

Finance Committee Meeting Minutes Monday September 11, 2023

Finance Committee

12 in attendance

Dennis Crowley (Chair)	Josette Burke
Douglas Shea (Vice Chair)	Jean Kenney
Mark Trudell	Scott Wassel
Mark Sullivan	Lawrence Pitman
Kathleen Foley Greulich	Steve Hendricks
Lisa Van der Linden	
Audrey Grace	

Absent: Susan Lawson

Additional attendees:

Jim Johnson, Patrick Shield, Jodi Cuneo, Ed Forsberg – Capital Budget Committee Chairperson

Meeting minutes of recorded meetings include time stamps from the video for viewing actual content.

The video can be found at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4snKcW-QJuc&list=WL&index=4>

Approval of minutes is based on the printed word and not the video

The meeting was called to order by Dennis Crowley at 7:00pm, and requested a moment of silence in honor of September 11th, 2001.

Ed Forsberg, Chairperson of the Capital Budget Committee, provided the report on the 2023 Fall Town Meeting Capital Requests.

Article 6

Ed Forsberg explained that the CBC voted in favor of this Article 7-0-0.

Jean Kenney asked if the Cable Fund is Walpole Media Corporation, and Jim Johnson explained yes, but that it is limited to what that money can be spent on.

Josette Burke asked regarding building maintenance, and wanted to know what the temperature of the schools were on the unseasonably hot days the week prior, and Jim Johnson said that the History wing at the High School was 82-84 degrees. Josette Burke then asked if any of this money would go to improving that. Jim Johnson explained that it is possible, but the numbers need to be figured with the OPM and the architects.

Ed Forsberg explained that the CBC voted favorably for \$600,000, and the schools were awarded a \$400,000 grant toward the project.

Mark Trudell asked about the systems in use at the High School, and Jim Johnson explained that there are multiple systems in use, some old and some newer.

Mark Sullivan asked if there is any historic data on the temperatures through the schools. Mike Friscia explained that they haven't looked at data, but know that it's an issue, so they need to replace equipment.

Doug Shea asked about the bridge for crossing the overflow area at Lorusso field, and Ed Forsberg explained that the bridge is a pre-constructed bridge that would cross over a rip rap infiltration basin, and allow connectivity to the trails.

Doug Shea feels that the bridge is not a vital cost expense, compared to the air conditioning at the schools. He also struggles with the concrete games for downtown recreation.

Mark Trudell asked about the backstop replacement at Bird, and Ed Forsberg explained that is a safety issue that needs to be repaired.

Mark Trudell asked about the shade structure at the playground, and Ed Forsberg explained that they will be adding two additional shade structures.

Josette Burke asked about the infield diamond renovations, and where they are located, and Ed Forsberg explained that they will be done at all the fields.

Mark Sullivan asked if there is an approved concept for the pools, and Ed Forsberg differed to Patrick Shield. Patrick Shield explained that they are working on concepts.

Audrey Grace asked if there was any discussion on planting trees rather than a shade structure, and Ed Forsberg explained that it was discussed but the trees would take too long to provide shade.

Motion by Doug Shea in favor of \$2,161,672 for Article 6, Seconded by Josette Burke. Motion passed 7-4-1. (Scott Wassel, Larry Pitman, Kathleen Foley Greulich, Audrey Grace were opposed, Dennis Crowley Abstained).

Article 7

Ed Forsberg explained that CBC voted favorably 7-0-0 for the amount of \$1,588,000. Free cash is \$1,473,000. Overlay is \$30,000. Ambulance Fund is \$85,000.

Doug Shea asked about the Modular Classrooms at Feeney. Mike Friscia explained that the request is based on growing need for preschool, and they continue to approach the threshold.

Jim Johnson explained that the preschool is essentially self-sustaining because of state funding and fees from the residents who participate, but wants members to consider the long term, and that there may be a need to fund on a greater basis in the future.

Josette Burke asked how the Town potentially absorbs 50-100 more children considering the ongoing migrant situation. Bridget Gough explained that there are so many unknowns, but she continues to have conversations with other towns to try to plan accordingly. They are trying to consider all the elements, including transportation, resources, support professionals and more.

Jean Kenney asked about the 1999 Engine Replacement, and if there is a plan for future replacement.

Jim Johnson explained that the Town just received two new engines this past month.

Larry Pitman asked how the trucks were paid for, and Jim Johnson explained that they were paid for in cash.

Mark Trudell asked about the quantity of message boards owned by the Highway, and Ed Forsberg explained that there are 3 for the town, and they would be shared between departments as needed.

Josette Burke asked about portable radios, how many are expected, and if there are additional parts of equipment, and Ed Forsberg explained that there will be 3 new mobile radios for vehicles, and 4 new radios including harnesses for some new staff.

Audrey Grace asked what year motorcycle is being replaced, and Ed Forsberg replied that it is a 2019.

Josette Burke asked the mileage, and it is just over 22,000 miles. She followed up asking if this would be used for trade in purchasing the new motorcycle, and they replied yes.

Motion by Larry Pitman \$1,588,000, with funding sources amended, Seconded by Doug Shea. Motion denied 2-11-0.

Motion by Kathleen Foley Greulich to accept Article 7 for the amount of \$1,588,000, Seconded by Scott Wassel. Motion passed 10-2-0.

Article 8

Ed Forsberg explained that favorable action was voted 6-0-0 in the amount of \$2,008,049. \$1,215,000 from Free Cash, \$6,233 from Ride Share Reimbursements, and \$786,816 from Chapter 90.

Josette Burke asked for clarification on Ride Share Reimbursement, and Ed Forsberg explained that it is the Town's share of the money that is collected by ride-share services. Patrick Shield explained that this money goes to the fund that helps pay for resurfacing the roads.

Mark Sullivan asked if any of the funds were used on Common Street, and Rick Mattson explained that that those particular improvements were from the Complete Streets Grants Program.

Josette Burke asked about the ride share reimbursement, and if these funds are dedicated to a particular account, or if it could be used elsewhere. Jodi Cuneo explained that it needs to be used to roads and road improvements.

Motion by Mark Trudell for favorable action on Article 8, seconded by Doug Shea. Motion passes 12-0-0.

Article 9

Ed Forsberg explained that CBC voted in favor 6-0-0 for \$1,245,000 from Water retained earnings.

Larry asked what the current balance of that account is, and Patrick Shield replied \$3,130,161.

Josette Burke asked about Phase 3 upgrades, and how many additional phases remain, and Ed Forsberg explained that there is one more, and the next phase is fairly inexpensive.

Motion by Doug Shea for favorable action on Article 9 in the amount of \$1,245,000, seconded by Mark Trudell. Motion Passes 12-0-0

Article 10

Ed Forsberg explained that CBC voted favorable 6-0-0 in the amount of \$654,000 from Sewer Retained Earnings.

Audrey Grace asked the year for the Ford F550 that is being replaced, and Ed Forsberg replied it has 142,000 miles, and it is a 2006.

Josette Burke asked about the High Oaks Sewer Rehabilitation, and Ed Forsberg explained that they will be replacing the pump and controls, similar to the work done at Eldor Drive and Morningside Drive.

Josette Burke asked the lifespan on the equipment, and Rick Mattson explained that it is typically warranted for 1 year.

Motion by Mark Sullivan for favorable action on Article 10 in the amount of \$654,000 from Sewer Retained Earnings, Seconded by Doug Shea. Motion Passes 12-0-0.

Jim Johnson explained that he has drafted motions for the upcoming meeting, so that everyone could have an opportunity to review them and understand what will happen.

He also indicated that the only outstanding items are the two zoning articles.

Dennis Crowley asked if the DPW contract has been finalized, and Jim Johnson explained that it has not.

Mark Sullivan asked if Walpole has a check and balance system for ensuring no overspending can occur and balances are kept, and Jodi Cuneo explained that yes, there is a weekly report that is reviewed.

Adjournment

Motion by Mark Trudell and seconded by Josette Burke to adjourn.

The motion passed 12-0-0.

The Finance Committee adjourned.