



Town of Swampscott

Finance Committee Meeting Minutes

Monday, September 21, 2020

Meeting Conducted via remote participation on the zoom.us application

Pursuant to Governor Baker's March 12, 2020 Order Suspending Certain Provisions of the Open Meeting Law, G.L. c.30A, §18, and the Governor's March 15, 2020 Order imposing strict limitation on the number of people that may gather in one place, this meeting of the **Finance Committee** was conducted via remote participation utilizing the zoom.us application. Specific information and the general guidelines for remote participation by members of the public and/or parties with a right and/or requirement to attend this meeting was made available on the meeting posting. No in-person attendance of members of the public was permitted, and every effort was made to ensure that the public can adequately access the proceedings in real time, via technological means.

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Tim Dorsey (Chair), Mary Ellen Fletcher (Vice Chair), Cinder McNerney, Eric Hartmann, Jill Sullivan, Joan Hilario, Matthew Kirschner, Gail Rosenberg, James Goldman

MEMBERS ABSENT: None

OTHER TOWN OFFICIALS PRESENT:

Michael McClung (Town Moderator); Peter Spellios (Chair, Select Board); Polly Titcomb (Vice Chair, Select Board); Sean Fitzgerald (Town Administrator); Ronald Mendes (Assistant Town Administrator); Amy Sarro (Town Accountant)

Chairman Tim Dorsey called the Finance Committee meeting to order at 6:31 ½ pm.

Mr. Dorsey opened the discussion by suggesting adopting of meeting minutes, as well as a review of the current state of the School Building Committee's deliberations on the new school project, which will be provided by Mr. Kirschner. Mr. Mendes and Mr. Spellios are also going to provide a brief presentation on the town's finances as they may be affected by the proposed school building project. The final item on the agenda is to provide perspective on FY2020 year end, as well as a look at potential amendments to the FY2021 budget along with a discussion of a special town meeting to be held within the next few months.

Mr. Dorsey asked for any comments on minutes from July 13 meeting. On MOTION (Fletcher) and SECOND (Sullivan) it was approved 9-0-0 by roll call vote) to approve minutes.

Moving on to the next item, Mr. Kirschner provided a timeline and review of the deliberations of the School Building Committee. Mr. Kirschner then provided an overview of the options that the School Building Committee has been looking at, along with many of the factors that the Committee took into account.

Mr. Mendes then delivered a presentation covering the town's excess levy capacity and reserve capacity at this time, and also at the time the new high school project was approved in 2002, and the previous vote for a new elementary school that was not passed in 2014. The town's excess tax levy capacity under Proposition 2 ½ and reserves today are at significantly improved levels compared to 2002 and 2014.

Mr. Mendes then also reviewed some debt service scenarios based on building one school at this time to meet the elementary school needs of the town vs. building one smaller school at this time along with an additional elementary school eight years later. The option of building two schools will require less debt service in early years and then result in up to three times as much debt service at the time of building the second school.

There was then some discussion among Finance Committee members and Mr. Spellios on the merits of the differing options for financing this project.

Mr. Dorsey then asked the committee to move on to a presentation of FY2020 year end and Ms. Sarro, Town Accountant, stepped the committee through a presentation on FY2020 Year-End.

Mr. Mendes then stepped through a presentation on the budget options for FY2021. At the presumed upcoming special town meeting, it is expected that the town will be asked to vote on budget amendments to FY2021. Based on data received from the Mass. Department of Revenue, the town is expected to receive an additional \$559,107 from the Commonwealth in local aid beyond the amounts originally estimated at the time of the spring annual town meeting.

Upon conclusion of the presentation, there was some discussion about where the Commonwealth stands in terms of its budgetary challenges and how that impacts the ability of local aid to come to the town over the next few years. There was also some discussion about varying methods of balancing the FY2021 budget, including reducing reliance on free cash and reserves.

On MOTION (Ms. Fletcher) SECONDED (Ms. Sullivan) it was VOTED (unanimous, by roll call vote 9-0-0) to adjourn.

Meeting adjourned at 8:09pm.

True Attest,

Timothy Dorsey, Chair

Minutes APPROVED by vote of the Finance Committee 10/05/2020