

WEST NEWBURY FINANCE COMMITTEE

Date, Time, Location: **Tu. March 29, 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), Stephanie Frontiera (SF). Guests/Participants (+ Depts): Wayne Amaral (DPW), Mike Gootee, Bob Janes, Dick Cushing (Water), Brad Buscher (Parks&Rec), Wendy Reed (Select Board)

Meeting Minutes – Mar. 29, 2022

1. Call to Order: 6:00 PM
2. Public Comment: None
3. Approval of Minutes: March 22, 2022 meeting minutes. NK: motion to approve. CEW 2nd. **Approved 5-0.**
4. Review Sunset Clauses of DPW Articles (note: the content, but not ‘sunset dates’, of DPW articles were previously voted during 3/15/22 FinCom mtg):
 - a. **Original STM Article 7**: #1-4 combined, i.e., ADA Accessibility, roof replacement at former highway/DPW garage, DPW work station relocation, Annex sanitary line repair. **Sunset date 6/30/24.** Motion to Approve: NK. 2nd: CEW. **Approved 5-0.**
 - b. **Original STM Article 7**: #5 Furniture & Renovations of Select Board Hearing Room. **Sunset date 6/30/24.** Motion to Approve: NK. 2nd: CEW. **Approved 5-0.**
 - c. **Original STM Article 7**: #6 New reception area in Town Offices. **Sunset date 6/30/24.** Motion to Approve: NK. 2nd: CEW. **Approved 5-0.**
 - d. **ATM Article 18**: Evaluate Page School Brick/Lintel work. **Sunset date 6/30/24.** Motion to Approve: NK. 2nd: CEW. **Approved 5-0.**
 - e. **ATM Article 19**: Page School Structural Assessment. **Sunset date 6/30/24.** Motion to Approve: NK. 2nd: CEW. **Approved 5-0.**
 - f. **ATM Article 20**: Replace Town Office Phone System. **Sunset date 6/30/24.** Motion to Approve: NK. 2nd: CEW. **Approved 5-0.**
 - g. **ATM Article 21**: Purchase of DPW EV Pick-up Truck. **Sunset date 6/30/24.** Motion to Approve: NK. 2nd: CEW. **Approved 5-0.**
 - h. **ATM Article 22**: Purchase of DPW F-550 Dump Truck. **Sunset date 6/30/24.** Motion to Approve: NK. 2nd: CEW. **Approved 5-0.**
5. Review Sunset Clauses of Fire Dept. Articles:
 - a. **ATM Article 23**: Emergency Communication Equipment on Page School. **Sunset date 6/30/24.** Motion to Approve: NK. 2nd: CEW. **Approved 5-0.**
6. Status of Additional Articles:
 - a. AJ reported that FinCom will consider the Soldiers & Sailors Articles at our next FC meeting.

- b. Former ATM Article 13 (\$48K for parking study on Pipestave) was removed from the ATM Warrant by Select Board.
- 7. Review of Budgets/Articles for Town Departments:
 - a. **Water Dept Operating Budget/ATM Article 5:** Total Salary & Expense of \$1,051K, a \$187K (+21.7%) incr. over FY22. Motion to Approve: NK. 2nd: CEW. AJ announced that long-time Water Superintendent, Mike Gootee, will be retiring in FY23 and Mike has graciously agreed to work for a 10 week overlap period between himself and the new (to be hired) Superintendent (timing TBD). NK commented that the budget for insurance was up significantly. MG responded this is because the new hire may choose a more expensive 'family plan' policy. **Approved 5-0.**
 - b. **Water Dept Transfer to Water Stabilization/ATM Article 6:** \$7500 transfer from water free cash, which represents the 'system development' fees collected in 2021. Motion to Approve: NK. 2nd: CEW. **Approved 5-0.**
 - c. **Water Dept System Study/STM Article 2:** \$27K requested for an engineering study of existing Town hydraulic/water distribution system. Motion to Approve: NK 2nd: CEW. AJ commented that the \$27K figure will likely change based on scope of final study. CEW stated that the amount of required water system expenditure is unsustainable for rate-payers, which will require the Town to assume a greater expense burden. AJ/MG commented that via a Capital Improvement Plan, we can/will repay the State of MA through an 'SRF' program, with e.g., a 20 year repayment plan. WB asked if there are any human health related issues due to aging pipes/infrastructure. MG responded that our pipes are iron and manganese, as opposed to lead and that the Town's water quality is excellent, with extremely low levels of Pfas ('forever') chemicals. **Approved 5-0. Sunset date 6/30/24.**
 - d. **Parks & Rec Operating Budget.** Total Salary & Expense of \$24.8K, a \$3.3K (+15.6%) incr. over FY22. Motion to Approve: NK. 2nd: CEW. A lengthy and animated discussion ensued regarding fee structures for Town field use. GR stated that the youth leagues, e.g., baseball, has little money to afford fees and parent volunteers perform a signif. amt. of field maintenance themselves. Per BB, WN charges \$5/hr for in-town and \$15/hr for out-of-town and/or profit making entities. CEW added, from his prior school experience, that Pentucket also instituted a set fee structure for field use. **Approved 5-0.**
 - e. **Parks & Rec Vegetation Mngmt./ATM Article 12:** \$9.9K requested (Mayer Tree service quote was \$15.25K) for removal of diseased trees & invasive bittersweet vine, btw recycling center, Pipestave & Dunn fields. Motion to Approve: NK. 2nd: CEW. **Vote 3-2** (WB, GR, JS voted in favor, and NK, CEW voted against). **Sunset 6/30/23.**
 - f. **Site study to place solar facilities/ATM Article 16 (orig.) now Art. 13:** \$15K requested by Arthur Wallace of Energy & Sustainability Comm. to

study feasibility of various Town-owned parcels for siting future solar generating facilities. Motion to Approve: NK. 2nd: CEW. NK commented that he didn't feel the locations mentioned were the best ones. **Vote 3-2** (WB, JS, CEW voted in favor, and NK, GR voted against). **Sunset 6/30/23**

- g. **Reimburse prior FY expenses/ATM article 27 (orig.), now ATM Art. 25:** \$342 requested. Motion to Approve: NK. 2nd: CEW. **Approved 5-0.**
- h. **Septic Loan Revolving Fund/ATM Art. 9:** \$10.4K requested by Bd. of Health, to repay debt service. Motion to Approve: NK. 2nd: CEW. **Approved 5-0.**
- i. **Mill Pond Comm. Operating Expenses:** Total requested \$2.1K, equal to FY22. Motion to Approve: NK. 2nd: CEW. **Approved 5-0.**
- j. **Bandstand Operating Expenses:** \$6K requested, primarily for weekly summer entertainment. Motion to Approve: NK. 2nd: CEW. **Approved 5-0.**
- k. **Select Board Operating Expenses:** Tot. Salary & Expenses of \$54.1K, a \$4K decrease (-7%) vs FY22. Per AJ, FY23 budget does not carry funds for SB mtg minutes, which will continue to be prepared by a vendor, payable as expenses, as opposed to wages. Motion to Approve: NK. 2nd: CEW. **Approved 5-0.**
- l. **Town Manager Operating Expenses:** Tot. Salary & Expenses of \$325.7K, an \$11.2K (+3.6%) incr. over FY22. Motion to Approve: NK. 2nd: CEW. AJ explained that the budget reflects the 'relocation' of a position (asst. to TM/Fin. Dept.) fully to the Finance Dept. budget. Current FY22 budgeted, but unfilled, Fin. Dept. support, will instead be allocated to hire an 'Asst. to Town Mngr.' position. The budget also includes an IT upgrade to the Town server, esp. security/ back-up protection. AJ commented that Fed. 'CARES' Act \$ was used to buy dept. laptops/equipment, during pandemic. **Approved 5-0.**
- m. **Finance Dept Operating Expenses:** Tot. Salary & Expenses of \$337.6K, a \$32.8K (+10.8%) incr. over FY22. Motion to Approve: NK. 2nd: CEW. See commentary under Town Manager budget above for proposed personnel assignments in FY23. **Approved 5-0.**
- n. **Finance Committee Expenses & Reserve Fund:** Budget originally proposed as \$62K (of which \$2K is for expenses, i.e., printing of Town Mtg. booklets, while \$60K was for potential reserve fund transfers). After discussion on the reserve fund amount, (e.g., \$40K was cut from waste collection budget), GR made a motion to **increase the reserve to \$80K**, CEW: 2nd. **Approved 5-0.**
- o. **Medicare Insurance/FICA:** Budget of \$51.5K, a \$1K (+2%) incr. over FY22. Motion to Approve: NK. 2nd: CEW. **Approved 5-0.**
- p. **Capital Stabilization Transfer:** Town Manager & CIC (Capital Improvements Comm.) recommends a \$500K transfer to Capital Stabilization, which is consistent with the past 3 budget cycles. There are ongoing updates to the Town Capital Improvement Program, which may

result in recommended change to the amount of the proposed FY23 transfer. Motion to Approve: NK. 2nd. **Approved 5-0.**

- q. **School Stabilization/ATM Art. 2:** \$397.3K requested from the School Stabilization Fund, to pay for a portion of the Town's share of debt services assoc. with the building of the new High/Middle School. Motion to Approve: NK. 2nd: CEW. AJ mentioned that the Select Board has approved this amount 3-0. A discussion ensued in which CEW mentioned that in the next few years, once the School Stabiliz. is exhausted, it will result in a significant tax increase for WN homeowners. **Approved 4-1**, with CEW voting against.
8. Prep of FinCom Booklet: NK requested that all narratives be sent to his attention by April 11, 2022
9. Appoint FinCom Rep to Capital Improv. Comm. (CIC): GR made a motion to **appoint WB to CIC**. 2nd: CEW. **Approved 5-0.**
10. Appoint FinCom Rep to Investment Policy Comm.: GR made motion to **appoint CEW to IPC**. 2nd: NK. **Approved 5-0.**
11. Adjournment: Motion to Adjourn, approved 5-0. 7:35 PM