer the sum of **\$4,000** from available funds (FY19 Free Cash) to pay for the costs of engineering oversight services during the construction of crosswalks and sidewalks along Chestnut Plain Road, or take any other action relative thereto.

Majority vote required

Recommended by the Selectboard

Recommended by the Finance Committee

The Committee along with the Selectboard discussed the articles. The Selectboard voted to have Article 4 removed from the STM warrant as the appropriation of those funds is not necessary. The Finance Committee voted to recommend the remaining articles for the STM.

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

none

The Joint Finance Committee and Selectboard meeting was adjourned at 8:37 pm.

The meeting was opened at 8:37 pm by the Chairperson Joyce Palmer-Fortune.

The Selectboard signed the Special Town Meeting Warrant for March 25, 2020 at 8:38 pm as earlier approved by the Board.

The Selectboard meeting was adjourned at 8:39 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Brian Domina, Town Administrator

Document List on File in the Selectboard Office

Joint Finance Committee/Selectboard Meeting Minutes dated 02/25/2020

FY21 Whately Police Department Budget

Letter from Chief Sevigne – FY21 Request for one additional Full-Time Police Officer – dated 02/03/2020

Letter from Chief Sevigne – Salary Increase dated 02/03/2020

FY21 Cultural, Recreation, Services budget

FY21 General Government budget

FY21 Insurance and Benefits budget

FY21 Unclassified budget

FY21 Debt budget