

Swampscott Finance Committee
April 5 2018

Attending: Marzie Galazka (Chair), Mary Ellen Fletcher, Joan Hilario, William Jones, Jill Sullivan, Gail Rosenberg, Polly Titcomb, Cinder McNerney

Not attending: Joan Hilario, Tim Dorsey

Also Attending: Max Kasper (Building Inspector), Gino Cresta (ATA Operations), Sean Fitzgerald (Town Administrator)

Max Kasper reported on the Building Department budget. It has not changed significantly, although there are many new line items for better transparency. Most of the budget is comprised of personnel. Staffing levels remain the same. At the moment, the part time inspector position is not filled, but Mr. Kasper looks to fill that this year to help with work load. The office supplies line is relatively high, because it includes weights and measures expenses required by the state. Mr. Fitzgerald notes that in the future, those expenses should be broken out as a separate line item. The increase in the Building Inspector's salary is due to the need to attract an employee with a broad skill and educational set. The \$76K salary is probably less than we would pay if we went out to the market for a building inspector. Mr. Kasper wrote a letter to the MSBA in support of our LOI for the elementary school projects.

Gino Cresta, Assistant Town Administrator for Operations, presented the DPW and Enterprise budgets. The cemetery budget increases slightly this year. The cemetery does have some aging equipment that may result in a capital request next year. The general DPW budget increases about 6% this year. There is a fairly significant increase in the personnel line item because labor has been appropriately accounted to the DPW department from the water and sewer enterprise funds. Equipment maintenance is up a bit with aging equipment. There was a discussion about expenses for debris removal, flowers, and trees. There was also a discussion about the value of leaf pickup – an item to be thought about next year. There was a \$30K increase in the sidewalk maintenance line item. The electricity and repair of streetlights was an expense also included in this budget (\$150K).

Mr. Jones requested that the following statement be entered into the minutes: Mr. Jones feels that some of Swampscott's roads are in an unacceptable condition of disrepair, citing Andrew Road as an example. It is his opinion that Swampscott should operate under the concept of Zero Tolerance for road upkeep. Going forward, he would like to see the DPW funded to be able to provide a higher level of annual maintenance. It is his opinion that more maintenance will reduce the time between full resurfacing.

Mr. Cresta also presented the Water and Sewer Enterprise fund budgets. There have been significant shifts in the personnel and fuel line items, because the

administration felt that the funds had been overcharged for these expenses over a period of time. The increase in the cost of bonds in the Sewer Enterprise fund is due to Stacy Brook. A discussion was held about the plan to deal with the EPA consent decree regarding Stacy Brook. Mr. Fitzgerald wants there to be a more scientific way of repairing this problem, rather than simply spending money without a clear-cut answer on whether it will be successful. Mr. Fitzgerald wants to work with Lynn and the state on a comprehensive plan to attack the Stacy Brook problem.

The Capital Improvement Committee entered the meeting to discuss the Capital Improvements Plan. They discussed changes to the Capital Improvement appropriation for this year. On Storm water management, the administration proposes to put about \$140K towards a study/grant match to develop a plan for the sea walls and storm water management. Mr. Fitzgerald reports that the State has a line item in this year's budget for Swampscott for coastal resiliency and he wants time to develop a plan that includes some other funding sources. Ms. Fletcher indicates that she is troubled that we are spending money on beautification efforts and other capital items while we are putting off spending on capital projects that have to do with public safety. Ms. Rosenberg agreed but added that it is also important to invest in the physical attractiveness of your community. Mr. Cresta indicates that he will use the funds to repair the particularly bad areas.

Ms. Sullivan brought up the newly added Capital Improvements Project of an Age-Friendly Community Assessment. She was concerned that this item was added very recently by the Board of Selectmen. Mr. Fitzgerald remarked that it is important for us to plan resources for Seniors. Ms. Sullivan wondered why this item has been funded while other critical items have been pushed off until 2020. In addition, several Finance Committee members questioned the CIC decision to eliminate funding for the HVAC system at Stanley School. The Facilities Manager had said this was very critical, and several members were concerned that this could be a critical financial mistake. Ms. Titcomb wonders why we are funding \$80K for new police cruisers while we are putting off a critical system for a school.

Motion to approve the amended minutes from 4/17: Rosenberg/Fletcher. 6-0-1.

Motion to adjourn. Rosenberg/Fletcher 7-0.