



Town of Swampscott
Finance Committee Meeting Minutes
Monday, April 11th, 2022 - 7:00 PM
Virtual Meeting

FINANCE COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT

Tim Dorsey (Chair), Mary Ellen Fletcher (Vice-chair), Naomi Dreeben, Eric Hartmann, Joan Hilario, Matthew Kirschner, Suraj Krishnamurthi, Cinder McNerney, Erik Schneider

OTHER TOWN OFFICIALS PRESENT

Michael McClung, Moderator; Peter Spellios, Select Board Member; Amy Sarro, Director of Admin. & Finance; Patrick Luddy, Treasurer/Collector

The meeting was called to order at 7:03 PM

Approval of Minutes

Deferred to next meeting.

Discussion of FY2023 Budget

Chairman Tim Dorsey commented that the committee could deliberate on conversations had at last meeting with the school committee or go through the budget line by line and propose changes/approve items that are outstanding.

Naomi Dreeben would like to know if the Town Administrator and the Superintendent were in the process of resolving the differences between proposed budgets for the school.

MaryEllen Fletcher asked if the finance committee is asked to make the final decision on the budget. Mr. Dorsey commented that the committee would make recommendations to the town meeting, and he has been working on requesting the Town Administrator and the Superintendent finalize their thoughts on the budget and present the finance committee with a resolution.

Matthew Kirchner asked the reason the school stopped capitalizing Technology items. Amy Sarro mentioned that the Town decided to change the capitalization policy several years ago rather than continuing to bond the cost of many item that have relatively short useful lives.

MaryEllen Fetcher commented that there are multiple school districts in Commonwealth capitalize their Technology. Joan Hilario also stated that Private sectors upgrade their technology and software by capitalizing.

Tim Dorsey stated that if the committee wanted to, it could recommend the middle-ground (appx. \$103K variance to town administrator's budget). He stated that he is not recommending a budget that goes beyond the financial guidelines.

Joan Hilario commented that from a process standpoint Finance Committee should make recommendations on only Town Administrator's and School Committee's proposed budgets.

Naomi Dreeben asked for clarification on the status of tri-chair meetings, which would be an opportunity to discuss these issues.

Cinder McNerney commented that the committee is aware of the financial guideline for budget growth and asked if the town administrator's budget is what needs to be debated.

MaryEllen Fletcher stated that it is her opinion that the Town Administrator has delivered a good budget each year, and this year she would like to know the mechanism he came up with this budget number.

Amy Sarro confirmed that the \$180k difference is the reduction in Chapter 70. She also responded to Cinder McNerney's question that the school would consider use more Circuit breaker or ESSER fund in case their proposed budget would not be voted on.

Joan Hilario commented that some departments in the town currently capitalize specific technology. Based on that, we should look at the different groups of users in the school department and see if it made sense to capitalize, based on purpose, some portions of their technology needs.

Erik Schneider commented that he felt there was no incentive for the Town Administrator and the School department to discuss, and that it is unlikely the two will bring forth an agreement. He stated the finance committee should prepare a response in case this happens.

Peter Spellios urged the committee to request town and school leadership reconvene and report back to the committee either a reconciled recommendation, or an explanation of why a recommendation could not be made.

Naomi Dreeben commented that the committee should encourage the Town and School and give them some more time to get an agreement. If that does not happen, the committee will act as their responsibility to make recommendations.

A line-by-line review of the budget was completed.

MaryEllen Fletcher asked Amy Sarro if a part-time cook is funded in the senior center's budget. Amy Sarro responded that the part-time cook position was discussed and was to be funded via the senior center's revolving fund, although there are not available funds to pay for the position currently.

Erik Schneider asked for clarification regarding the uses of the technology budget. Amy Sarro clarified that most of the budget pertains to subscriptions and telephone utilities, other than the hardware/equipment line for \$7,500 which provides for replenishment/replacement of physical tech.

MaryEllen Fletcher asked Amy Sarro for an update on the DPW contract. Amy Sarro commented that the contract is still under negotiation. MaryEllen Fletcher asked what the impact to the FY23 budget might be when the contract is settled. Amy commented that there is some funding in salary reserve to fund a new contract, and any remaining amounts would require a transfer from free cash or other funds to cover.

Remaining Items of Interest:

Selectboard Expenses – MaryEllen Fletcher

Town Administrator Personnel – MaryEllen Fletcher

Finance Committee Reserve

Salary Reserve

Building Commissioner Personnel – MaryEllen Fletcher

Senior Center Personnel – MaryEllen Fletcher

Essex Vocational Tech
Public Schools
Solid Waste Enterprise Fund
State Assessments

Committee Updates

It is anticipated that the CIC will vote on their recommendations this week.

Old and new business

None.

Public Comment

None.

On Wednesday, there will be debate/discussion/ideas to resolve the opening items.

On **MOTION** (Joan Hilario) and **SECONDED** (MaryEllen Fletcher), it was **VOTED** to adjourn the meeting at 8:40 PM. **ROLL CALL**: Eric Hartmann (YES), Erik Schneider (YES), Cinder McNerney (YES), Naomi Dreeben (YES), Matthew Kirschner (YES), Tim Dorsey (YES).

True Attest,

Trang Vu

Assistant Town Accountant

Approved by vote of the finance committee 06/06/2022.