

**Joint Meeting
Finance Committee
Selectboard
February 18, 2020
Town Offices**

Finance Committee Attendees: Paul Antaya, Dan Kennedy, Tom Mahar, Jim Kirkendall, Fred Baron, and Bob Fydenkevez; Selectboard members, Joyce Palmer Fortune, Frederick Orloski, 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 February 4, 2020

The Committee voted to approve the meeting minutes from February 4, 2020.

Discuss and review proposed FY 2021 operating budgets for:

Cultural, Recreation & Services

South County Senior Center - Christina Johnson (Director of South County Senior Center) appeared before the Committee and presented her FY21 budget notes. Jim Kirkendall (Finance Committee) stated that last year the Committee requested the number of Whately residents that utilize the South County Senior Center and inquired if that information was available? Christina stated that unfortunately, their computer system does not have the option of selecting a town when registering. All registrations are recorded by zip code and since Whately and South Deerfield share a mailing zip code, the report was not accurate. Christina stated that out of an estimated 250 applicants, 52 applicants were Whately residents. Paul Antaya (Finance Committee Chair) expressed concern that due to the lack of utilization information, it would be difficult to approve their FY21 budget request. The Committee had a brief discussion regarding the Senior Center's signing in/out process, importance of tracking Whately resident's utilization, transportation increases, and the maintenance of the building. Christina stated that transportation is a big need for the Senior Center. The \$5,500 transportation budget has more to do with transportation for Senior Center events, not transporting people to the Senior Center. The on-going difficulties between FRTA and PVRTA has created transportation challenges for seniors, especially in Sunderland. The Committee stated that the members of the Committee strongly support the South County Senior Center and the services that it provides our residents, but have continued to request Whately resident utilization of the Senior Center and would like those numbers for the Finance Committee meeting in March. The Committee questioned the increasing trend in the budget over the past few fiscal years. Christina stated that in previous years some expenditures were being paid out of a Gift Account that should have been paid out of their general expenses. This wasn't noticed until recently and those expenditures now appear in the budget. One of the Senior Center's main goals is to

increase their outreach to residents in Whately and Sunderland. No action was taken at this time and the request for the utilization numbers remains.

Recreation Department – Jonathan Edwards (Selectboard) spoke on behalf of the Recreation Department as a member. Jonathan reviewed the Recreation Department's FY21 budget with specific attention to Herlihy Field and the Recreation Department's revolving fund. The Committee had a brief conversation regarding the slight increase in the budget, the new ballfield at Herlihy Field, fees collected/used, Recreation Department's revolving fund, and past appropriated funds. Jonathan informed the Committee that the Recreation Department's revolving account has a \$20,000 cap. The Committee requested that they receive revolving account information for every budget that has one. No action was taken at this time.

Library – Library Director, Cyndi Steiner presented to the Committee the Library's FY 2021 budget with specific attention to building maintenance, IT support, CW Mars network, heating expenses, and collection development. Cyndi informed the Committee that the Library is turning 70 years old this year. Due to the Library's age, there has been a few unexpected expenses which is reflected in the slight increase in the building maintenance line item. Cyndi read the Library's circulation numbers over the last year. Cyndi stated that the Library had a slight increase in patron registration from last year. As a secondary patron tracking system, the Library uses a paper hash tag system. This year, there was an increase in new programming, due to the Union 38 family network. The Committee had no questions at this time regarding the Library's FY21 budget. No action was taken at this time.

Council on Aging – Ruth Leahy (Council on Aging) appeared before the Committee to discuss their FY21 budget with specific attention to the revitalization of the Council on Aging. Ruth stated that a questionnaire will be mailed to Whately seniors that would provide information to both the Council on Aging and the South County Senior Center. Ruth discussed the Council on Aging's new activities, future plans, and senior outreach efforts. The Committee had a brief discussion regarding the relationship between the South County Senior Center and local Council on Aging Committees and the Franklin County Triad program. Ruth stated that the Council on Aging provides information regarding the local seniors which is presented to the South County Senior Center Board of Oversight Representative. Jonathan stated that the Franklin County Triad program is under the Franklin County Sheriff's. The Committee appreciates Ruth's motivation and dedication to the Council on Aging. No action was taken at this time.

Tri-Town Beach – Paul Antaya (Finance Committee Chair) stated that the Committee did not receive a Tri-Town Beach budget. Paul suggested that the Committee should have a conversation regarding the how the beach has become a liability to the town. The Committee had a lengthy discussion regarding the beach's appearance, water condition, ownership of the land, town politics, potential RFP, budget authority, beach's staff, and road/beach maintenance. Jonathan stated that the beach has been deteriorating over the years, and it's due for an overhaul. The beach should be an asset to the town and not a liability. The Committee discussed potentially closing the beach for summer of 2020 while

repairs and updates are made.

Paul Antaya (Finance Committee Chair) stated that since the Committee hasn't submitted a budget, he's not sure where to go from here. There is no one to answer to the budget. Fred Baron stated that if we pull funding, we also could be surrendering rights. The Committee does not want to surrender the town's rights at this time. Brian inquired what the Committee would like him to convey to the Tri-Town beach Committee? The Committee stated that they will be thinking about their options along with the assistance of town counsel. No action was taken at this time.

Veteran – Brian reviewed the Veterans FY21 budget. The Committee had no questions at this time. No action was taken.

Whately CPA Projects - Paul Antaya (Finance Committee Chair) discussed the Whately's CPA Project Funding requests. The Committee had a lengthy conversation on the CPA state funding process, Finance Committee's recommendations, and the Finance Committee's authority over CPA funds. The Committee considered the idea that a member of the CPC could present a CPA project to the Finance Committee to request a recommendation. The Finance Committee will not be providing recommendations on CPA projects that have not been presented. No decision was made at this time.

Discuss and review the FY 2021 capital project prioritization report from the Capital Improvement Planning Committee

Library's CIPC – Jim Ross (Library Trustee) appeared before the Committee to discuss the Library's two CIPC projects; ADA compliance and repaving of the Library's parking lot. The Committee had a brief discussion regarding the Library's ADA compliance request, endowments received, construction timeline, and future maintenance of the lift. The Library is requesting \$75,000 towards the installation of the wheelchair lift. Jim informed the Committee that, over the summer, Brian Domina, Keith Bardwell, Larry Ashman, Don Sluter, and himself worked on an ADA compliance grant that would help fund the wheelchair lift. Unfortunately, the Library did not receive the grant. For this reason, the Library is requesting half of the project amount from the town. No action was taken at this time.

Dan Kennedy (CIPC member) reviewed the FY21 capital project prioritization report with specific attention to the town office generator, new excavator for the Highway Department, tele communications, carpet replacement at the WES, reconstruction of the parking lot at the WES, skylights in WES cafeteria, police department interior/exterior improvements, fire hoses on the Fire trucks, radar boxes, and emergency management screen. The Committee had a lengthy discussion regarding the new excavator purchase, skylight replacement, emergency management screen, and the CIPC charge.

The Committee requested additional information from Keith Bardwell (Highway and

Building Superintendent) regarding the monetary amount spent on leasing/renting equipment in previous years and use of the excavator for potential future projects. Fred inquired if the Finance Committee is reviewing the proposed cost of the proposed capital improvement projects to make sure they appear reasonable? After much discussion, the Committee discussed strongly recommended group A of the FY21 capital project prioritization report, but delayed taking any action. The project listed in group A revolve around employee safety, which is the CIPC and Finance Committee's main concern.

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

none

The meeting was adjourned at 8:13 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Brian Domina, Town Administrator

Document List on File in the Selectboard Office

Joint Finance Committee and Selectboard Meeting Minutes dated 02/04/2020
Cultural, Recreation, Services FY21 Budget
Capital Project Prioritization Criteria from CIPC dated 02/17/2019
CIPC FY21 – Capital Project Recommendations