



Town of Swampscott
Finance Committee Meeting Minutes
Monday March 29th, 2021 7:00 PM
Virtual Meeting

FINANCE COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT

Tim Dorsey (Chair), Mary Ellen Fletcher (Vice-chair), Eric Hartmann, Joan Hilario, Matthew Kirschner (was not present for vote on approval of minutes), Cinder McNerney, Jill Sullivan

ABSENT

Gail Rosenberg

OTHER TOWN OFFICIALS PRESENT

Sean Fitzgerald, Town Administrator; Amy Sarro, Town Accountant; Ron Mendes, Asst. Town Administrator Admin & Finance; Patrick Luddy, Asst. Town Accountant

Meeting called to order 7:03 PM

Approval of Minutes

On **MOTION** (Jill Sullivan) and **SECONDED** (Joan Hilario) it was **VOTED** by **ROLL CALL** to approve minutes from 2/16, 2/23, and 3/15. **ROLL CALL:** Tim Dorsey (**YES**), Mary Ellen Fletcher (**YES**), Eric Hartmann (**YES**), Joan Hilario (**YES**), Cinder McNerney (**YES**), Jill Sullivan (**YES**)

Public Comments

Thomas Palleria was recognized by the committee and commented on the committee's responsibility for oversight of the rail trail project. As a follow up to his comments made at the 3/15 finance committee meeting he briefly summarized subsequent communications with town staff he had on the matter.

FY 2022 Budget Review

Chairman Dorsey commented that he had begun the process of arranging meetings with key town staff and department heads to discuss high-priority budget items.

Mr. Dorsey then went through the proposed FY 2022 budget by department with the committee to identify items that were unlikely to require additional review. They were as follows:

Town Moderator
Select Board
Town Administrator
Town Accountant
Assessing
Treasury/Customer Service
Human Resources
Legal/Insurance
Technology
Town Clerk
Conservation Commission
Zoning Board of Appeals
Historical Commission
Building Department

Constable
Emergency Management
Parking Clerk
Harbormaster
Snow & Ice
Board of Health
Animal Control
Veterans' Services
Public Library
Regional Vocational School Assessment
State Assessments
Water Enterprise Fund
PEG Enterprise Fund

Questions brought up – Community events in Select Board budget, Communications Director job change, and phone service contract, cyclical costs, overlay reserve policy, MOU/elimination of minimum manning and civil service and the costs/benefits associated, aggregated salary totals for employees who are charged across budgets (Jill Sullivan), Salary Reserve, Solid Waste Projections, Health Insurance, Representation at Essex Agr./Tech school, Retirement Board

Invite Max and Gino to the joint CIC meeting on 4/12

Human Resources Dept. Budget

There was discussion surrounding the human resources department's budget. Chairman Dorsey commented that the budget for the Diversity & Inclusion Coordinator is currently 100% reflected in the town's Human Resources budget, despite prior comments that the position would be cost-shared with the school.. Town Administrator Sean Fitzgerald commented that the DEI position would be providing services to both the town and the school. Mr. Fitzgerald clarified that the conversation surrounding what portion of this position may be funded by the appropriation for the school department is still ongoing.

Matthew Kirschner asked Mr. Fitzgerald to briefly summarize the work that he hopes the DEI director will be able to accomplish once brought onboard. Mr. Fitzgerald provided a high-level overview of the nature of the issues that the DEI coordinator would be expected to address, and also commented on work that had been accomplished in neighboring communities that implemented similar positions.

Mr. Kirschner also asked Mr. Fitzgerald if there would be any benefit from developing tangible goals for DEI initiatives and seeking consultants to address issues vs. adding a new position to the Human Resources department. Mr. Fitzgerald said that the town likely requires a combination of resources to accomplish the necessary DEI goals.

Jill Sullivan commented that there is a benefit to having an employee to address matters such as DEI, as opposed to consultants, because the issues are entrenched in the town and it will be important to have someone on board that will take the time to get to know the community and understand the issues present that are specific to Swampscott (as opposed to consultants who are more removed from the community).

Mr. Fitzgerald also expressed a desire to pursue grant funding to assist with the DEI initiatives that the town wishes to implement.

Mary Ellen Fletcher commented that she felt a consultant might be able to address matters of DEI better than an employee, because a consulting group might have specialists available that could target specific issues that are identified.

Senior Center Budget

Chairman Dorsey commented that Bob Powell (Retirement Board), Marilyn Cassidy (Council on Aging) and Gina Bush (Acting Senior Center Director) were invited to join the finance committee meeting on Monday 4/5 to discuss the senior center's budget, which had been identified as a topic of interest.

Reports on Committees

Capital Improvement Committee

- The CIC's scoring spreadsheet was shared with the committee, denoting which projects had already been approved by CIC, and which ones were still pending
- Ms. Fletcher also asked the committee to forward to her any questions they had relative to proposed capital projects so that she can communicate them to CIC

Hadley Re-Use Committee

- The commercial reuse subgroup will be looking at Mill 58 next week, which is a mixed-use property in Peabody, as part of their research

Old and New Business

Matthew Kirschner asked for information regarding Snow & Ice budget results for FY 2021. Mr. Fitzgerald commented that currently it appeared the Snow & Ice budget would close out favorably for FY 2021.

Mr. Kirschner also asked Mr. Fitzgerald for a status update on Fourth of July. Mr. Fitzgerald stated that he was hopeful a Fourth of July celebration could occur this year, but the decision would need to be delayed until closer to June. Any action would be subject to recommendations from public health officials at this time.

On **MOTION** (Jill Sullivan) and **SECONDED** (Mary Ellen Fletcher) it was **VOTED** by **ROLL CALL** to adjourn the meeting at 8:57 PM. **ROLL CALL:** Eric Hartmann (**YES**), Joan Hilario

(YES), Matthew Kirschner (YES), Cinder McNerney (YES), Jill Sullivan (YES), Mary Ellen Fletcher (YES) Tim Dorsey (YES).

True Attest,

Patrick Luddy

Patrick Luddy, Assistant Town Accountant

Minutes APPROVED by vote of the Finance Committee 6/28/21