

FINANCE COMMITTEE

MINUTES

February 6, 2020

Regular meeting of the Finance Committee was held on Thursday, February 6, 2020 at 7:00 p.m. in Room #112, Town Hall with the following members present: M. Trudell, J. Burke, J. Fisher, D. Crowley, J. Fisher, A. Flowers, K. Greulich, A. Hamilton, S. Lawson, D. Shea, M. Sullivan and L. Van der Linden, 8:15 S. Ahern. Members absent were: M. Ahigian, B. Bain, and L. Romanowiz. Also present was Town Administrator J. Johnson, Assistant Town Administrator P. Shield, Finance Director M. Thompson, Town Accountant J. Cuneo and, Assistant Collector/Treasurer L. Sinkus. Also present was various department heads.

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

May 4, 2020 Spring Annual Town Meeting

Town Administrator J. Johnson reviewed and provided an overview of the Culture and Recreation, Health and Human Services and Public Safety Budgets with department heads present to answer any questions from the Committee.

Board of Health – M. Ranieri, Health Director was introduced. Hours have increased for the Public Health Nurse. Town previously had a contract with VNA and hours were split between Town and VNA. This did not work out. Position will now handle the flu clinics. Health Director will be applying for a Grant for mental health issues. (170 cases last year) New employees will be required for certain licenses under Training and Development.

Council on Aging — K. McManama, Director – Under salaries there is an increase in hours for the van drivers and staffing hours for the building. COA activity has increased since the building opened with a total increase of 25 visitors/day in 2016 to 142/day in 2019. Amount of seniors using the facility has gone from 813 to 2156. Majority of the seniors drive themselves. Some programs have maxed out with participation.

MOTION MADE by S. Lawson, Seconded by D. Crowley for Favorable Action on the Health and Human Services Budget in the amount of \$811,636, Motion Passed (10-0-1) (J. Fisher abstained) (11 voting)

Walpole Public Library - S. Genovese, Library Director and D. McElhinney, Library Trustee, There is a new position of Program Director for children's programs (16 hours per week) They hope to develop additional programs with input from community and staff. Library has a Parents Advisory Group which is very active. Books are purchased based on trends and what appeals to the majority of the people.

8:15 p.m. – Committee Member S. Ahern

Inspectional Services – M. Yanovitch, Building Commissioner. Department has to follow local, state and national building codes and local zoning regulations. Inspections are based on anything that is required by law. Total fees received by the department last year was approximately 1.8 million.

MOTION MADE by D. Crowley, Seconded by S. Lawson for Favorable Action on the Inspectional Services Budget in the amount of \$486,945, Motion Passed (12-0-0) (12 voting)

Animal Control – This position is now under the control of the Police Department and department has a working relationship with Animal Control Officer and is going well

Trails Committee - Budget has been increased by the Town Administrator from \$650 to \$1750 for expenses. It has come to the attention that the volunteers have been using their own money and not seeking reimbursement to purchase supplies.

Police – Police Chief J. Carmichael and Deputy Chief R. Kelleher Chief spoke to creating a contingency plan due to the anticipated growth in the town and what priorities are going to be. Main issue is the increase of staff needed as the Town grows. Three new positions have been added. This will increase the staff officers from 44 to 47. One of the positions is for an additional Lieutenant. Town is dealing with many different issues and the role of police has changed with an increase in domestic violence and mental health issues. Town has a lot of facilities that they respond to every day. Under Training and Development, department follows MGL and department policy. Town Administrator has a policy in place for all employees. Chief would like to increase minimal manning. He anticipates there will be a couple of retirements this year. Department is basically young officers. Role of police is changing and they deal with more social issues. They had 21,000 incidents that they had to respond to along with 59 violent crimes. Replacement of vehicles is taken up in the Fall under Capital Budget. Chief would like to have an additional motorcycle. Traffic in Town is growing with infrastructures increasing. Department is unsure of how it is going to be addressed and have applied for a transportation bond bill for a study. Town Administrator would also like to set aside monies to deal with it.

MOTION MADE by D. Crowley, Seconded by S. Lawson for Favorable Action on the Police Budget in the amount of \$6,079,384, Motion passed (11-0-0) (11 voting)

Fire – Fire Chief T. Bailey and Deputy Fire Chief P. Barry – Budget increased by \$207,000 or 4.76%. Budget recommendation adds two new firefighter positions. These positions will allow the department to staff three of the firefighting groups to ten firefighters and one group to nine firefighters. Town Administrator is hoping (if budget allows) to add one more firefighter into the FY21 budget. (Allowing all four groups to staff to ten firefighters) Chief Bailey spoke to staffing in his department an issue, they are running two departments (EMS and Fire). Call volume has increased 26%. He would like to see 16 firefighters on per shift, allowing for two engines, tower and ambulance. They need the manpower. He would like to see an additional engine in the future. Department dealt with 14 major issues last year. Ambulance calls have increased. He expressed concerns with the reconstruction of Rte. 1A. During the rush hour they going to have two lanes, other than one. Only two roads provide for a detour. Construction is going to be a problem with all the building. Community is changing. Town has a railway, chemical plant, prison, Rte. 95, etc. Town will be applying for a three year Grant that will fund 75% of

the cost of adding additional firefighters. Chief Bailey spoke to the department doing training every day and has a training office. Opening the East Walpole Station as a satellite presents its own set of issues. Increase in firefighters doesn't necessarily save in overtime. Town needs to be proactive as it is facing huge growth.

Town Administrator spoke to having a workshop with the Selectmen and Finance Committee.

Fire Budget Held

Weights & Measures

MOTION MADE by D. Crowley, Seconded by S. Lawson for Favorable Action on the Weights & Measures Budget in the amount of \$5,000, Motion Passed (12-0-0) (12 voting) Unanimous

Emergency Management

MOTION MADE by D. Crowley, Seconded by S. Lawson for Favorable Action on the Emergency Management Budget in the amount of \$34,098, Motion Passed (12-0-0) (12 voting) Unanimous

Animal Control

MOTION MADE by D. Crowley, Seconded by S. Lawson for Favorable Action on the Animal Control Budget in the amount of \$68,657, Motion Passed (12-0-0) (12 voting)

Schedule

School Budget is scheduled for discussion on Monday, February 10. It is anticipated that they will need two additional meetings with the Finance Committee.

Union Contracts are going well and will need to be scheduled. Town Administrator spoke to having a deadline of April 13, 2020 to settle the contracts.

Committee could possibly do a preliminary discussion of the zoning articles prior to the Planning Board Public Hearings.

An updated schedule will be discussed further at the February 10, 2020 meeting. Committee needs to schedule the Housing Partnership, Planning Board articles and private petitions (Articles 24 and 25)

Adjourn:

MOTION MADE by D. Crowley, Seconded by S. Lawson to adjourn at 9:10 p.m. (12-0-0) (12 Voting) Unanimous

Respectfully submitted,

Clare P. Abril, Clerk.