

Joint Finance Committee- Selectboard

Meeting Minutes

March 15, 2022

Town Offices

Open Hybrid Session via Zoom

6:00 pm

The open session of the Joint Finance Committee- Selectboard meeting of the Town of Whately was called to order on March 15, 2022, at 6:04 pm by the Finance Committee Chairperson Paul Antaya. Also present were Finance Committee members Jim Kirkendall, Dan Kennedy, and Donna Wiley. Present via Zoom was Finance Committee member Brenda Doherty. Present for the Selectboard was Fred Baron. Selectboard Chairperson Jonathan Edwards was present via Zoom. Also Present were Town Administrator Brian Domina and Town Administrative Assistant Amy Lavallee, Fire Chief John Hannum, and Recreation Commission Chair Chris Williams. Present via Zoom was Treasurer Collector Lynn Sibley.

1. To review and vote to approve the meeting minutes from February 15, 2022, and March 8, 2022

Motion made to accept the Minutes from February 15, 2022. Motion seconded. All in favor. Paul-yes, Donna-yes, Dan-yes, Jim-yes, Brenda-abstain.

Motion made to accept the Minutes from March 8, 2022. Motion seconded. All in favor. Paul-yes, Jim-yes, Dan-yes, Donna-abstain, Brenda-abstain.

2. To review and discuss the Special Town Meeting warrant for March 23, 2022

Brian shared with and discussed the Articles for the Special Town Meeting to be held on March 23, 2022. Articles 1-3, recommended by the Community Preservation Committee, did not require a vote from the Finance Committee. Article 4, recommended by the Library Trustees, required a vote from the Finance Committee as to whether to recommend the passage of Article to Town Meeting. Motion made to recommend Article 4. Motion seconded. All in favor. Paul-yes, Jim-yes, Dan-yes, Donna-yes, Brenda-abstain. Article 5 required a vote from the Finance Committee as to whether to recommend the passage of Article 5 to Town Meeting. Motion made to recommend Article 5. Motion seconded. All in favor. Paul-yes, Jim-yes, Dan-yes, Donna-yes, Brenda-abstain.

3. To review and discuss FY23 operating budgets and capital requests

a. Fire Department

Fire Chief John Hannum discussed with the Board and Committee the proposed increase in the Fire Department budget from FY22. John explained that the Department created a detail rate and process to provide fire details when requested, he discussed the increased responsibilities on the Fire Department due to the marijuana processing facilities. John also discussed the anticipated utility increases and the need for equipment replacement (specifically ice rescue equipment).

b. Recreation Committee

Chris Williams discussed a budget increase of \$1,000 from FY22 to cover field maintenance and registration software. Chris provided a summary of the Recreation Departments operations and changes, one of the more significant changes was the roll out of a new web-based sports management program called "Rec Desk."

c. Treasurer-Collector

Treasurer-Collector Lynn Sibley discussed with the Board and Committee the increase in the Treasurer' budget from FY22. She explained that this is for additional staff time to train the new incoming Treasurer (Lynn is planning to retire next spring), software upgrades, and supply cost increases.

d. Insurance- Benefits

Brian discussed with the Board and Committee that the MIIA Insurance policy premium is estimated to increase 6-7%, current budgeted increase is 5%.

Lynn discussed the Health Insurance budget which is proposed to decrease slightly from FY22. Medicare and Social Security is 1.45% of payroll.

Workers Comp budget increase from FY22 is due to the increase in MIIA insurance premiums. The premium increase is due to past workers compensation claims that the Town has needed to file.

Lynn suggested that the unemployment budget can be lowered from the proposed \$16,000 to \$10,000 if needed. The Committee needs to be aware that the Town is self-insured so regardless of what the Town budgets it is an estimate at this point of the projected costs, which could be higher or lower than the budgeted amount.

Franklin Retirement Board increase is set by the Franklin Regional Retirement System and the assessment is set on the number of retirees and actuarial tables.

Police Department and Fire Department are covered by a separate Injured on Duty policies and not under workers compensation. Similar to workers compensation, the IOD premium is increasing due to past claims.

OPEP request is \$25,000, which is the standard request until the goal of \$200,000 saved in the trust fund is reached.

Medicaid assistance budget increase from FY22 due to service cost increases from the Lower Pioneer Valley Education Collaborative.

4. Review and discuss recommendations of the Personnel Committee (no vote)

Brian discussed with the Board and Committee the Personnel Committee recommendations regarding the Highway Department wage increases, Police Department wage increases, Fire Chief position, Police Chief Salary increase, and Highway Superintendent wage increase. The Board requested the spreadsheet from the 10 Comparable Towns worksheet from the Personnel Committee. Board also requested the total salary expenditures for full time employees from FY18 to FY22 to look at the rate of increase.

5. Review and discuss budget projection worksheets for FY23

Brian shared and discussed with the Board and Committee two different budgeting spreadsheets. The first spreadsheets so details on the projected revenues, expenses and proposition 2.5 status for the Town. The second budgeting spreadsheet shows an overview of the operating budget and proposed capital expenditures.

6. Items not anticipated

Paul shared and discussed with the Board and Committee the Personnel Committee bylaws from Conway and Deerfield to discuss the composition of Personnel Committee members from surrounding towns. Paul expressed concern about possible conflicts of interest on the Whately Personnel Committee because certain members of the PC are compensated by the Town. The Committee requested that the Selectboard take a closer look at the issues and determine if changes need to be made.

Paul shared with the Board his desire for the Finance Committee to engage directly with the school committees on the budgets next year. Paul suggested that it would be up to the school committee as to whether or not the school committee wanted the participation of the school administration.

Adjourn:

Motion to adjourn. Motion seconded. Meeting adjourned at 8:04pm.

Next Meeting: March 29, 2022

Documents:

Meeting Minutes, February 15, 2022

Meeting Minutes, March 8, 2022

Town of Whately Special Town Meeting Warrant, March 23, 2022

Memorandum, To Selectboard from Brian Domina, *Personnel Committee Recommendations for FY23*, March 9, 2022

Memorandum, To Selectboard, Finance Committee, and Personnel Committee from Amy Schrader, *Increase in Hours for the Town Clerk Position*, February 10, 2022

Letter from Chris Williams, Recreation Department, regarding new 5 hour a week Recreation Director proposal

Traffic Control Officer Policy and Procedure NO 5.09

Email from Keith Bardwell to Brian Domina, *Operator/Laborer Salary Adjustment Request*, February 8, 2022

Letter to Personnel Committee from Highway Department regarding wage increase request

US Bureau of Statistics, *Consumer Price Index Overview Table- New England*,

Bureau of Labor Statistics, US Department of Labor, *Changing Costs in the Boston Metropolitan Area- December 2021*, February 4, 2022

Bureau of Labor Statistics, US Department of Labor, *Consumer Price Index, Boston-Cambridge-Newton- January 2022*, February 10, 2022

Email to Selectboard, Finance Committee from Brian Domina, *Additional COLA Information*, February 16, 2022

Spreadsheet, *COLA Projections for FY23*

Spreadsheet, *Summary of Projected Property Tax Revenue*

Spreadsheet, *Budget Projection #1 FY23*