

WEST NEWBURY FINANCE COMMITTEE

Date, Time, Location: **Tu. March 1, 2022, 6 PM** (1910 Bldg. & remotely via Zoom)

Attendees (& initials): Gary Roberts (GR), Nathan Kelly (NK), Chuck Wegrzyn – remote (CW), Chris Wile (CEW), Walter Burmeister (WB), Jim Sperelakis (JS), Angus Jennings (AJ), Stephanie Frontiera (SF). Guests: Wendy Reed, Christian Kuhn, Rich Baker, Sam Joslin, Blake Seale, Bob Janes, Paul Sevigney

Meeting Minutes – Mar. 1, 2022

1. Call to Order: 6:00 PM
2. Public Comment: None. Observed moment of silence for recently deceased FinCom member, Dr. Joseph Heyman.
3. Approval of Minutes: Jan. 24, 2022 FC meeting minutes. Motion to approve: JS. 2nd: NK. Approved 4-0, with 2 abstentions (CEW, WB), as they were not yet FC members on 1/24.
4. Presentation of proposed FY23 operating budget: AJ reviewed draft budget, dated 2/27/22. Draft reflects a \$1.621M (+9.7%) expense increase for FY23 vs FY22 amended, with the largest single budget contributor being education at approx. \$10M, a \$1.244M incr. (+14.2%). Non-education budget incr. of approx. \$377K (+4.7%), with \$211K (+2.6%) attributed to non-wage/staffing changes. JS asked about Federal ARPA (American Rescue Plan) funding for WN – how much & process for spending? AJ explained WN will likely receive \$730K, and have 2.5 yrs to spend, at the discretion of the Selectboard, which can include water, sewer, broadband projects, etc. SF will be attending a training session on ARPA shortly.
5. Review of Departmental Budgets:
 - a. Moderator: \$260 total, no increase. NK: motion to approve. JS 2nd. Approved 6-0. CEW commented that the Town owes a Thank You to our Moderator (KC Swallow) for her dedicated service and professionalism.
 - b. Assessing: Tot. Salary & Exp. = \$183.8K, a \$613 decr. (-0.3%) vs. FY22. Christian Kuhn, Chief Assessor, cited the decr. expenditure in ortho-pictures & exemption mailings. NK: motion to approve. JS 2nd. Approved 6-0.
 - c. Inspectional Services: Tot. Salary & Exp. = \$144.8K, an incr. of \$3.6K (+2.5%). Sam Joslin reviewed budget. NK: motion to approve. JS 2nd. Approved 6-0. GR asked how much revenue the inspection dept. raised in permits/license fees? AJ/SJ responded approx. \$200K, i.e., \$55K more than expenses.
 - d. Zoning Board of Appeals: \$700 total +0%. AJ noted ZBA often deals with Chapter 40B proposals. NK: motion to approve. CW 2nd. Approved 6-0.
 - e. Board of Health: Tot. Salary & Exp. = \$610K, a \$16K decr. (-2.6%) vs. FY22. Blake Seale & Bob Janes explained the reduced fee of \$35K for

hauling recycling, as the key contributor to the FY23 budget decrease. NK asked whether the YTD expenditures for waste collection/recycling were accurate, at apprx. 52/24%, respectively, thru 2/25/22. SF confirmed they were. AJ explained that highly volatile waste/recycling costs are challenging to budget and often involve 'turn-backs' to the Town, for non-expenditures at end of budgetary period. NK, thru his study of the BOH collection data, felt the reduction in waste tonnage (1483 in FY21 vs pacing in FY22) should result in a continued decrease in waste collection, which may be due to the new barrels. After disc. & debate, inclu. a disc. re: cost of wet vs dry tonnage, e.g., CW felt the new barrels were not serving their purpose and a composting program would be a more effective way to reduce waste tonnage. NK: **motion to reduce BOH waste collection & disposal budget by \$18,044 to level fund with FY22 (total waste collection budget now \$401,940)** CEW: 2nd. Approved 5-1, with CW voting no.

- f. Harbormaster: \$4500 total, an incr. of \$500 (+14.3%) vs FY22, due to expanded services in the contractual obligation with Salisbury, in effect thru FY24. AJ explained the desirable increase in enforcement services, and that WN owns the pump-out boat, which is garaged in Salisbury. NK: motion to approve. JS: 2nd. Approved 6-0.
- g. Veteran's Services: \$31.3 total, a decr. of \$2.1K (-6.4%) vs FY22. AJ explained that the Veteran's budget inclu. a modest fee for tending to soldier's graves at our local cemeteries (\$3.6K), as well as \$2.2K budgeted for the Memorial Day parade (first since '19, due to pandemic), and a lower assessment from No. Essex Vet. Services of \$21K. NK: motion to approve. CW: 2nd. Approved 6-0.
- h. Debt Service: Principal & interest of \$310.9K, a decr. of \$13K (-4.2%) vs FY22. AJ explained debt service is declining on a straight-line basis, as expected. NK: motion to approve. JS: 2nd. Approved 6-0.
- i. Essex County Retirement: WN's assessment incr. by \$74K (+10.1%) to \$805.4K in FY23. Per AJ, this is assessed by Essex Regional Retirement Assn., and there is little we can do to object. NK: motion to approve. CEW: 2nd. Approved 6-0.
- j. Unemployment Compensation: \$1500 tot., no incr. vs FY22. AJ explained that this is another category difficult to budget and \$1500 is a conservative figure. However, if a town employee had a legitimate unemployment claim, the sum the Town may have to pay could be significantly higher, e.g., in FY20, WN paid \$10.3K in unemployment claims. NK: motion to approve. CW: 2nd. Approved 6-0.
- k. Group Health Insurance: \$476.7K total, an incr. of \$67.9K (+16.6%) vs FY22. AJ explained that the plan choices, as well as what new/existing employees choose for healthcare coverage (e.g., single vs family plan) has a major bearing on the budget and expenditure. After disc., NK made

a motion to incr. the Health Insur. Budget by approx. \$5K, to \$481,857.
CEW: 2nd. Approved 6-0.

- I. OPEB: \$0 FY23 budget. AJ explained that 'other post-employment benefit' funding is done via a warrant article. NK: motion to approve. WB: 2nd. Approved 6-0.
 - m. Insurance & Bonds: \$199.9 total, an incr. of \$14.8K (+8%). AJ explained that this is a compilation of bonding for key town employees, worker's comp. insur., as well as insurance coverage for Town owned buildings and assets, e.g., 1910 building, Soldier's & Sailors, etc. NK: motion to approve. CEW: 2nd. Approved 6-0.
6. Review FinCom Meeting Shedule and Topics: GR/AJ proposed the following dates: Tu. 3/15, Tu. 3/22, and Tu. 3/29, all at 6 PM. AJ circulated a handout of the proposed warrant articles for the Annual Town Meeting, to be disc. at a future FC meeting.
 7. Adjournment: Motion to Adjourn, approved 6-0. 7:12 PM