



Town of Swampscott
Finance Committee Meeting Minutes
Monday, December 6th, 2021 – 7:00 PM
Virtual Meeting

FINANCE COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT

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

OTHER TOWN OFFICIALS PRESENT

Amy Sarro, Director of Admin. & Finance; Patrick Luddy, Treasurer/Collector; Sean Fitzgerald, Town Administrator; Peter Spellios, Selectboard Member; Trang Vu, Asst. Town Accountant

Public Comment

None.

Approval of Minutes

Approval of minutes was deferred to the next meeting.

Continued Review of Town Meeting Warrant Articles

Article 1

MaryEllen Fletcher expressed concern about transferring funds from Police Personnel Expense to Police Expense, citing vacancies at the police departments as a possible driver of overtime expense as we approach year end.

Amy Sarro commented that the police department salary expense is trending in line with budget expectations and transferring funds from personnel expense to cover other expense should be acceptable.

On **MOTION** (Eric Hartmann) and **SECONDED** (Joan Hilario) it was **VOTED** to recommend favorable action on Town Meeting Article 1. MARYELLEN ABSTAINED.

Article 2

Town Administrator Sean Fitzgerald commented that the Select Board has recommended indefinite postponement for this article and there are no other updates.

On **MOTION** (MaryEllen Fletcher) and **SECONDED** (Cinder McNerney) it was **VOTED** to recommend indefinite postponement on Town Meeting Article 2.

Article 3

Town Administrator Sean Fitzgerald commented that an appropriation of \$67,576.88 is being requested to fund aspects of the Library, DPW, and administrative unions.

There has been an agreement met between the town and the library union. The administrative and DPW unions have not reached an agreement with the town; the recommended figure funds the last best offer that the Town

Administrator and the Board extended to the DPW and administrative unions. In the event they do accept, the town would be able to fund those contract costs in FY22 instead of having to wait for FY23.

Selectman Peter Spellios commented that the Board did not recommend a \$28,000 transfer to fund certain provisions of the custodial and administrative assistant union contracts. The basis of this decision was that the school department had already paid out the funds without an additional appropriation, suggesting that additional appropriation was not necessary to fund the CBAs.

On **MOTION** (Jill Sullivan) and **SECONDED** (Gail Rosenberg) it was voted to recommend favorable action on Article 3 (appropriation not to exceed \$67,576.88)

Article 4

Chairman Tim Dorsey commented that the Selectboard had voted to recommend an appropriation of \$1.25M of free cash to offset the tax rate.

Selectboard member Peter Spellios commented that last year \$1.55M was appropriated from free cash to keep the median single-family tax bill flat. An appropriation of \$1.55M this year would keep the average single family tax bill increase just under \$100. A \$1.25M

Cinder McNerney commented that she feels it makes sense to apply free cash in the amount of \$1.55M to reduce the tax rate.

Jill Sullivan also commented that a tighter budget that does not generate large amounts of free cash would be ideal in her opinion.

MaryEllen Fletcher also agreed with Jill Sullivan and Cinder McNerney and stated that the \$1.55M of free cash should be returned to the taxpayers, especially considering the infrastructure funding that will be available to the town in future years.

Jill Sullivan commented that, while she is generally supportive of returning the money to taxpayers, considering the commitment of reserves to projects including the new school in future years, she would be comfortable recommending \$1.25M to preserve free cash for future uses.

Tim Dorsey reiterated his support for \$1.55M (the same amount as last year) based on the general assumption that free cash levels are anticipated to be similar to where they were last year.

On **MOTION** (MaryEllen Fletcher) and **SECONDED** (Gail Rosenberg) it was VOTED to recommend favorable action on the motion to apply \$1.55M of Free Cash toward the tax levy.

ROLL CALL: Tim Dorsey (YES), MaryEllen Fletcher (YES), Eric Hartmann (YES), Joan Hilario (NO), Matthew Kirschner (YES), Cinder McNerney (YES), Gail Rosenberg (YES), Jill Sullivan (NO).

Article 8

MaryEllen Fletcher commented that she was opposed to establishing an enterprise fund for solid waste at this time. MaryEllen Fletcher further commented that she felt the fees for overflow bags etc. are too high relative to the cost of the additional throw.

Peter Spellios commented that the enterprise fund is poised to generate a lot of transparency.

Cinder McNerney asked about financials of solid waste activities.

On **MOTION** (Jill Sullivan) and **SECONDED** (Eric Hartmann) it was **VOTED** to recommend favorable action on the motion to set up Solid Waste Enterprise fund. **ROLL CALL:** Gail Rosenberg (YES), Cinder McNerney (YES), Matthew Kirschner (YES), MaryEllen Fletcher (NO), Joan Hilario (YES), Tim Dorsey (YES).

The committee determined that the committee's recommendations on warrant articles will be presented as follows:

Article 1 – Tim Dorsey
Article 2 – Tim Dorsey
Article 3 – Tim Dorsey
Article 4 – Tim Dorsey
Article 5 – Tim Dorsey
Article 6 – MaryEllen Fletcher
Article 7 - MaryEllen Fletcher

Committee Reports

- The school is assuming that the town will fund a 2.88% increase to the school department appropriation
- Circuit breaker funding is higher this year than expected; there is additional budget certainty versus this same time last year
- Discussion of the pros and cons of a standalone facilities department

New and Old Business

None.

On **MOTION** (Joan Hilario) and **SECONDED** (Gail Rosenberg) it was **VOTED** by **ROLL CALL** to adjourn the meeting at 8:43pm. **ROLL CALL:** Joan Hilario (YES), Jill Sullivan (YES), Gail Rosenberg (YES), Eric Hartmann (YES), Cinder McNerney (YES), Matthew Kirschner (YES), Mary Ellen Fletcher (YES), Tim Dorsey (YES).

True Attest,
Trang Vu

Trang Vu, Assistant Accountant

Approved by vote of the finance committee 03/07/2022