

ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING

Tuesday, March 2, 2021

6:30 PM

Virtual, via Zoom

Members present: Brian Boyle, Omid Gharony, Bob Guerriero, Ann Hurd, Craig Lauer, and Bill Nickles

Members absent: None

Call to order: Chairman Boyle called the meeting to order at 6:30 PM. The entire meeting can be viewed by going to:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kFoG5z9ZHjM&list=PLu94OVLkDQ_LWB3HSPkc_uIG6ztnCxFowO&index=1

Agenda Item #1: Tax Collector budget (146)

- Town Tax Collector Michelle Carlisle presented the Tax Collector budget.
- The Salary line included a COLA and step increase.
- The Purchase of Services line was increased by \$500 to cover the costs of processing returned checks that the Tax Collector has to deal with occasionally.
- All other items were level funded.
- **MOTION:** Omid Gharony moved to approve the Tax Collector budget as presented, for a total of \$74,687; seconded by Ann Hurd. **VOTING IN FAVOR:** Brian Boyle, Omid Gharony, Bob Guerriero, Ann Hurd, Craig Lauer, and Bill Nickles. **VOTED AND PASSED. UNANIMOUS (6-0).**

Agenda Item #2: Town Service budgets (145, 147, 710, 752, 911, 912, 913, 914, 915, 916)

- Town Treasurer Kristen Noel presented several town service-related budgets.
- Treasurer (145)
 - The Salary line included a COLA and step increase.
 - The Longevity line, used to reward town employees with ten or more years of service, was increased by \$1,200. This amount will cover a \$100 increase in Longevity pay per person that was agreed to last year.
 - All other items were level funded from FY21.
 - It was agreed to change the nomenclature of the Tax Taking Expense line to Tax Title Expense to better reflect the nature of that line item.
 - **MOTION:** Bob Guerriero moved to approve the Treasurer budget as presented, for a total of \$115,761; seconded by Craig Lauer. **VOTING IN FAVOR:** Brian Boyle, Omid Gharony, Bob Guerriero, Ann Hurd, Craig Lauer, and Bill Nickles. **VOTED AND PASSED. UNANIMOUS (6-0).**
- Human Resources (147)
 - Human Resource Wages were reduced by \$1,065 due to a correction of the stipend amount.
 - All other items were level funded from FY21.

- Town Selectman Bob Czekanski suggested moving the Educational Assistance line from the Treasurer budget to the Human Resources budget.
- **MOTION:** Craig Lauer moved to approve the Human Resources budget as presented, for a total of \$9,465; seconded by Bill Nickles. **VOTING IN FAVOR:** Brian Boyle, Omid Gharony, Bob Guerriero, Ann Hurd, Craig Lauer, and Bill Nickles. **VOTED AND PASSED. UNANIMOUS (6-0).**
- Debt Service (710, 752)
 - Debt Service allocations were discussed but not voted on during this meeting.
 - The new Fire Department vehicle purchase will not incur any costs in FY22. However, approval to borrow for the purchase of this vehicle will be presented at Town Meeting this year.
 - Town Accountant Ninotchka Rogers suggested spreading the costs for the proposed purchase of the new DPW vehicle over five years, for an expected yearly debt service cost of approximately \$23,000/year. This purchase will be finance with State House Notes.
- Employee Benefits (911, 912, 913, 914, 915, 916)
 - Worcester Regional retirement Assessment (WRRRA) line was increased by \$81,648, due to hiring four new public safety employees. This employees are all considered Category 4, which increases the town's WRRRA assessment.
 - Total Health Insurance assessment, including Group Health and OPEB, was increased by \$53,891.
 - Workers Compensation assessment was increased by \$1,129.
 - **MOTION:** Craig Lauer moved to approve the Employee Benefits budget as presented, for a total of \$1,511,827; seconded by Omid Gharony. **VOTING IN FAVOR:** Brian Boyle, Omid Gharony, Bob Guerriero, Ann Hurd, Craig Lauer, and Bill Nickles. **VOTED AND PASSED. UNANIMOUS (6-0).**

Agenda Item #3: Town Administrator budgets (122, 123, 151, 192, 195, 243, 244, 303, 440, 945)

- Town Administrator Don Lowe presented several Town Administrator budgets.
- Selectmen (122)
 - Selectmen budget is level funded from FY21 at \$19,620.
 - **MOTION:** Bob Guerriero to approve the Selectmen budget as presented, for a total of \$19,620; seconded Craig Lauer. **VOTING IN FAVOR:** Brian Boyle, Omid Gharony, Bob Guerriero, Ann Hurd, Craig Lauer, and Bill Nickles. **VOTED AND PASSED. UNANIMOUS (6-0).**
- Town Administrator (123)
 - The Wages and Salary lines included a COLA and step increase.
 - Don Lowe requested an increase in the Dues line to \$250 to cover anticipated dues expenses.
 - The Compensation Reserve line, originally requested at \$60,000, was reduced to \$0. This line is no longer needed because all town contract negotiations are complete and wage baselines have been established.

- **MOTION:** Craig Lauer moved to approve the Town Administrator budget as amended for a total of \$218,477; seconded by Bob Guerriero. **VOTING IN FAVOR:** Brian Boyle, Omid Gharony, Bob Guerriero, Ann Hurd, Craig Lauer, and Bill Nickles. **VOTED AND PASSED. UNANIMOUS (6-0).**
- Legal (151)
 - Don Lowe requested an increase to the Legal Services line to \$60,000 due to the recent trend of increased legal activity, in addition to the expected salary negotiations in FY22.
 - The Committee further increased this line to \$70,000.
 - **MOTION:** Bob Guerriero moved to approve the Legal budget as amended for a total of \$70,000; seconded by Craig Lauer. **VOTING IN FAVOR:** Brian Boyle, Omid Gharony, Bob Guerriero, Ann Hurd, Craig Lauer, and Bill Nickles. **VOTED AND PASSED. UNANIMOUS (6-0).**
- Town Hall (192)
 - The Electric line was reduced by \$1,250 since this amount was transferred to the Parks and Recreation budget to cover the electricity costs of the lights at Memorial Field.
 - Purchase of Services was reduced to \$0 since it is no longer needed.
 - The Repairs line was reduced to \$0 since it is assumed that any repairs to Town Hall would be covered under the Town Buildings budget (190).
 - **MOTION:** Ann Hurd moved to approve the Town Hall budget as amended for a total of \$27,865; seconded by Craig Lauer. **VOTING IN FAVOR:** Brian Boyle, Omid Gharony, Bob Guerriero, Ann Hurd, Craig Lauer, and Bill Nickles. **VOTED AND PASSED. UNANIMOUS (6-0).**
- Town Reports (195)
 - Purchase of Service line was increased by \$700 and the Postage line was reduced by \$700, since the dissemination of the Town Warrant is now done by The Independent newspaper instead of the US Postal Service.
 - **MOTION:** Craig Lauer moved to approve the Town Reports budget as presented for a total of \$3,700; seconded by Bill Nickles. **VOTING IN FAVOR:** Brian Boyle, Omid Gharony, Bob Guerriero, Ann Hurd, Craig Lauer, and Bill Nickles. **VOTED AND PASSED. UNANIMOUS (6-0).**
- Plumbing and Gas Inspector (243), Wiring Inspector (244)
 - Plumbing and Gas Inspector (243) and Wiring Inspector (244) Purchase of Services were both increased slightly, by \$369 and \$428, respectively.
 - **MOTION:** Craig Lauer moved to approve the Plumbing and Gas Inspector budget as presented for \$18,836 and the Wiring Inspector budget as presented for \$21,836; seconded by Bob Guerriero. **VOTING IN FAVOR:** Brian Boyle, Omid Gharony, Bob Guerriero, Ann Hurd, Craig Lauer, and Bill Nickles. **VOTED AND PASSED. UNANIMOUS (6-0).**
- Post-Secondary Vocational Education (303)
 - Post-Secondary Vocational Education was reduced to \$0 since there were no requests this year.
 - **MOTION:** Omid Gharony moved to approve the Post-Secondary Vocational Education budget as presented for \$0; seconded by Craig Lauer. **VOTING IN**

FAVOR: Brian Boyle, Omid Gharony, Bob Guerriero, Ann Hurd, Craig Lauer, and Bill Nickles. **VOTED AND PASSED. UNANIMOUS (6-0).**

- Sewer (440)
 - The Sewer budget is level funded from FY21.
 - **MOTION:** Bob Guerriero moved to approve the Sewer budget as presented for \$8,700; seconded by Omid Gharony. **VOTING IN FAVOR:** Brian Boyle, Omid Gharony, Bob Guerriero, Ann Hurd, Craig Lauer, and Bill Nickles. **VOTED AND PASSED. UNANIMOUS (6-0).**
- Other Insurance (945)
 - The General Insurance assessment for FY22 is \$74,296.
 - The Bonding line was increased by \$100 to \$1,000.
 - The Deductible line was increased to \$5,000 based on a request from Town treasurer Kristen Noel.
 - **MOTION:** Craig Lauer moved to approve the Other Insurance budget as amended for \$119,074; seconded by Ann Hurd. **VOTING IN FAVOR:** Brian Boyle, Omid Gharony, Bob Guerriero, Ann Hurd, Craig Lauer, and Bill Nickles. **VOTED AND PASSED. UNANIMOUS (6-0).**

Agenda Item #4: Capital Expenditures Review

- Town Administrator Don Lowe reviewed the proposed Capital Expenditures for FY22, including his recommended rank ordering for the Capital Expenditures.
- One Capital Expenditure suggested by Don Lowe was the establishment of a Wastewater repair fund to be available in the event that repairs need to be made to the wastewater treatment facility.
- Don Lowe estimates that the total impact to Free Cash in FY22 will be \$307,678.

Agenda Item #5: Budget Item Re-Consideration

- The Advisory Committee re-considered several budget items where some amounts changed since the original vote was taken.
- Planning Board (175)
 - Wages were adjusted to \$72,352 based on wage negotiations for the new Town Planner.
 - **MOTION:** Craig Lauer moved to approve the total Planning Board budget as amended for \$76,602; seconded by Bill Nickles. **VOTING IN FAVOR:** Brian Boyle, Omid Gharony, Bob Guerriero, Ann Hurd, Craig Lauer, and Bill Nickles. **VOTED AND PASSED. UNANIMOUS (6-0).**
- Police Department (210)
 - New Salary and Wages lines were adjusted to a total of \$1,368,124 based on completed wage and salary negotiations.
 - **MOTION:** Craig Lauer moved to approve the total Police Department budget as amended for \$1,537,650; seconded by Bob Guerriero. **VOTING IN FAVOR:** Brian Boyle, Omid Gharony, Bob Guerriero, Ann Hurd, Craig Lauer, and Bill Nickles. **VOTED AND PASSED. UNANIMOUS (6-0).**

- Highway (421)
 - New Salary and Wages lines were adjusted to a total of \$720,348 based on completed wage and salary negotiations.
 - **MOTION:** Craig Lauer moved to approve the total Highway budget as amended for \$859,583; seconded by Bob Guerriero. **VOTING IN FAVOR:** Brian Boyle, Omid Gharony, Bob Guerriero, Ann Hurd, Craig Lauer, and Bill Nickles. **VOTED AND PASSED. UNANIMOUS (6-0).**
- Transfer Station (433)
 - New Wages line was adjusted to a total of \$51,385 based on completed wage negotiations.
 - **MOTION:** Craig Lauer moved to approve the total Transfer Station budget as amended for \$226,985; seconded by Bill Nickles. **VOTING IN FAVOR:** Brian Boyle, Omid Gharony, Bob Guerriero, Ann Hurd, Craig Lauer, and Bill Nickles. **VOTED AND PASSED. UNANIMOUS (6-0).**

Agenda Item #6: Advisory Committee business

- Minutes from the 23 February Advisory Committee Meeting were presented and approved.
- The Advisory Committee (131) and Reserve Fund (132) budgets were reviewed. Both were level funded from FY21 at \$185 and \$100,000, respectively.
 - **MOTION:** Craig Lauer moved to approve the Advisory Committee budget as presented for \$185 and the Reserve Fund budget as presented for \$100,000; seconded by Omid Gharony. **VOTING IN FAVOR:** Brian Boyle, Omid Gharony, Bob Guerriero, Ann Hurd, Craig Lauer, and Bill Nickles. **VOTED AND PASSED. UNANIMOUS (6-0).**
- The next Advisory Committee meeting will take place on March 16, 2021.

Adjourn: **MOTION:** Craig Lauer moved to adjourn at 8:48 PM; seconded by Omid Gharony. **VOTING IN FAVOR:** Brian Boyle, Omid Gharony, Bob Guerriero, Ann Hurd, Craig Lauer, and Bill Nickles. **VOTED AND PASSED. UNANIMOUS (6-0).**

Approved by the Advisory Committee