



Town of Medway

FINANCE COMMITTEE

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Wednesday, March 17, 2021 – 7:00 PM
Sanford Hall, Town Hall
155 Village Street

Present in person: Todd Alessandri, Chair; Frank Rossi, Vice Chair.

Participating Remotely: Ellen Hillery, Clerk; Brian Cowan; Will Lane; Sue Segarra; Jim Sullivan.

Absent: Jeff O’Neill; Michael Schrader.

Staff in person: Carol Pratt, Finance Director; David D’Amico, Director, Department of Public Works; Jeffrey Lynch, Fire Chief; Lt. William Kingsbury, Police Operations; Peter Pelletier, Deputy Director, Department of Public Works.

Staff Participating Remotely: Michael Boynton, Town Manager; Michael Fasolino, Deputy Fire Chief.

Call to Order

At 7:02 PM Chairman Alessandri called the meeting to order, noting that two members were present in the meeting room, and five members were participating remotely via teleconferencing. He shared the items on tonight’s agenda. All votes will be by roll call as is customary with remote participation.

Review of FY22 Department Budgets – Police, Fire and Department of Public Works

For these discussions, the committee utilized sections of the FY22 Budget Books.

Fire Department

Present: Jeffrey Lynch, Fire Chief; Michael Boynton, Town Manager.

Chief Lynch noted that some line items decreased from last year, noting that two positions will be added later this coming year. Those positions had been proposed before, but they were postponed. Responding to a question from Chairman Alessandri, he stated that grant monies were used to fund some salary items, but those funds are coming to an end. Mr. Boynton briefly reviewed the history of these positions, noting that they were considered two at a time to lessen the salary burden. Brief discussion followed.

Chief Lynch briefly reviewed the number of calls received by the Department. He noted that they expect calls to increase once the assisted living facility is open though it will not be full right away. He anticipates that Fire Department staff will be slowly increased during the time it takes for the facility to be completely full with residents.

Ms. Segarra asked if the Salmon assisted-living facility can be adequately covered with existing staff. Chief Lynch responded that the facility is on track with an expected opening in June, adding that he believes they can cover it for the first few months while the department gets more fully staffed. Mr. Boynton confirmed that the facility will begin populating in late spring or early summer. Brief discussion followed.

At this time, Chief Lynch provided a brief explanation of training exercises. If they have a structure to burn, they will, otherwise will use training dummies and other equipment in exercises. Mr. Rossi spoke briefly about his experience in live fire training.

Responding to a question from Chairman Alessandri, Chief Lynch stated that the stipend is for performance of extra duties such as IT, processing equipment orders, truck maintenance, and similar things. It was noted that police/fire communications would come under the Police Department.

Mr. Boynton emphasized that it has been a stressful and challenging year. The public safety staff have been incredible in the work that they have done in maintaining support within the community, especially those tasks directly related to COVID-19.

Discussion concluded at 7:18 PM; Chief Lynch exited the meeting.

Police Department Operations

Present: Lt. William Kingsbury., Police Operations

Lt. Kingsbury reported there were no proposed changes in personnel, noting that an officer will be retiring. Last year we lost some older officers and gained young ones. Some officers are coming in with more education. Due to retirement, there will be a related reduction in longevity payments. There will be some increases in leases in things such as investigative equipment, and in assessment centers for specific positions. An assessment center is a testing center utilized in promotions or new hires; use of these centers has occurred in Medway since 2016. He pointed out that written tests are no longer being used. Brief discussion followed.

Mr. Rossi noted that the proposed budget is in line with previous years. Brief discussion followed on vehicles which Lt. Kingsbury reported that the department is utilizing an older Crown Victoria to transport prisoners. He pointed out that this is an infrequent use, keeping the front line vehicles for regular duty that would not require regular sanitizing.

Discussion concluded at 7:26 PM; Lt. Kingsbury exited the meeting.

Department of Public Works

Present: David D'Amico, Director, DPW; Peter Pelletier, Deputy Director, DPW.

Mr. Pelletier reported that their budget is seeking an increase in overtime as well as several stipends for obtaining licenses and similar tasks. He noted that there may be a need to lease some space for various

purposes as well as absorbing a cemetery that would be under the Parks Department. In the Sewer Department, they are focusing heavily on the I&I (Inflow and Infiltration) activities in order to monitor the water going into the Charles River and putting more effort into MS4 Permit requirements. The department had the benefit of an intern this year helping to identify the outfalls throughout the water system.

At this time, Mr. Boynton reported that the position of Deputy Director was posted this week. Mr. D'Amico will be retiring at the end of the fiscal year, and Mr. Pelletier is moving up to Director. The Snow and Ice Account is in decent shape, though there may be a few more inches of snow before it's all over. Right now the account is \$18,000 in deficit. Using a budget figure of \$475,000 each year seems to work, with the understanding that there could be a small deficit if there is not significant snowfall. He spoke briefly about the private cemetery that may be coming to the jurisdiction of the Town as the cemetery owners are unable to secure services to maintain it privately. Mr. Boynton spoke briefly about efforts to control electricity costs and getting solar panels online. Brief discussion followed.

Ms. Hillery asked if the new DPW facility is equipped with air conditioning. Mr. Boynton responded that the entire building is being heated including the garage bays. For the summer, the garage bays will not be cooled, only the office space and remainder of the building.

Mr. Rossi asked about if the Town was keeping up with the Streets and Sidewalks Plan. Mr. Pelletier responded that the department is tracking well on that plan. The effort spent on the Brentwood sewer project did impact some of those roadways. Overall good progress is being made. Mr. Boynton noted that adding new sidewalks can take more time to complete due to funding. He pointed out that all the streets in the Brentwood area were dug up in some fashion so will have to assess what is necessary there. He spoke briefly about areas for new sidewalks. It was noted that notice had been received on the award of grant money for a new culvert. Brief discussion followed.

Responding to a question from Mr. Rossi about the splash pad at Choate Park, Mr. Boynton stated that it will stay closed until the Town receives word that it be opened. He theorized that opening it may be in conjunction with summer camps. It was noted that this function falls under the Board of Health.

At this time, Chairman Alessandri noted that the I&I cameras were demonstrated at the Select Board meeting on Monday; interesting to see them in action. He asked about funds for fields and money coming out of stabilization funds. Mr. Boynton responded that there will not be revenue to put into stabilization fund; however, there is a federal program providing aid to communities for loss of revenue. The biggest hits have been the Thayer House (closed for a year) and loss of revenue from meals tax. Now that the snow is almost gone, we may be able to begin using the fields. Overall, without revenue, there will likely be no contribution to the stabilization fund until next year.

Regarding solid waste fees, Mr. D'Amico reported there will be no increase in fees to residents; however, the disposal costs have gone up for both recycling and trash. Because residents are home more due to the pandemic, they are throwing more things away.

Mr. Pelletier reported there will be an inspection on the Lovering tank next year. Inspections are not annual. It was theorized that the cost to maintain would be closer to that of rebuilding a tank due to age.

Discussion concluded at 7:52 PM; Mr. D'Amico and Mr. Pelletier exited the meeting.

Initial Review of Annual Town Meeting & Special Town Meeting Warrant Articles

The committee reviewed both Warrants. A list is provided here; there may or may not have been discussion.

Present: Michael Boynton, Town Manager; Carol Pratt, Finance Director.

Special Town Meeting

Article 1: Free Cash Transfer: Snow and Ice Deficit – This will be a TBD as there may be plowable snow on Thursday and Friday. It is currently \$18,000 which would come from free cash. Brief discussion followed on supplies, i.e., salt shed.

Article 2: Prior Year Bills – One from the Clerk’s office and all others related to Condon Hardware. The store is closing and we discovered there were invoices that had not been paid.

Article 3: Transfer from Overlay to Capital Stabilization – These funds are no longer necessary as the current case has been resolved.

Article 4: Free Cash Transfer to Capital Stabilization – This will bring that balance over \$3 million.

Article 5: Free Cash Transfer to General Stabilization

Article 6: Adjustment: Community Preservation Fund Statutory Set-Aside -- Annual housekeeping article for Community Preservation Fund.

Article 7: Repurpose Monetary Article—Fire Dept. Items, School Paving Projects – Original funds from FEMA were not used at Fire Station #1 and the Chief was able to get authorization to use the funds for a different purpose.

Article 8: Repurpose Monetary Articles – Transfer to Capital Stabilization – repurposing funds for specific projects and those funds are no longer needed. Otherwise, those funds will close to free cash.

Annual Town Meeting

Article 1: Debt Stabilization Fund Transfer – An annual item which prevents costs from being passed to taxpayers. Ms. Pratt reported that the amount is getting smaller each year, and it should go away in a couple of years.

Article 2: Transfer from Ambulance Receipts to General Fund – Our fees will be over \$740,000, and we like to leave \$100,00 in the Ambulance Receipts. It was noted that it is not a revolving account, but a revenue fund. The only way to move funds out is by Town Meeting vote. Ambulance purchase will come out of this fund which will also require a Town Meeting article. Brief discussion followed.

Article 3: Appropriation: FY22 Operating Budget

Article 4: Appropriation: FY22 Water Enterprise Fund – It was noted there will be a large project in FY23

Article 5: Appropriation: FY22 Sewer Enterprise Fund

Article 6: Appropriation: FY22 Solid Waste Enterprise Fund

Article 7: Free Cash Appropriation: Capital and Other Items – It is unlikely there will be last minute changes.

Article 8: Free cash Transfer to Street Acceptance Account -- There are over 20 subdivisions whose roadways have not been accepted, and these funds will be used to augment the street acceptance account.

Article 9: Borrowing: Parks Projects -- Increased to \$1,150,000. The high school tennis court was added. The Community Preservation Committee is meeting at the same time the Select Board is meeting, and if CPC votes, we will be able to update the Warrant. Brief discussion followed.

Article 10: Raise & Appropriate: Roads & Sidewalks -- \$800,000 to augment free cash and Chapter 90 monies for this work. There is also approximately \$800,000 available in the Brentwood project.

Article 11: Free Cash Transfer: Town and Building Repair and Maintenance -- The facilities study was done to identify immediate needs. Staff will be prioritizing projects and the cost for those total around \$394,000. Some were included on the CIPC list, but we discourage departments from submitting these kinds of needs to be funded by free cash; this recommendation came from the Capital Improvement Planning Committee. It was noted that some of these expenses may be eligible for reimbursement by federal funding.

Article 12: Borrowing: Urban Renewal Plan Implementation -- Increased amount for the gathering of parcels at the Oak Grove development.

Article 13: Water Retained Earnings Transfer: Purchase Vehicle and Provide Grant Funds -- This is for the purchase of a small pickup truck and also to provide matching funds for an asset management grant (Lovering Street Tank).

Article 14: Appropriation: General Stabilization -- This is the annual transfer. We are maintaining our AAA bond rating.

Article 15: Appropriation: OPEB Trust.

Article 16: Appropriation: Medway Day.

Article 17: Appropriation: Community Preservation Committee -- This is the annual CPC budget. Ms. Pratt noted these figures may change as a result of the CPC meeting on April 5.

Article 18: Revolving Funds – Authorize FY22 Spending Limits

Article 19: Acquire Real Property – Evergreen Cemetery -- This is the private cemetery that may be coming to the Town. It is a friendly eminent domain taking. Brief discussion followed.

Article 20: Amend General Bylaws – Stormwater

Articles 21 – 32 are Planning and Zoning Articles and will be reviewed on March 24.

Article 33: Accept Access Easement to Conservation Restriction Parcel -- Timber Crest Estates -- this is to accept a perpetual easement.

Article 34: Charter Amendment – Selectmen to Select Board -- This was approved a few weeks ago, and this is to amend the Town Charter to reflect change from Board of Selectmen to Select Board. Brief discussion followed.

Upcoming Meetings

It was noted that Ms. Susy Affleck-Childs, Planning and Economic Development Coordinator, will speak to the Zoning and Planning Articles on March 24. Rich Boucher will be coming in for Information Services the same evening. Ms. Pratt, Finance Director, will also be reviewing debt service.

At this time, Chairman Alessandri reported that he will have to be out of town on April 7, asking if there is any difficulty in pushing the public hearing to April 14. He clarified that he can attend electronically, but would prefer to be here in person. Reports are due April 12. After polling the members present, he noted he will confirm with the Assistant Town Manager whether the hearing can be changed to April 14. It has not yet been advertised.

Discussion concluded at 8:51 PM.

Miscellaneous

Regarding a Finance Committee representative to Master Plan Committee, Chairman Alessandri reminded members that Ms. Hillery and Mr. Sullivan had initially expressed interest. Is anyone interested in serving on this? Mr. Sullivan noted that he has a lot of work commitments and did not think he could take it on. He deferred to Ms. Hillery who agreed to serve on the committee.

In lieu of a Chairman's Report, Chairman Alessandri encouraged members to review the video of the Select Board meeting on Monday, March 15 for the discussion on the battery facility and also the work by the Department of Public Works on water issues.

There were no other reports.

Other Business:

For the Subcommittee Reports, Mr. Rossi suggested that review of meeting minutes for respective groups might provide details. Chairman Alessandri asked that the reports be submitted ahead of the April 12 deadline if possible so there is no delay in getting the final draft to the printer.

Review/Approval of Meeting Minutes

The committee reviewed draft minutes from March 10, 2021.

Mr. Rossi made a motion to approve the minutes of March 10, 2021 as amended; Ms. Segarra seconded. No discussion. ROLL CALL VOTE: 7-0-0 (Alessandri, aye; Cowan, aye; Hillery, aye; Lane, aye; Rossi, aye; Segarra, aye; Sullivan, aye).

Adjourn

At 9:06 PM Mr. Rossi made a motion to adjourn; Mr. Sullivan seconded. No discussion. ROLL CALL VOTE: 7-0-0 (Alessandri, aye; Cowan, aye; Hillery, aye; Lane, aye; Rossi, aye; Segarra, aye; Sullivan, aye).

*Respectfully submitted,
Jeanette Galliard*