



Town of Swampscott
Finance Committee Meeting Minutes
February 16th, 2021 7:00 PM
Virtual Meeting

FINANCE COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT

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

ABSENT

James Goldman, Joan Hilario

OTHER TOWN OFFICIALS PRESENT

Michael McClung, Town Moderator; Peter Spellios, Chair Select Board; Sean Fitzgerald, Town Administrator; Ron Mendes, Asst. Town Administrator; Max Kasper, Facilities Director; Patrick Luddy, Asst. Town Accountant

7:05 Meeting called to order

Review of Special Town Meeting Articles

Article 1

Eric Hartmann provided the committee with an update on the progress he made for the presentation on Capital Planning and Debt Service that will be presented at Special Town Meeting.

Tim Dorsey also delivered to the committee an overview of the presentation he is preparing for Special Town Meeting on Finance Committee's purpose, mission, methods, goals and accomplishments, and challenges.

Article 2

Director of Facilities Max Kasper provided an overview of the condition of the existing middle school roof, including age and condition of the different sections of the roof. He recommends total replacement of the sections of the roof that were replaced in 1992, and some level of replacement of the roof sections that were replaced in 1996.

Gail Rosenberg asked Max to clarify on escalation costs associated with putting the project off any longer. Max clarified that the escalation cost for this type of project would be about 5% annually.

Mr. Kasper discussed the town's recent attempt to obtain MSBA funding for roof repairs at the middle school via an accelerated repair application. He stated that typically MSBA reimburses about 40% of the project cost for this type of repair.

The accelerated repair application was denied because MSBA revised their criteria for accelerated repairs in response to an increase in demand from districts across the Commonwealth, and this project did not meet the revised criteria.

Mary Ellen Fletcher inquired about the condition of the sections of the middle school roof that are not included for replacement in the project proposal, and whether it makes sense to replace the whole roof to take advantage of the low interest rates available for financing now. Mr. Kasper explained that it would not be prudent due to the labor cost associated with removing and reinstalling all the solar power equipment that is fixtured to that section of the roof.

Chairperson Dorsey asked for clarification from town staff regarding the MSBA Emergency repair application, and whether there was a formal follow-up after the initial denial of the application. Sean Fitzgerald, Town Administrator, echoed Max's previous comments about the reason for denial, and clarified that he did reach back out to the MSBA immediately following the initial denial and they were not able to reconsider our application for accelerated repair. Mr. Fitzgerald agreed to contact the MSBA once more to request that they reconsider the application for repairs to the middle school roof that was previously filed and declined, to make sure that route has been exhausted prior to the vote at special town meeting.

On **MOTION** (Jill Sullivan) and **SECONDED** (Cinder McNerney) it was **VOTED** by **ROLL CALL** to **RECOMMEND FAVORABLE ACTION** on Article 2 for the March 1st, 2021 Special Town Meeting in the amount of \$1,900,000, with the condition that the project is funded through borrowing. **ROLL CALL:** Jill Sullivan (YES) Gail Rosenberg (YES) Eric Hartmann (YES) Cinder McNerney (YES) Matthew Kirschner (YES) Mary Ellen Fletcher (YES) Tim Dorsey (YES)

Article 3

Town Administrator Sean Fitzgerald provided an overview of the additional scope for the Hadley Feasibility Study. Article 3 proposes increasing the budget for this capital project by \$165,000. A significant portion of the proposed additional funding is related to geotechnical studies to evaluate the project's exposure to excavation of ledge on the final site. The amendment also includes some funding for traffic studies and other environmental studies for the site. This additional work will allow the town to secure more accurate pricing for the construction estimate for the proposed new school.

Ms. McNerney inquired regarding the balance remaining from the original appropriation for this project. Mr. Fitzgerald confirmed that nearly all of the \$750,000 originally appropriated has been spent.

Mary Ellen Fletcher asked for clarification on what the \$750,000 original appropriation has achieved relative to the project's objectives and the MSBA's requirements for this project. Peter Spellios spoke briefly to the significance of the need for the additional work now that the final location for the school has been selected.

Ms. McNerney asked whether the MSBA would be reimbursing any of the additional \$165,000 being proposed for the study. Town Administrator Sean Fitzgerald confirmed that some of the expenses may be reimbursable, however at this time the exact reimbursement rate is unknown.

On **MOTION** (Cinder McNerney) and **SECONDED** (Gail Rosenberg) it was **VOTED** by **ROLL CALL** to **RECOMMEND FAVORABLE ACTION** on Article 3; a \$165,000 appropriation increase to the Hadley Feasibility Study capital project, to be reduced by any available funds including MSBA reimbursement. **ROLL CALL:** Cinder McNerney (YES) Gail Rosenberg (YES) Eric Hartmann (YES) Matthew Kirschner (YES) Mary Ellen Fletcher (YES) Jill Sullivan (YES) Timothy Dorsey (YES)

Update on CIC from Liaison

- CIC has received appx. 27 requests; Police (2), Facilities (13), Fire (4), DPW (6), Town Administrator (1), Community Development (2), School (2)
- CIC has received all the information on these projects and is beginning their review
- Next meeting is February 23rd

Update on Contracts

Town Administrator Sean Fitzgerald acknowledged the importance that the committee is informed about employment contracts and their financial impacts, however, was not able to provide comments on specific contracts that are still under negotiation and have not been approved by the Select Board. He confirmed that the two contracts currently under negotiation are for the Fire Chief and the Town Accountant.

Old and New Business

Mary Ellen Fletcher inquired about the timeline for the review of the School Committee's budget. Chairperson Dorsey commented that he is expecting the school business administrator to attend a finance committee meeting sometime in March to deliver responses to the committee's written questions regarding the school committee' budget for FY 2022.

On **MOTION** (Jill Sullivan) and **SECONDED** (Gail Rosenberg) the meeting was **ADJOURNED** at **9:08 PM**.

True Attest,

Patrick Luddy

Patrick Luddy, Assistant Town Accountant

Minutes APPROVED by vote of the Finance Committee 3/29/2021