

MEETING MINUTES-WEST NEWBURY FINANCE COMMITTEE

Date & Time: Monday May 4th , 2020 6pm

Location : GoToMeeting

Attendees: Gary L. Roberts Jr., Forbes Durey, Brad Beaudoin, Nathan Kelly, Angus Jennings, Jim Sperelakis, Jennifer Walsh, Jessica Knezek

AGENDA

1. Call to Order
2. Approval of minutes

Minutes from 3/12/2020 approved 6-0.

3. Review of Budget Changes that have occurred since our last meeting. The Committee can elect to keep budgeted amounts as previously voted or elect to support the changes as suggested by the Board of Selectmen.

Motion to reconsider the Library budget

6-0 approve.

Motion to accept the Selectmen's recommendation to increase the budget of the library by \$7,569.

The board of selectmen recommended increasing the Library budget \$7,569 to establish a 10 hour part time position for a librarian's assistant to help with staffing coverage. Representatives from the library note that they are at maximum capacity to provide staffing coverage for the library making time for sick/vacation/family leave difficult. Durey noted that FY21 budget included increased support from DPW to help take the burden on cleaning off the library staff with hopes that this would help decrease free up staffing hours. Beaudoin noted that due to the COVID19 pandemic and social distancing guidelines, perhaps this would better be reevaluated in the fall as public gathering locations like the library are likely to have decreased use for the near future.

2-4 disapprove with Durey, Roberts, Beaudoin, Kelly opposed

Motion to reconsider conservation budget

6-0 approve.

Motion to accept the Selectmen's recommendation to reduce the Conservation budget by \$1,055, as recommended by BOS.

The selectmen felt that the standard cost of living adjustment for the Conservation Agent of 2% was sufficient, over the 6% recommended by the Town manager and approved by the Finance committee on 3/10/20. Wendy Reed of the Conservation Committee felt that his increase in wages was justified based on comparable rates from surrounding towns stating that this position is paid 4-5\$ per hour less than other towns. She also noted that they were very happy with the current agent and would like to keep them

3-3 disapprove with Sperelakis, Durey, Roberts opposed.

Motion to reconsider the Police overtime budget line item

4-2 approve with Kelly and Roberts opposed.

Motion to accept the Selectmen's recommendation to reduce the Police overtime budget line item by \$12,188

The selectmen felt this item could be reduced. Kelly felt this change would not mean much as it's a line item that cannot be truly reduced as it's a required service. Kelly's preference was for a more accurate number versus a smaller value that will be over-drawn. He stated further that the committee should support the police chief's recommendation. Jennings noted that the YTD spending is well below the budgeted amount.

1-5 disapprove with Knezek in favor.

Motion to reconsider the Whittier Tech line item.

5-0-1 with Kelly abstaining

Motion to accept the Selectman's recommendation to reduce Whittier Tech budget by \$5,971.

The final approved assessment from Whittier Tech came in under budget by ~\$6,000.

No discussion.

5-0-1 approve with Kelly abstaining.

Motion to reconsider Public Health Nurse line item

6-0 approve.

Motion to accept the Selectman's recommendation increase the Public Health Nurse budget by \$4,335.

At the April 28 BOS meeting the Board unanimously recommended an increase in the FY21 expense budget for the Public Health Nurse to reflect an increase in the hourly rate paid pursuant to that BOH contract, and to separately budget funds based on potential increased hours resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic

No Discussion

6-0 approve.

4. Review changes made to Articles since we voted on the. The Committee can elect to keep their votes as they stand or reconsider Articles based on their current amounts or changes.

Motion to reconsider STM Article #4 - snow and ice removal.

6-0 approve.

Motion to approve the final snow and Ice deficit amount of \$64,562.

The final cost for snow and ice removal is \$64,562, \$3,475 above posted warrant amount. The Selectmen did not want to increase snow and ice amount from warrant with concern that it may cause confusion at town meeting. They would rather seek alternate sources to pay the balance.

Durey notes that snow and ices was much less at the previous Finance committee meeting and with a lack of significant snow activity since then how the balance on this account increased so much. Walsh noted that contractors do not always get their invoices in right away.

3-3 disapprove with Durey, Kelly and Roberts opposed

Motion to reconsider ATM Article #9 - school stabilization transfer

6-0 approve

Motion to accept the Selectmen's recommendation to increase the School Stabilization Transfer from \$247,340 to \$652,340.

The selectmen wanted to increase the draw from the Town's School Stabilization account to provide more financial aid to the tax payers due the COVID19 pandemic. This increased spending would prevent the impact of the school from being felt during FY2021. Roberts recognized the good intentions of this proposal but was concerned that the economic downturn may actually get worse in the coming years. Thus to spend the majority of the school stabilization now would make the tax jump very severe the following year where the economy may not be any better. Kelly felt the Town has as well though-out financial plan for the new middle/high school and that we should stick to it. Sperelakis notes that if this large drawdown is taken this year, it will be very hard to explain the abrupt increase at subsequent town meetings.

0-6 disapprove.

Motion to reconsider ATM Article #11, 300K transfer to stabilization.

6-0 approve.

Motion to accept Selectmen's recommendation to take no action on ATM Article #11, 300K transfer to stabilization.

The Selectmen felt given the uncertainty of the COVID19 Pandemic having higher free cash reserves would allow the town greater financial flexibility. This article was originally made to set aside funds for the Middle street bridge project.

No discussion.

5-1 approve with Roberts opposed

Motion to reconsider ATM article #15, DPW Plow Truck.

6-0 approve.

Motion to accept the Selectmen's recommendation to take no action on ATM #15 DPW Plow

While the Selectmen support this article, they have asked that it be put off a year due to financial concerns over COVID19.

Roberts felt that this was a needed piece of equipment and that it shouldn't be put off. Roberts also had concerns because it takes some time to procure a truck of this size. Jennings noted that DPW Director Amaral did say that he could get by without it for another year.

5-1 approve with Roberts opposed