

MEETING MINUTES-WEST NEWBURY FINANCE COMMITTEE

Date & Time: Wednesday February 26th , 2020 7pm

Location : 1910 Building 1st Floor Hearing Room

Attendees: Gary L. Roberts Jr., Forbes Durey, Brad Beaudoin, Nathan Kelly, Angus Jennings, Jessica Knezek, Rick Parker, David Archibald

AGENDA

1. Call to Order
2. Public Comment
3. Approval of minutes
4. Review and discuss budgets and articles from the following departments:

A. Board of assessors(Tom Atwood, Rich Baker, Meredith Stone, Maureen Curtin)

It was noted that the pictometry cost was placed on the assessors budget even though many other offices use this resource. Atwood asked if this could be paid with a warrant article. Jennings made changes to the reimbursement for travel and cell phone use.

Vote 4-1 approve, Beaudoin dissenting in favor of picometry being a separate article

Article #31: soldiers and sailors tax exemption

vote 5-0 approve, no discussion

B. Open space committee

Budget Vote 5-0 approve, no discussion

C. Town manager

Discussion regarding the best practice to continue to raise money for the new middle school/high school as FY2021 is the first year that funds are due for the project. Previously, funds had been placed into the school stabilization fund to reserve funds with the idea of lessening the impact of the cost of the new school. Now that payments are due, it makes less sense to place money into the school stabilization just to take it out in the same year to start paying for the school. Durey asked if the debt service could be placed into the budget proper rather than adding an article each year. Jennings thought that it would make sense to continue drawing down the funds from the school stabilization account to zero with articles and then place the debt service on the budget proper once those funds are spent.

Jennings then reviewed the Selectmen's budgetary guidance to keeping tax payer bill increases to 2%. After reviewing the Town's finances, this places the target budget increase to less than \$510,000. Based on the current proposed budget, the FY2021 budget is over by \$187,138 and this does not include police union contracts which are in negotiation. This also does not account for \$400,000 used to reduce the tax rate last year.

\$3,250 funding was cut from Town manager budget reflecting removing the cost of 1 of 2 proposed town manager info fliers for the town, with the hope that an additional savings of \$3,250 can be gained by evaluating costs savings for moving from self hosting computer servers for the town vs cloud solutions.

Vote 5-0 approve as amended

Article #33- revolving funds yearly article
5-0 approve, no discussion

D. Finance Dept

There is a significant back-log of financial work that is needed between the new accounting software and day to day tasks that have been over looked but require attention moving forward. As such, Jennings as budgeted \$3,000 in additional funds for expenses to hire additional help to work through these issues.

5-0 approve.

E. Selectmen

Annie Sterling has moved to Selectmen's office.

Vote 5-0 approve. No discussion.

Article #32, Dog waste bylaw

Vote 1-4 fails, Beaudoin, Durey, Knezek, Kelly opposed

F. Special council

\$2,500 proposed reduction in this budget item

Vote 5-0 approve, no discussion

G. Unemployment

This item was not funded this year

Vote 5-0 approve

H. Harbormaster

Level budgeted, but there have been expanded services provided including routine patrols of the river from May-October

Vote 5-0 approve, no discussion.

I. Cable advisory committee

No budget, no vote

J. Insurance and bonds

There are two large debts the Town has outstanding- \$1.1 million for the Brake Hill Water Tank project and \$1.25 million for the renovation of Soldiers and Sailors Memorial building. The general plan is to consolidate both of these debts into a single bond which carries better rates.

Property insurance rates are likely to go up by 7-9% due to the claim at the Paige School related to the flood last year. In total insurance and bonds raised by 9.9% in this budget.

Vote 5-0 approve.

Article #16: transfer of \$85,000 from CPC for debt service related to the restoration of soldiers and sailors memorial building.

Vote 2-3 failed, with Durey, Kelly and Roberts dissenting.

Article #27: \$8,048 to fund installation of electric charging stations at Paige School and 1910 building.

Roberts questioned if this station would be for the benefit of the town at large or just a select few towns people as few towns people work at the 1910 building or Paige school or have electric cars. Kelly asked whether these stations were the “fast charging stations” vs the traditional charging stations(which charge relatively slowly). The answer was that these would be the slower ones. Knezek asked if all people with electric cars would already have chargers at their houses.

Vote 2-3 failed, Beaudoin, Durey, Roberts dissenting

K. Veteran's affairs

Vote 5-0 approve with no discussion.

Durey made a motion to re-vote the DPW dept. budget backing out \$750 for a speaking fee requested by the Tree commission, as requested by the Town Manager. Vote 5-0 approve.

Vote 5-0 to approve the DPW budget as amended.