

ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING

Tuesday, February 1, 2022

6:31 PM

Virtual, via Zoom

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

Members absent: None

Call to order: Chairman Boyle called the meeting to order at 6:31 PM. The entire meeting can be viewed by going to:

[Bolton Access TV – Advisory Committee Meeting](#)

Agenda Item #1: Tax Collector

- Michelle Carlisle presented the budget.
- Salary includes a COLA adjustment, and the stipend is for being certified.
- Purchase and Services is for incidental fees and is being used in part to pay ACH fees for residents on the new billing platform. Michelle watches the ACH cost closely to make sure it does not move too high.
- Software support is for VADAR Systems which provides software tools for tax collection and town management.
- Postage is mailing of all the bills and is going up because postage cost has gone up.
- Tax taking expense is the cost to put a lien on a property. Once that is done it moves to the Treasurer's office for foreclosure proceedings if applicable (land only).
- Dues are for membership in MA Tax Collector Association and Worcester Tax Collector Association.
- Motion to approve Tax Collector budget by Craig Lauer, seconded by Bob Guerriero; **VOTED AND PASSED UNANIMOUS (5-0).**

Agenda Item #2: Treasurer

- Kristen Noel presented the budget.
- Salary includes step and COLA, and the stipend is for being certified.
- The longevity benefit is going up because more employees are becoming eligible. Employees receive the benefit at 10, 15, 20 and 25 years.
- Tax title expense is to fund all the efforts to foreclose on land-only property which the town has been successful doing recently which results in increases to free cash.
- The proposal is to zero out tax title expense and to move this to the revolving fund.
- Software support is for payroll.
- Bank charges is for the cost of borrowing.
- Motion to approve the Treasurer budget by Craig Lauer, seconded by Omid Gharony; **VOTED AND PASSED UNANIMOUS (5-0).**

Agenda Item #3: Debt Service

- Kristen Noel presented the budget.
- Only new item is debt for the fire truck which was approved last year but is being paid in part this year.
- No vote required.

Agenda Item #4: Worcester Regional Retirement Assessment

- Kristen Noel presented the budget.
- A 10% increase is generally expected based on number of employees, age, and other factors.
- Motion to approve the Worcester Regional Retirement Assessment by Omid Gharony, seconded by Craig Lauer; **VOTED AND PASSED UNANIMOUS (6-0)**.

Agenda Item #5: Health Insurance, OPEB, and Life Insurance

- Kristen Noel presented the budget.
- Health Insurance is going up because the joint buying group is losing Fallon as a provider and having to switch to Blue Cross / Blue Shield. This is based on everyone on Fallon moving over to Blue Cross / Blue Shield. Also reflects the cost of adding Dental Insurance to fill coverage gap.
- OPEB is down 6.75% and is well funded.
- Life Insurance is level funded.
- Motion to approve Health Insurance, OPEB and Life Insurance budget by Craig Lauer, seconded by Omid Gharony; **VOTED AND PASSED UNANIMOUS (6-0)**

Agenda Item #6: Town Administration

- Don Lowe presented the budget
- Selectboard is level funded. Motion to approve Selectboard budget by Craig Lauer, seconded by Omid Gharony; **VOTED AND PASSED UNANIMOUS (6-0)**
- Town Administrator budget has compensation reserve because of ongoing or upcoming union contract negotiations. Since the number is not known no vote needed.
- Legal budget is trended positively, so recommendation is level funded. Motion to approve Legal budget by Craig Lauer, seconded by Ann Hurd; **VOTED AND PASSED UNANIMOUS (6-0)**
- Town Hall budget is level funded.
- Town Reports is the cost of producing reports for the town meeting. Down to producing about 100 copies as we have moved to a digital version. Postage cost is zeroed out as we mail out copies with the paper.
- Motion to approve Town Hall and Town Reports budget by Bob Guerriero, seconded by Craig Lauer; **VOTED AND PASSED UNANIMOUS (6-0)**
- Read into the minutes the Minuteman Regional Vocational Tech proposed budget of \$893,714. No vote required. Discussion on the debt exclusion number.

- Workers' Compensation budget is formulaic and is a good number. Motion to approve Workers' Compensation by Ann Hurd, seconded by Craig Lauer; **VOTED AND PASSED UNANIMOUS (6-0)**
- Other Insurance budget is increasing 5.1%. Motion to approve Other Insurance by Craig Lauer, seconded by Omid Gharony; **VOTED AND PASSED UNANIMOUS (6-0)**
- Don Lowe provided a brief review of capital requests.
- The town has received \$1.6 million in ARPA funds. These funds need to be targeted by 2024 but does not need to be spent until 2026. Some of the capital request will be covered by ARPA funds as confirmed by town counsel.

Agenda Item #3: Advisory Committee business

- Meeting minutes from January 18, 2022, were presented. Motion to approve minutes by Craig Lauer, seconded by Omid Gharony; **VOTED AND PASSED UNANIMOUS (6-0)**
- Next meeting will be February 16, 2022 with the Nashoba Regional School District Superintendent and Advisory members of Lancaster and Stowe.
- Adjourn: Motion to adjourn Ann Hurd at 7:50 PM, seconded by Craig Lauer; **VOTED AND PASSED UNANIMOUS (6-0)**

Approved by the Advisory Committee