

## **FINANCE COMMITTEE**

### **Minutes**

**March 8, 2018**

Regular meeting of the Finance Committee was held on Thursday, March 8, 2018 at 7:00 p.m. in Room #112, Town Hall with the following members present: P. Stasiukevicius, M. Trudell, J. Burke, S. Lawson, A. Hamilton, J. Leith, L. Huempfer, R. Nottebart, M. Clow, T. Bowen. Members absent were R. Mariani, J. Vallancourt, P. Hinton, A. Flowers and E. Barmakian. Also in attendance was Town Administrator, J. Johnson, Town Accountant J. Cuneo, Assistant Town Administrator P. Shield, and Fire Chief T. Bailey

7:10 p.m.- Quorum being present, the meeting was called to order by the Chairman P. Stasiukevicius.

7:10 – called to order.

#### **Chairman's Comments**

None

#### **May 7, Spring Annual Town Meeting**

**Articles 7, 8, 9 and 10-** Sewer and Water Commissioners W. Abbott, T. Brown and J. Hasenjaeger and Superintendent of Water and Sewer R. Mattson.

#### **Article 7 – MWRA Connection**

\$250,000 being requested for the Sewer and Water Commissioners to enter into agreements with the MWRA and other parties necessary to facilitate a connection to the MWRA Water System. Connection fee to the MWRA would be \$4,000,000 and this would be spread over 25 years. This would have to be paid regardless of the usage. Mr. Mattson explained that as residential and economic growth continues within the Town, additional water will be required to meet the demand. Sewer and Water feel that the connection to the MWRA via Norwood is a way of meeting the demand, particularly during the summer months. Water that is supplied to us from the MWRA is exempt from the Water Management Permit. This connection would also be an insurance policy should the Town suffer a long term loss of one of the larger wells. This connection is not intended to replace Walpole's existing water supply, just as a supplement, if needed. 30% of the States communities are supplemented with MWRA water. MWRA is a wholesaler of water. The connection would be through Norwood and it is in preliminary discussions. Connection is already at the Norwood line. Entrance fee has to be negotiated. Norwood would probably like the Town to do a study for the impact on their

lines. A packet for submittal would have to be done. Town would only pay for usage after the entrance fee. It would be up to the Water Department to decide to use the water.

Committee discussed concerns with the number of apartments and buildings coming on line, and if there were any other options available for wells. Mr. Mattson spoke to the Town being limited to the withdrawal set by the DEP. Cost of new wells is expensive and part of the problem is the lawn irrigation. Town would also have difficulty getting approval from the Neponset River Water Shed Association. DEP has concerns with impact on the aquifer. There needs to be a better system for conserving water, larger developments need to become pro-active, conservation is the key. There is a need to understand the cost of the infrastructure improvements. A lot of risks involved. Engineers feel we have adequate water for the anticipated 600 apartments downtown. Mr. Mattson spoke to the Town cannot deny water. Joining the MWRA takes pressure off local services. It would be very expensive to build an additional well and problem receiving the okay.

To vote for this article would be a red flag to all the builders to expand faster than we are now, presently it is controlled to a degrees and the Boards in town should be taking a look at the expansions and developments in town. Concerns for 5 to 10 years out and what the town will look like.

Also discussed was concerns with the Quabbin going low, Walpole will be at the end of the line, Boston won't be having the problem.

Unknowns are what is Norwood going to charge Walpole. If we connect we will end up using it. Does the Town need to do this now or do we lose the opportunity. Commissioners felt we could do in the future.

Town Administrator spoke to this being an insurance policy for the Town at a cost of \$20/year per customer, can't depend on the wells. He has spoken to Town Counsel to see if we can legally deny building, Town can if there is a moratorium, but there needs to be a basis for the moratorium.

Commissioners spoke to looking into changing the rate structure, heavy users would pick up the difference. Only one community (Sharon) has a reasonable rate. It is a fairness and conservation issue.

7:35 p.m. – Committee Member L. Huempfner left to attend School Committee Meeting

**MOTION MADE** by M. Trudell, Seconded by T. Bowen to Refer Article 7 Back to Committee for further analysis, Motion Passed (9-0-0) (9 voting) Unanimous

**Article 8 – Water Enterprise Fund/Operation of Water Department** -Salary request is \$974,793, expenses in the amount of \$1,617,325, Capital in the amount of \$567,500. Mr. Mattson spoke to no additional positions or hours in the Department. Modest increase in budget and anticipated 1.5% in water rates.

**MOTION MADE** by T. Bowen, Seconded by M. Trudell for Favorable Action on Article 8, Water Enterprise Fund in the amount of \$5,060,880, Motion and Second withdrawn pending clarification on the submitted numbers

**Article 9 – Sewer Enterprise Fund/Operation of Sewer Department**

Salary request is \$309,599, Expenses \$4,170,895 , Capital Projects requested \$925,000.

Significant increase I due to the annual MWRA Assessment (\$4,025,000)

Town Administrator spoke to postponing any action on Articles 8 and 9 for clarification of the numbers as presented.

**Article 10 – Water System Improvements**

\$1,825,000 is being requested for the replacement of 6,775 l.f. of unlined 6 in. cast iron water main on Riverside Place, Eleanor Road, Clark Avenue, Charles Street, Beacon Street, Charlotte Road, Marston Road, Calvert Road and Pleasant Street (from Union Street to the Norwood line)

**MOTION MADE** by S. Lawson, Seconded by J Burke for Favorable Action on Article 10 in the amount of \$1,825,000 by Borrowing (Vote postponed due to this article not listed on the posted agenda)

**Articles 29, 30 and 31 Street Acceptances**

Town Engineer M. Walker present to discuss these articles. Planning Board has held the hearing on all these street acceptances with no issues and bonds have been released.

**Article 29 – Lavender Lane**

**MOTION MADE** by T. Bowen, Seconded by M. Trudell for Favorable Action on the street acceptance of Lavender Lane, Motion Passed (9-0-0) (9 voting) Unanimous

**Article 30 – Daylily Lane**

**MOTION MADE** by T. Bowen, Seconded by M. Trudell for Favorable Action on the street acceptance of Daylily Lane, Motion Passed (9-0-0) (9 voting) Unanimous

**Article 31 – Red Gate Road**

**MOTION MADE** by T. Bowen, Seconded by M. Trudell for Favorable Action on the street acceptance of Red Gate Road, Motion Passed (9-0-0) (9 voting) Unanimous

## **Article 22 – Industrial Road**

**Authorizes the Board of Selectmen to sell town owned property at Industrial Road (Lots 63, 65 and 66.** This article had been requested by the adjoining property owner, W. Duggan, Lot 64. Mr. Duggan has had a business located on Industrial Road since 1993. He would like to see the property cleaned up and is aware that any sale of the property would have to go through the public procurement process. He requested that the Board of Selectmen put this article on the warrant. He would build a new facility with new landscaping if successful in purchasing property. Town would have to have the properties appraised to get fair market value, then it is open bidding. First step is Town Meeting approval. Some of the property is wetlands and not all is buildable.

**MOTION MADE** by S. Lawson, Seconded by M. Trudell for Favorable Action on Article 22, Motion Passed (9-0-0) (9 voting) Unanimous

## **Articles 24, 25, 26 Tax Exemptions**

These articles were put on the warrant at the request of the Selectmen. They would like the Town Administrator to look at ways to help certain individuals with tax relief.

### **Article 24 – Tax Relief Age Reduction**

Reduces the age from 70 to 65 years old to certain qualifying seniors and provide tax relief. FY2017, 237 property tax exemptions granted by the Town total of \$255,562. (\$106,157 was reimbursed by the State) It is anticipated that passage of this article will expand the number of individuals that could qualify for this tax exemption.

**MOTION MADE** by T. Bowen, Seconded by R. Nottebart for Favorable Action on Article 24, Motion Passed (9-0-0) (9 voting) Unanimous

### **Article 25 – Blind Persons Exemption**

This article increases the current tax exemption for blind persons from \$437.50 to \$500.

**MOTION MADE** by T. Bowen, Seconded by M. Trudell for Favorable Action on Article 25, Motion Passed (9-0-0) (9 voting) Unanimous

### **Article 26 – Optional Additional Real Estate Exemption**

Increases the percentage from 50% to 75% which is a uniform percentage for all state statutory exemptions granted on the applicant's domicile. Current cost to the Town is approximately \$65,900, increase to 75% would cost approximately an additional \$33,000.

**MOTION MADE** by T. Bowen, Seconded by M. Trudell for Favorable Action on Article 26, Motion Passed (8-0-1) (S. Lawson abstained) (9 voting)

### **Article 23 – High Street land Water Tower/Cell Tower**

Further discussion held, Administrator is researching the authorization that was previously granted for the use of the cell tower. He recommended not voting at this time.

### **Article 20 – Revolving Funds**

Town Administrator spoke to three new revolving funds being added. 1) net metering, - funds will issue payment to vendors for energy-related services. 2) Veterans Agreement Fund, sharing of Veterans Agent services with the Town of Medfield. Town will take in payments from Medfield for the salaries, expenses and benefits of Veterans Agent and allow the Town to pay the Veterans Agent with the funds collected and 3) Vehicles and Replacement Program. Town to use receipts from sale of used vehicles and equipment to purchase new or used vehicles and equipment in compliance with G.L. c.30B. These funds are in addition to the previously approved Revolving Funds.

**MOTION MADE** by T. Bowen, Seconded by R. Nottebart for Favorable Action on Article 20, Revolving Funds, Motion Passed, (9-0-0) (9 voting) Unanimous

### **Assistant Town Administrator**

Town Administrator J. Johnson introduced Patrick Shield as the new Assistant Town Administrator. Mr. Shield's position was ratified by the Board of Selectmen on March 6.

### **Adjourn:**

**MOTION MADE** by S. Lawson, Seconded by M. Trudell to adjourn at 9:00 p.m., Motion Passed (9-0-0) (9 voting) Unanimous

Respectfully submitted,

Clare P. Abril  
Clerk