

WEST NEWBURY FINANCE COMMITTEE

Date, Time, Location: **Tu. March 15, 2022, 6 PM** (1910 Bldg. & remotely via Zoom)

Attendees (& initials): Gary Roberts (GR), Nathan Kelly (NK), Chris Wile (CEW), Walter Burmeister (WB), Jim Sperelakis (JS), Angus Jennings (AJ).
Absent: Chuck Wegrzyn. Guests/Participants (+ Depts): Jim Blatchford (Town Clerk), Wayne Amaral (DPW), Mike Dwyer (fire/police), Rick Parker (Select Board)

Meeting Minutes – Mar. 15, 2022

1. Call to Order: 6:00 PM
2. Public Comment: None
3. Approval of Minutes: March 1, 2022 FinCom meeting minutes. NK: motion to approve. CEW: 2nd. Approved 5-0
4. Review of Departmental Budgets & Articles:
 - a. **Town Clerk & Bd. Of Registrars:** Total combined Town Clerk+Registrars Salary & Exp. = \$167.1K, a \$5.1K incr. (+3.0%) vs FY22. NK: motion to approve. WB: 2nd. AJ explained budget reflects incr. number of elections (3) in FY 23 vs 1 in FY22. NK: asked if all poll workers are paid? Jim Blatchford responded that he wouldn't turn away a volunteer, but prefers paying poll workers, due to reliability, at a rate of \$15/hr in FY23. **Approved 5-0.**
 - b. **DPW:** Tot. Salary & Exp. = \$1,374K, a \$101K incr. (+7.9%) vs FY22. NK: motion to approve. CEW: 2nd. AJ commented that the DPW union contract expires at the start of FY23 and collective bargaining negotiations are ongoing. The budget proposal reflects a new full time DPW hire, a 'program and project manager', to support the DPW Dir., Wayne Amaral (WA). Currently, a 15 hr/wk. admin, along with WA, are the only DPW office staff. WA has addit. responsibilities, inclu. as a State of MA certified purchasing officer. The new position will assist WA in applying for potentially lucrative grants, support for specialized MS4 stormwater compliance, Town sustainability coordination, etc., and allow the DPW Dir. to focus on oversight and major initiatives. NK asked if this new hire would support grant writing across all town depts. AJ responded yes. JS asked if hiring an outside consultant vs hiring an FTE was considered. WA said yes, but this multi-faceted position requires someone with a wide bandwidth. CEW asked if health insur., retirement, etc. are inclu. in the proposed budget figure. AJ responded that both are covered, in those respective budgets. NK asked if State 'Chapter 90' funds are used for roadwork. WA responded that all paving is funded via Chapter 90 and the \$55K budgeted for streets/paving are only 'spot repairs'. GR commented that our 'snow and ice' revolving account is, in fact, not responsible budgeting procedure. **Approved 5-0.**
 - c. **DPW sponsored articles:**
 - i. **Facility Improvements:** NK commented that several, seemingly unrelated projects are batched together and it's better to separate into different articles. NK made motion to split into 4 separate articles. CEW: 2nd. **Approved 5-0.** Projects 1-4 combined are ADA accessibility improvements, roof replacement and work station relocation of water/old highway garage, Annex plumbing/sanitary line repair, combined total of

\$83.4K. WA commented that several items, inclu. the ADA and sanitary line work can be done with in-house labor, at a fraction of the cost of an outside contractor. **Articles 1-4 approved 5-0.**

- ii. **Furniture & Renovations of Selectboard Hearing Room:** \$24.2K requested, to include 35 new chair, new cabinet/closet, rewiring, etc. NK: motion to approve. WB: 2nd. CEW suggested that plenty of good, used chairs will be available, upon conclusion of the school bldg. project. **Approved 4-1**, with CEW opposed.
- iii. **Furniture Renovations in Planning Dept:** \$3.5K requested for new desk, decluttering, reception area, etc. NK: motion to approved. CEW: 2nd. **Approved 4-1**, with GR opposed.
- iv. **Creating new reception area in the Town Offices:** \$7.5K requested to cre-0ate a front lobby area, for a staff member or volunteer to greet and direct visitors, answer phones, etc. WB asked if this will involve a new hire? AJ responded no, it will likely be Annie, a 22 hr/wk. Selectboard admin. employee. NK: motion to approve. CEW: 2nd. **Disapproved 1-4**, with CEW voting in favor.
- v. **Page School brick exterior:** \$25K requested to fund audit/evaluation of brick exterior, esp. failing lentil stone work. NK: motion to approve. WB: 2nd. CEW asked, how many of these Page money request articles will we see going forward, a 'money pit'? NK added, 'a band-aid'. NK asked if we can go back to Aulson Co. (performed Page lentil survey in 2017), to get an updated repair price based on 'today's rates'. WA cautioned against that, as further deterioration may have happened in 5 yrs, and it's inadequate to do so. **Approved 5-0.**
- vi. **Page School structural study/assessment:** \$85K requested to fund a structural safety and component assessment study. NK: motion to approve. CEW: 2nd. JS asked is this a 'soup to nuts' evaluation? WA: responded yes, the last comprehensive structural eval. was performed in 2009, 13 yrs ago, and many things have changed and potentially deteriorated. A new eval. will assist Town/School officials in determining priorities. **Approved 5-0.**
- vii. **Town Hall phones:** \$65K requested to fund replacement of the phone system in town offices. NK: motion to approve. CEW: 2nd. WB asked if leasing vs. buying was considered, considering how quickly telcom equipment is obsoleted. WA responded the last upgrade was made in 2012, and the system is starting to fail, with replacement parts often difficult to find. **Approved 4-1**, with JS voting against. WB assigned narrative.
- viii. **DPW pick-up truck:** \$56K requested to fund fully electric pick-up truck purchase, replacing undersized '08 Ford Ranger. NK: motion to approve. CEW: 2nd. AJ explained this EV vehicle is in line with the Town's stated goals to transition to clean, electric vehicles, whenever feasible. NK asked why do we need the 'extended range' battery package, at an addit. \$10K, assuming the vehicle stays in town, and is charged overnight? WA explained that the truck may be used continuously for hours, and it's likely will need the addit. battery power. **Approved 4-1**, with NK voting against.

- ix. **DPW dump truck**: \$80K requested to fund a new F-550 dump truck, replacing the aging 2008 F-350 dump truck, which is losing power, due to heavy use over 14 yrs. NK: motion to approve. CEW: 2nd. **Approved 5-0.**
 - x. **Emerald Ash Borer Audit**: \$34K requested to fund a town-wide audit to inspect the effects of this destructive insect on the ash trees on Town owned land. NK: motion to approve. CEW: 2nd. NK asked if we will ever actually get rid of them? WA explained that trees can be treated at \$400-\$500 per application, and some treatment is already being applied to several ash trees in the Mill Pond/Pipestave area. CEW asked 'are we already too late'? WA responded that we will be, if nothing is done in next 1.5 - 2 yrs. **Approved 4-1**, with CEW opposed. JS assigned narrative.
- d. **Fire Department**: Tot. Salary & Exp. = \$313.4K, an \$3.5K incr. (+1.1%) vs FY22. AJ explained that the Fire Dept. wage budgeting is subject to change, based on finalization of terms for the FY23 chief and personnel. Mike Dwyer (Chief Fire Engineer & Police Sgt./SRO) has been appointed to serve as new Police Chief, upon current Chief Durand's retirement 6/30/22. NK: motion to approve. CEW: 2nd. **Approved 5-0.**
 - e. **Police Department**: Tot. Salary & Exp. = \$1,234K, an incr. of \$6.8K (+0.6%) vs FY22. NK: motion to approve. CEW: 2nd. AJ again explained that the Police Dept. wage budgeting is subject to change based on finalization of terms of FY23 Police Chief and personnel. AJ and Mr. Dwyer explained the salary structure, shift and educational incentives, stipends, and coverage by part-time officers. **Approved 5-0.**
 - f. **Public Safety Dispatch**: Tot. Salary & Exp. = \$338.4K, an incr. of \$6.9K (+2.1%) vs FY22. NK: motion to approve. CEW: 2nd. WB provided a handout and suggested that W.Nby. regionalize dispatch with local communities, at a savings to taxpayers, without a loss of service. GR: replied that the FinCom does not make policy, but instead advises based on the budgets and articles presented. CEW added that we did, at one time, operate a regional dispatch with G'land. AJ explained that his office and the Selectboard were beginning to look into various regional structures, inclu. dispatch, with the objective of saving money, w/out loss of service. **Approved 4-1**, with WB opposed.
 - g. **Animal Control**: Tot. budget = \$26.9K, an incr. of \$1K (+3.7%) vs FY22. AJ explained this W.Nby's share of an MOU/regional agreement with Newburyport. **Approved 5-0**
 - h. **Emergency Management**: Tot. budget = \$12.2K, a \$0.3 (+2.2%) incr. vs FY22. AJ explained that this \$750 budget is lowered by grants. NK: motion to approve. CEW: 2nd. **Approved 5-0.**
 - i. **Fire Chief Sponsored Articles**:
 - i. **Emergency Communication Equipment**: \$39K requested to purchase and place new public safety communication equip. on roof of Page School, an remove outdated equipment/tower from Parks & rec bldg. NK: motion to approve. JS: 2nd. **Approved 5-0.**
 - ii. **Purchase AEDs**: \$15K requested to purchase six automated external defibrillators (AEDs) for public safety responders and in town-wide

facilities. NK: motion to approve. CEW: 2nd. **Approved 5-0**. JS assigned narrative.

- iii. **Rescue Air Bag System**: \$10K requested to purchase replacement rescue air bag. MD explained that existing system is no longer compliant and needs replacement. NK: motion to approve. CEW: 2nd. **Approved 5-0** CEW assigned narrative.

- iv. **Rescue Saws & Power Tools**: \$14.5K requested to purchase two new rescue saws and power tools for fire vehicles, replacing older tools which are no longer serviceable. NK: motion to approve. CEW: 2nd. **Approved 5-0**. WB assigned narrative.

- 5. For reference, these 'sunset clauses' for aforementioned articles, were assigned during 3/22/22 FinCom mtg:

- a. Page school \$85K struct. assess: end FY24 (6/30/2024). **Approved 5-0**
- b. Page \$25K ext. brick evaluation: end FY24 (6/30/2024). **Approved 5-0**
- c. Fire Dept. \$15K AED devices: end FY24 (6/30/2024). **Approved 5-0**
- d. Fire Dept. \$10K rescue airbags: end FY23 (6/30/2023). **Approved 5-0**
- e. Fire Dept. \$14.5K rescue power tools: end FY23 (6/30/23). **Approved 5-0**
- f. Emerald Ash Borer \$34K audit: end FY23 (6/30/23). **Approved 5-0**

- 6. Adjournment: Motion to Adjourn, approved 5-0. 8:19 PM