

## WEST NEWBURY FINANCE COMMITTEE

### Meeting Minutes

Date & Time: Wednesday March 15, 2023, 6:00 PM  
Location: 1910 Building 2nd Floor Hearing Room  
Attendees: Rob Phillips (RP), Chris Wile (CW), Walter Burmeister (WB), Dan Innis (DI), Ross Capolupo (RC), Angus Jennings (AJ),  
Absent: Jim Sperelakis (JS)  
Guests: Chief Dwyer, Wendy Reed, Jennifer Walsh, Fred Chanania

### AGENDA

#### 1. Call to Order

#### 2. Public Comment.

- No public comment.

#### 3. Approval of Minutes

- Meeting of February 22, 2023
  - Motion to Approve Dan Innes, Second Chris Wile, Approve 5-0
- Meeting of March 1, 2023
  - Motion to Approve Dan Innes, Second Chris Wile, Approve 5-0
- Meeting of March 8, 2023
  - Motion to Approve Dan Innes, Second Chris Wile, Approve 5-0

#### 4. Review and Discuss Budgets and Articles for Spring Town Meeting to be held on April 24, 2023.

##### Library Operating Budget

Level staffing budget, some back and forth about rates.

COLA will be taken into account for all budgets afterwards (SB voted 3%, bottom-line impact \$20k for all budgets)

Fred Chanania Chairman of Library Trustees: They raised two employees (seniority of 9 years and 14 years) from Step 4 to Step 7 (within same grade) which is \$1.70 per hour (\$889 per person, per year). This is not in the current budget submitted.

AJ – SB had said after wage/classification study, no more raises until a uniform policy is developed.

Wendy Reed– goal of wage study consistent treatment for all employees. These 2 would have been Step 2, and they were bumped up to Step 4. They are higher paid than comparable positions at other towns.

FinCom does not feel that we have the authority or background to approve step increases in lieu of the SB / Town Manager.

Motion to Approve Budget without Step Increases CW, 2<sup>nd</sup> RP, 5-0

##### Police Budget

##### *Chief Mike Dwyer*

AJ - SB did vote to increase pay for reserve officers starting 7/1/23. Reserve officers were not part of wage/classification study. Reserve officers regional problem, want to really be competitive. Amounts to roughly \$17k.

Chief – 2 gasoline cruisers, low miles low usage. They are still getting data on the hybrid cruisers (\$2,000 difference in price).

AJ recommend to remove cruiser \$60k.

Motion to Approve \$1,190,686 CW, 2<sup>nd</sup> DI, 5-0

Page School - Chief is happy with the improvements we are making. Outfitting entire school would be huge undertaking, may not be a need, but basic cameras at important areas would be a good start.

##### Fire Operating Budget

Level funded budget, difficult to forecast because based as a function of responses.

Motion CW 2<sup>nd</sup> RP, 5-0

They do 500 calls a year.

#### Dispatch Budget

Includes new 20 hour per week dispatch employee, yet reduction in wages due to 1) new position new efficient than drawing from part time or full-time which is OT, and 2) AJ and Jenny working with Chief to get to the bottom of consistent turn-backs.

Benefits eligible and they've accounted for health insurance.

Motion CW, 2<sup>nd</sup> DI, 5-0

WB thinks this town is too small to have its own dispatch department, he has the logs for the last 4 years, most of the time they are not busy. Bring the other towns in or put this out.

CW years ago we contracted dispatch with Groveland, then we started to do our own thing. CW would rather bring people in rather than go out, due to bad experiences going out in past.

#### Article 28 – 2023 Ford Police Cruiser

Motion CW, 2<sup>nd</sup> DI, 5-0

Sunset 6/30/24

Rationale DI

#### Article 26 – Fire Pickup Truck

Motion CW, 2<sup>nd</sup> RP, 5-0

Sunset 6/30/25

Rationale DI

Chief – taking hand-me-down's from DPW for long time, want to replace old engine 27 at garden street. Good forestry vehicle as well as backup medical response vehicle.

#### Emergency Management Budget

Largely funded by grants due to proximity to Seabrook.

Level services budget with 2% COLA

Motion CW, 2<sup>nd</sup> DI, 5-0

#### Veterans Budget

Change veterans budget line from 4,664 to 24,240 (75% is reimbursed by state but must budget full amount)

Motion to Approve 55,152 CW, 2<sup>nd</sup> DI, 5-0

#### Water Operating Budget

##### *Mark Marlowe & Bob*

Enterprise funds used to separate revenues from expenditures to provide transparency on true operating costs of a service. West Newbury only has water.

Functionally its town department but financially its different.

Motion to Approve \$1,048,532 CW, 2<sup>nd</sup> RP, 5-0

RP notes a decrease over current op budget.

Savings with Mike not being here, and health insurance.

Tremendous amount of water purchases from NBPT due to drought. Also due to Brake Hill tank outage, we are going to be pumping solely from NBPT for 2-3 months.

RP ask how are revenues? Are we generating enough to cover these expenses? Does not appear to be the case. They can generate a surplus and store it in stabilization. They haven't raised rates in 3-4 years. Should there be annual increase? Can't push away the rate payers.

#### Article 7 Church and Prospect Water Main Replacements

Town got \$1.4mm in ARPA monies, SB voted on Monday night to use \$625k for the purposes set out in article. As such, this article wont go out to voters.

There was concern about buying the pipe and then the town turning down the rest of the project, and town being stuck w pipe.

Motion to approve \$2.5mm authorization for borrowing for previous Article #7 CW, 2<sup>nd</sup> DI, 5-0

No sunset for borrowing authorization.

Rationale RP

CW as a note, he would never have voted in favor of buying the pipe, warranties get voided, inventory gets lost, delays or deficiencies become a problem, missing out on markups that they will get elsewhere. Have to store the product so there is no degradation. Opportunity cost of \$625k otherwise earning a return.

We don't have quotations for the \$2.5mm installation costs, don't have true cost until it goes out to bid. Goal is to break ground May 2024.

AJ at town meeting they may want to know rate impact for debt service on this. Rate study underway, should have estimate for Town meeting.

#### Article #8 Appropriation of Water RE

Motion CW, 2<sup>nd</sup> RP, 5-0

Sunset 6/30/23

Rationale RP

Driven by scheduled repairs at Pipestave and unscheduled repairs at Brake Hill. During the repairs, Town has been purchasing from Groveland.

Should the Contractor be paying for this? Clearly a problem with how it was constructed. Someone needs to chase it down, read the contract and see what it says.

#### Article #9 New Master Meter at Pipestave Booster

Reads water travelling through system so we can track unaccounted for water. Difference between what is pumped to tank and from. The difference is always the fire department.

Motion CW, 2<sup>nd</sup> DI, 5-0

Sunset 6/30/23

Rationale RP

#### Article #10 Purchase Continuous Chlorine Monitoring System

Motion CW, 2<sup>nd</sup> DI, 5-0

Sunset 6/30/24

Rationale RP

Current system is 14 years old, still works or we need to put someone in the building every 4 hours to test. We have stretched the lifecycle, typically closer to 10 years.

#### Article #11 Purchase SCADA Remote Terminal Units

Motion CW, 2<sup>nd</sup> DI, 5-0

Sunset 6/30/24

Rationale RP

What enables communication throughout the grid. Current unit is 10-12 years old, outdated, shuts itself off. Need to replace so they don't have a failure. Expected life 7-8 years or more.

#### Article #12 Exterior Repairs to Wellfield #1 Building

Motion CW, 2<sup>nd</sup> DI, 5-0

Sunset 6/30/24

Rationale RP

CW suggest if Whittier might be interested in doing this, they will provide labor and Town only needs to provide materials. They will look into it.

Article #13 Clean Well Heads at Well Field #1

Motion CW, 2<sup>nd</sup> DI, 5-0

Sunset 6/30/24

Rationale RP

Needs to be done every 4-6 years, and this is that year. Helps keep screens clean. Drought conditions make it worse.

Article #14 Valves, Hydrants, Water Mains, Meter Pits

Motion CW, 2<sup>nd</sup> DI, 5-0

Sunset 6/30/25

Rationale RP

Article to replace older hydrants and meters around town.

Article #21 Curbside Revolving Fund

Motion to set the maximum amounts for the revolving funds to \$50,000 for curbside CW, 2<sup>nd</sup> DI, 5-0

**5. Town Manager Updates – A.J.**

9 articles remain for next week's meeting

Wetlands Bylaw was removed for warrant, not enough time for reviews and public outreach.

Solar bylaw amendment – will FinCom take position? Yes

**6. Communications**

Question about dead ash trees – of one falls, who is responsible? AJ checking in with insurance and legal if necessary.

**7. Schedule for Future Finance Committee meeting dates.**

- Next Wednesday 3-22-2023.
- Pencil in 3-29-2023.

**8. Other Upcoming Non-Finance Committee meetings related to Budget and Town Meeting Articles.**

**9. Adjournment**

- Motion to Adjourn Dan Innes, Second Chris Wile, Approved 5-0