

FINANCE COMMITTEE

MINUTES

October 17, 2019

Regular meeting of the Finance Committee was held on Thursday, October 17, 2019 at 7:00 p.m. in the South Street Center (Senior Center) 60 South Street: with the following members present: M. Trudell, A. Flowers, J. Burke, M. Ahigian, A. Hamilton, S. Lawson, S. Ahern, B. Bain, D. Shea, L. Van der Linden, D. Crowley, J. Fisher, K. Greulich, L. Romanowiz and 7:45 p.m. M. Sullivan. Also in attendance were Town Administrator J. Johnson, Assistant Town Administrator P. Shield, Finance Director M. Thompson, T. Accountant J. Cuneo, department heads, and members of the general public.

7:00 p.m. – Quorum being present, the meeting was called to order by the Chairman M. Trudell.

October 21, 2019 Fall Annual Town Meeting

Finance Committee Public Hearing cannot be opened prior to 7:30 p.m. due to this being the advertised time.

7:45 p.m. – Committee Member M. Sullivan

Town Meeting Update

Chairman spoke to the Committee having four outstanding articles to be voted on. (Articles 12, 18, 19 and 20).

Minutes

MOTION MADE by S. Lawson, Seconded by D. Crowley to approve the October 7, 2019 Minutes as amended, Motion Approved (15-0-0) (15 voting)

Town Meeting Articles

Article 18 – Extending Town's Water Supply/Darwin Lane Purchase

Committee has three options before them (1) approve the article as it is printed in warrant, (2) No Action or (3) Refer the article back to the petitioner. Mr. Moraski, RTM Member has requested that the Sewer and Water Commissioners refer the article back to the petitioner. Sewer and Water Commissioners voted 4-0-0 to do so.

MOTION MADE by S. Lawson, Seconded by D. Crowley for Reconsideration of Article 18, Motion Approved (15-0-0) (15 voting) Unanimous

MOTION MADE by S. Lawson, Seconded by D. Crowley for Article 18 to Refer back to Petitioner, Motion Approved (15-0-0) (15 voting) Unanimous

Articles 19 and 20 will be discussed by the Committee after the public hearing.

Public Hearing

MOTION MADE by D. Crowley, Seconded by A. Flowers to open the Finance Committee Public Hearing on the October 21, 2019 Warrant at 7:30 p.m., Motion Approved (15-0-0) (15 voting) Unanimous

Chairman M. Trudell recapped the articles for the audience and opened for discussion any questions on a particular article in the October 21, 2019 Fall Town Meeting Warrant.

Article 2 – J. Moraski –Questioned the \$75,000 for debt and interest being requested. It was explained that this is additional revenue and would be put into this article rather than putting it into a budget.

Article 3 – Questions on the requested amount of \$6,638,252 being changed. It was explained that this is an updated number on the fields due to the project being put out to bid and having received firm numbers. Finance Committee voted 15-0-0

Resident J. Conroy raised the issue of the location of the ball fields. She spoke to when the Override for the high school was passed, it was discussed that a campus atmosphere could potentially be built with use of areas of the town forest with the transfer of land at the present high school. She feels the use of the present high school would be a more effective project and the plans that were brought forward in 2001 would be a viable option. She would like to see this pursued.

Chairman Trudell explained that under Article 5, there was money being appropriated for a high school evaluation/study.

Articles 4 and 5 – Capital expenditures for buildings and equipment. Questions on the amount of \$50,000 being requested for window replacement, \$25,000 being recommended. This is only the first step in window replacement throughout the Town.

Articles 6 and 7 – Street, sidewalk and drainage articles.

Article 8 – Stabilization. \$300,000 being requested. Town appropriates money each year into the Stabilization Fund.

Article 9 – OPEB Funds - \$292,000 to supplement the OPEB Fund.

Article 10 –\$592,847 – Medicaid reimbursements and parking fee receipts received from students. These monies are posted to Free Cash and each year and are then appropriated out of Free Cash back to the School Budget

Article 11 – Board of Assessors – All business have to be reviewed on site and there is a need to have an outside consulting firm review the business's personal property. Town will be reviewing a business's real estate in two years.

Article 12 - Held - Committee to discuss after the public hearing.

Article 13 –Sewer and Water MWRA Grant – Town receives 75% reimbursement and is a 0 interest loan from the State. Due to technical issues on warrant, petitioner has to come up with different language. Finance Committee voted Refer Back to Petitioner. This will be taken up in the Spring Town Meeting.

Article 14 – 15, Inclusionary Zoning and Housing Trust –

J. Moraski would like to see these two articles be Remanded Back to Committee and be taken up in the Spring. He had issues with some of the language in the Trust and certain sections. He feels that there should be representation from all the precincts and felt there should be oversight by the Board of Selectmen. He will work with the Housing Partnership Committee on his recommendations.

Article 16 –Hancock Court Street Acceptance – No comments.

Article 17 – MGL provides Veterans accelerated eligibility for the property tax exemption

Article 18 – Referred back to Petitioner, work more closely with petitioner and Town Counsel, make it more clearer.

Article 19 – 20, Town Charter/By-law Amendments/Gender Language.

J. Moraski spoke against this article. He would like to see the Town do a review of the entire Town Charter. These articles are very controversial and are important to a lot of people. He spoke to being in favor of the spirit of the articles. He would like to see the new language presented by Town Counsel.

MOTION MADE by J. Burke, Seconded by S. Lawson to close the public hearing at 8:00 p.m. Motion Passed (15-0-0) (15 voting) Unanimous

Discussion resumed and voting on the balance of articles on the 10/21/2019 FATM Warrant

Article 12 – Purchase of Property on Darwin Lane.

MOTION MADE by S. Lawson, Seconded by D. Crowley to Reconsider Article 12, Motion Passed (15-0-0) (15 voting) Unanimous

Sewer and Water Commissioners voted 3-1-0 for No Action on this article.

MOTION MADE by S. Lawson, Seconded by D. Crowley for No Action on Article 17, Motion Passed (15-0-0) (15 voting) Unanimous

Articles 19, 20 – Gendered Language Articles

Finance Committee had previously voted on these articles with the petitioner's language. Town Counsel has reviewed the articles and had some issues with the wording and had made recommendations. These changes will require a bill to be filed before the legislature. The Town's delegation has been proactive on this. A number of communities have already passed similar legislation. Middle School Student I. Taylor spoke strongly in favor of this article. It was noted by some of the Finance Committee Members that her comments had an impact on their vote.

MOTION MADE by S. Lawson, Seconded by A. Flowers for Reconsideration of Article 19, Motion Passed (15-0-0) (15 voting) Unanimous

MOTION MADE by S. Lawson, Seconded by A. Flowers for Favorable Action on Article 19 with submitted language from Town Counsel on October 17, 2019, Motion Passed (15-0-0) (15 voting) (Unanimous)

Article 20 – MOTION MADE by S. Lawson, Seconded by A. Flowers for Reconsideration of Article 20, Motion Passed (15-0-0) (15 voting) Unanimous

MOTION MADE by S. Lawson, Seconded by A. Flowers for Favorable Action on Article 20 on the submitted language from Town Counsel on October 17, 2019, Motion Passed (15-0-0) (15 voting) Unanimous

Adjourn:

MOTION MADE by A. Flowers, Seconded by S. Lawson to adjourn the meeting at 8:17 p.m., Motion Passed (15-0-0) (15 voting) Unanimous

Respectfully submitted,

Clare P. Abril
Clerk