

WEST NEWBURY FINANCE COMMITTEE

REC'D W. NEWBURY CLERK
'22 JUL 26 AM 11:52

Date & Time: Tuesday, April 13th, 2021 7pm

Location: 1910 Building, 2nd Floor Hearing Room, West Newbury, MA

Attendees: Gary Roberts, Jessica Knezek, Nathan Kelly, Angus Jennings

Remotely: Jim Sperelakis, Joe Heyman, Stephanie Frontiera, Wendy Reed, Richard Baker, Mike Gootee, Jenn Poliseno, Richard Cushing, Elisa Grammer, Christian Kuhn, Blake Seale, Bob Janes, Thomas Fahey, Paul Sevigny

Meeting Minutes

1. Call to Order - 7:03 PM

2. Public Comment - none

3. Approval of Minutes - 4/5/21 - Approved, 5-0

4. Review and discuss budgets and articles from the following departments:

a.) Assessing

-change in staffing; new hire Christian Kuhn,

JS - 1.7 FT, is .7 clerk?

AJ - yes, 28 hours/week.

NK - if it went FT, what would it look like if Chief Assessor took on additional responsibilities, and does he have qualification for these responsibilities?

AJ - Finance is lean staffed, Cyber Administrator is supposed to keep Town up to date on technology. Mr. Kuhn is tech savvy and could handle these responsibilities.

NK - when the contract with Patriot Properties ends, what do you foresee happening with these responsibilities, and whether the contract with Patriot would be necessary?

AJ - that would be up to the Board of Assessors. If that happened, we're still dealing with the past, but once we catch up there will be more bandwidth available.

Budget Approved, 5-0

ARTICLES:

STM Article 14 - Server and revaluation of utilities

Funding Source: Free Cash

Sunset Clause: end FY22

Approved, 5-0

b.) Water

AJ - main change is a second FT licensed operator (2.5 → 3.5). Additional operator is critical for the Town, and we are staffed too thin. Water chemical building was completed last week. MG - able to level-fund on the rate for a year due to a savings on loan. A lot of funds are being put into infrastructure. Brake Hill Tank passed testing, looking forward to demolishing the old tank. We are definitely understaffed. There are a lot of responsibilities. MG worked daily for six months straight. Lead/copper are becoming issues.

JS - \$40K saved by buying less water from Newburyport. Is that reflected in the expense account? MG - Yes

Budget Approved, 5-0

ARTICLES

ATM Article #5 - \$500K into Stabilization.

JK - We have had a rate hike, exceeded expenses. Why put this money into another project?

GR - Consider lowering the water rate?

MG - people used more water last year, and we are not going up on rate. It took a lot of years to get this high of a surplus in Water Free Cash. Less comes in on a wet year, so we do not know what we are going to have coming in.

Funding Source: Water Free Cash

Approved, 3-2 (Roberts, Knezek against)

ATM Article #6 - Pipestave Tank Improvements

MG - difficult to deal with because of location. Need to clean and reline it. It will cost us more if we do not get it done.

JS - how much would it cost to knock it down and build a new one?

MG - \$5 million.

Sunset Clause: end of FY24

Funding Source: Water Free Cash

Approved, 5-0

c.) Health

NK inquired about Recycling line item being spent at approximately 25% YTD, when it should be in excess of 50%. SF provided information on receipts which confirmed that spending should be in excess of 50% based on the ratios YTD.

NK - Motion to reduce Recycling line by \$21,000 to \$45,000, seconded GR; Approved 5-0
NK - Motion to increase Finance Committee Reserve Fund by \$21,000, seconded GR;
Approved 5-0

BOH had a long public meeting tonight about their decision to move to automated trash. No decision was made, and the meeting was continued to next week, 4/20/21. BS indicated that he has spent a lot of his own time at the recycling center on Pipestave Hill dealing with overflowing cardboard.

Budget, Approved as Amended, 5-0.

ARTICLES:

ATM Article #10 Septic Revolving

Approved, 5-0

STM Article #9 Covid Testing \$100,000

Concern about getting revenues back from Amesbury instead of FEMA. Expect no net cost.

Sunset Clause: end FY22

Funding Source: Free Cash

Approved, 5-0

d.) Historical Commission

AJ - level funded

Approved, 5-0

ARTICLES

BJ - Third Historical Inventory - expected to be last. Reimbursement from state 50%.

GR - my house was in the second wave, and it was neat to see.

Funding Source: CPC/CPA

Sunset Clause: end FY22

Approved, 5-0

e.) Harbormaster

Budget Approved, 5-0

f.) Community Preservation Committee

Coffin Street Article - delayed, as CPC has not yet voted upon it yet.

ATM Article #11 - Annual Article

Approved, 5-0

ATM Article #13 - Mill Pond All Persons Trail

GR - goal is to make the area more accessible, the area is very uneven

AJ - funding is for survey/architect costs, and have sought a grant

Funding Source: CPA

Sunset Clause: end FY23

Approved, 5-0

STM Article #4 - Whetstone Greenway

AJ - cost is driven by needing to be accessible by all.

Funding Source: CPA

Sunset Clause: end FY24

Budget Approved, 5-0

g.) Other Post Employment Benefits (OPEB)

ATM - Article #8 - OPEB

Amount recommended by BOS

Approved, 5-0

5. Review schedule for joint meeting with Select Board / Moderator / Town Counsel
Next Meeting likely on

6. Timeline and division of labor to produce Finance Committee Town Meeting booklet
GR will send out assignments by 4/17/21. NK requests all rationales by 4/27/21.

7. Communications - AJ - Dropbox has not been used, just attachments.

8. Adjournment 8:43 PM