

MEETING MINUTES-WEST NEWBURY
FINANCE COMMITTEE

Date & Time: Tuesday February 26th, 2019 7pm

Location : 1910 Building 1st Floor Hearing Room

By: Gary L. Roberts Jr., Chairman, Forbes Durey, Brad Beaudoin, Laurie Zywiak, Jim Sperelakis, Nathan Kelly, Jessica Knezek

AGENDA

1. Call to Order
2. Public Comment, Public comment is limited to 2 minutes per resident for items on the agenda. The chair may allow for more time depending on number of residents seeking to participate.

None.

3. Late File Items

None.

4. Approval of minutes

Minutes from 2/11/19 6:00 approve

5. Department/Article review

Capital article votes will be delayed until the the CIC has a chance to review said articles. A general review of voting procedures including setting a recommended sunset date for each article was presented by Durey.

Why was the budget built on a 2% budgetary increase to homeowners factoring in increased revenue gains?

-The response was that this was the standard practice in local municipal financing.

FinCom members asked if it would make more sense to try to build the budget based around a 2.5% increase exclusive of increased revenue gains.

The 4.4% proposed budget increase- how does this compare to previous years.

-This increase is less then last year around 5.5% but more then years prior to that.

DPW, Wayne S. Amaral present

Proposed budget increase 3.8%. Some factors responsible for the increase are: Non-union employees are receiving a pay raise, the new tree vendors fees which are significantly higher- owing to the increased cost of tree company insurances, \$10,000 for stormwater management planning required by the EPA.

Snow and ice expenditures is still underestimated at \$150,000.

Vote 5:1 to approve- Beaudoin dissents.

Articles(non-capital)

Emergency action plan for Mill Pond Dam

-It has been mandated by the State that the town develop a emergency action plan for the Mill Pond Dam. The DPW director does not feel like this is a task that can be handed in-house and has recommended retaining an outside engineering firm. McCarron noted that this may constitute an unfunded mandate and may be eligible for state assistance.

Vote 5:1 Beaudoin dissenting

Snow and Ice deficit article: \$110,000 to fund the snow and ice removal deficit(standard article)

Vote: 4:2 approve, Roberts, Kelly dissenting

Amendment to the Trench Excavation Bylaw.

This article seeks to streamline the permitting process for Trench Excavation in town, giving approval authority to the DPW director.

6:0 approve

Amend Street Opening Permits.

This article is similar to that for the Trench Excavation Bylaw change; it seeks to streamline the process for approving street opening permits giving DPW director authority to issue such permits.

6:0 approve

Water Department, Gootee, Janes present

There was no discussion pertaining to the water departments proposed budget.

6:0 approve

Water Dept Articles.

Durey recused himself from discussion and left the room, as he is an abutter to the Brake Hill Tank project.

Two related articles were presented: one to broaden the scope of use of \$1.7M in funds approved for the Brake Hill water tank to also include the chemical injection plant. The need for this is due to the fact that the bond for the project has already been closed and there is a 3-year window to use these funds. In addition to this 1.7M funding, another 1.2M is requested to fund the monetary short fall in both projects.

5:0:1 approve, Durey abstaining

Library.

6:0 approve

Town Council, Mike McCarron present.

There was some discussion as to why a special council was requested by the Town Manager. The town manager felt that some personnel issues would benefit from the perspective of someone without close ties to the town.

6:0 approve

New Optical Scanner article. \$5,500

The previous scanner is over 20 years old.

6:0 approve

Registrar Budget

The dept. will continue to submit for reimbursement from the state for early voting.

6:0 approve

Planning Board.

Proposed budget requests a 20% increase. Changes include addition of 6 hrs/week administrative assistant. The assistant would free the town planner up to work on more proactive roles with town planning. The town manager also felt like increased pay for the town planner is warranted based on her qualifications. Durey asked for a definition of “the market” for competitive salary ranges. The Town Planner and Town Manager replied that the market was based on national averages and a 2016 study. Durey asked if they reviewed Town Planner salaries for Groveland, Georgetown, or Merrimac; the answer was “no.” It was asked what other projects the town planner would focus on if they had more time. The planner replied that she has been so busy that she hasn’t had time to think about it. She noted that in the past, she had received a grant for a city center study(septic), but found that there was not support for the project from the townspeople. Durey inquired whether the Board had addressed the Finance Committee’s FY2019 Budget Review recommendation that the Board review and adjust/increase their Fee schedule to offset their FY2019 budget increases. The Fees were described by the Town Planner as

“nominal” and said that there had been no effort to review or adjust fees. Durey again suggested that the Board do the same to address their 20% budget increase request for FY20.

4:2 approve Durey, Beaudoin dissenting

Planning Board Articles:

Open space preservation development amendment.

This article was originally presented at the previous town meeting and pulled over language as it pertains to affordable housing. The new language clarifies for the planning board as well as developers how bonus units are calculated.

6:0 approve

Large Scale Ground Mounted Solar Photovoltaic Installation overlay district amendment. The biggest changes from the previous form presented last year were removal of the special permit requirements and the setbacks were reduced to 150 feet.

6:0 approve

Zoning Board of Appeals

Budget is largely unchanged.

6:0 approve

6. Communications

Jennings concluded the meeting with a review of expected revenues and how those may impact the tax rate. The change in assessed valuation for FY19 was \$52 million dollars as opposed to \$18 million in FY18. Of note however is the FY20 is a re-evaluation year so property valuations are expected to jump again. While Jennings noted that this increase valuation does help lower the tax rate, this does not necessarily lower the tax bills residents are expected to pay.

7. Adjournment