



Finance Committee

March 2, 2021 2:00 p.m.

Virtual Meeting

Minutes

Pursuant to Governor Baker's March 12, 2020 Order Suspending Certain Provisions of the Open Meeting Law, G.L. c. 30A, §18, this meeting of the Town Council and Finance Committee is being conducted via remote participation.

1. Call to order

Members participating remotely: De Angelis, Griesemer, Pam, Schoen, Steinberg; Resident members participating remotely: Hegner, Kubiak, Sheffler

Members absent: None

Others participating remotely: Town Manager Paul Bockelman, Finance Director Sean Mangano, Comptroller Sonia Aldrich, Clerk of the Council Athena O'Keeffe, DPW Superintendent Guilford Mooring, Delaney, Environmental Scientist Beth Willson

Steinberg called the meeting to order at 2:03 PM, confirmed all participants can hear and be heard, and announced audio and video recording.

2. Storm Water Bylaw and Illicit Discharge Bylaws

Mangano, Mooring, and Willson spoke about the following:

- Brief overview of the purpose of the bylaws
- Cost management
- Timeline of permitting process
- Bylaws as part of a larger federal storm water management program
- Cost to implement both bylaws is relatively small at the outset
- Costs in 3-5 years
- Once the Town identifies bigger problems in the next 3-5 years, there will be a larger program to address those issues
- No capital expenditure in first 5 years other than what has already been added to the capital plan

Questions:

Griesemer asked about buildings that are coming that it would apply to. Mooring said there is no cost for a year while regulations are developed and there will not be much change to implement the bylaw. He added that once problems are identified, they may need to change piping systems, sanitary sewer systems, and design and implement treatment devices before discharging into discharge areas.

De Angelis asked when they will have the specifics because they need to be prepared for coming costs. Mangano said they will have ongoing updates for the committee.

Pam asked about funding and what the cost of not adopting the bylaws would be. Mooring said the Federal EPA would issue a daily fine and issue notice of non-compliance which could result in a court order to force the Town to do it.

Schoen commented that if the town really wants to implement these bylaws and do it right, they should ask for support for the capital costs. She suggested raising the issue at the state level and asking for representatives to advocate on the Town's behalf.

Hegner spoke about zoning and building those requirements into the zoning bylaws.

Kubiak said these are old regulations, not new. He asked if Mooring sees any developments or changes that would impact water issues or private development that could promote improvements in the infrastructure. Mooring said for larger projects, that has been going on and they can start to implement infrastructure improvements for smaller projects with these storm water regulations.

Griesemer asked about where the payment or fee goes. Mangano said the developer would pay these fees to the Town, and Mooring added that the fees do get passed eventually to the end user. Mooring and Mangano further clarified how these fees are passed on.

Griesemer said these bylaws must be adopted by July 1, 2021 and she asked the committee if these bylaws need to come back to them again. Steinberg said the next step would be to draft a report on the bylaws on the financial aspects of the bylaws. He said they don't need to make a recommendation because the Council has no choice but to enact the bylaws.

3. Community Preservation Act, review proposals recommended by Community Preservation Act Committee

Kubiak asked for clarification on the community housing. Delaney spoke about how projects are reimbursed.

Marshall spoke about starting to require grant recipients to submit progress reports and she said there has never been a concluding report in the past about the success of the project.

Aldrich said they are working on a formal review process now. Marshall and Aldrich further discussed about review and progress reports.

Members reviewed the Community Preservation Act Committee recommended project list. Aldrich said these projects are cash or borrowing, no debt or debt service.

Pam asked about the pool conditions. Ziomek commented on the incremental maintenance that they are doing to the Mill River pool and touched on other recreation projects overall that will need CPA investments over time.

MOTION: Steinberg moved, second by Schoen, to recommend appropriation and transfer order FY22-07. Resident members agreed with the motion.

VOTED: Unanimously, 5-0 by roll call to recommend appropriation and transfer order FY22-07.

4. Jones Library, to review the financial elements of each option and provide that review to the Town Council for consideration at its meeting on Monday, April 5, 2021. (Agenda Item 5)

De Angelis said she is concerned about real cost construction estimates, and asked what the estimated cost increase to start the project in 2022 would be, including escalation amount and total cost. Schoen said she sent a detailed list of questions. She said on Total Costs, the documents they received from Monday night with repair options had the numbers that De Angelis referenced that went in with the grant proposal in 2017. Schoen spoke on Cash Flow/Financing and asked what happens for the two years while the building is being built and asked where they would pay rent to.

Kubiak asked about taking the MBLC money and Griesemer asked how they would earn money on the investment from the MBLC money. Mangano said one other town has done that, and the MBLC stated that it is an option but that was during a time when interest rates were better than they are now.

Hegner asked about an EUI of 29 and net zero readiness. Hegner also asked about a phased building approach. Pam asked if CPA funds go towards Town share or Library share of funding.

Steinberg said the Council will decide to approve CPA money and determine how it is allocated.

Kubiak said he is concerned that costs don't look at all accessibility issues. The response was the architect did follow the code for library in the assessment and costs.

Members discussed adding a meeting March 30 to complete the discussion and recommendation to the Council in time for the Council meeting on April 5.

5. Public Comment (Agenda Item 7)

Tim Neale, Amherst resident, said it is important to understand the financial benefit of repair versus renovate/expand such as increased library visits and economic benefits with renovation/expansion rather than repairs.

David Lithgow, Amherst resident, stated after looking at the 2/16 report projecting the costs in the future, and said it would be helpful to see those projections expressed as a percentage of the Town's GDP with conservative assumptions over the 20-30 year period.

Mangano said a similar metric to compare this to would be taxable property values.

6. Review two proposed Financial Orders (Agenda Item 4)

The committee had no questions.

MOTION: Griesemer moved, second by Schoen, to recommend appropriation and transfer order FY21-12 to the Council. Resident members supported the motion.

VOTED unanimously, 5-0 by roll call, to recommend appropriation and transfer order FY21-12 to the Council.

MOTION: De Angelis moved, second by Griesemer, to recommend appropriation and transfer order FY21-13 to the Council. Resident members supported the motion.

VOTED unanimously, 5-0 by roll call, to recommend appropriation and transfer order FY21-13 to the Council.

7. Meeting schedule and plan for May budget review (Agenda Item 6)

Mangano said they will hear back from Department Heads on any conflicts in the next few days. He said that he expects that they will need the same meetings every week for 3-4 weeks as they did last year.

8. Topics not anticipated by the Chair 48 hours before the meeting: None

9. Adjourn

Steinberg declared the meeting adjourned at 4:35 PM

Public participation & public comment instructions:

To join the Council meeting via Zoom teleconferencing: Go to <https://amherstma.zoom.us/j/92128430882> To indicate you wish to make a comment click “raise hand”.

*To join the meeting via telephone: Call (312) 626-6799 or (646) 876-9923; Enter webinar ID when prompted: 921 2843 0882. When prompted to enter your participant number press #; To indicate you wish to make a comment, press *9 on your telephone.*

During the public comment period, the Chair will recognize members of the public. When called on, please identify yourself by stating your full name and address.

Record of Agenda Packet Materials and Documents Presented:

- 8.a. CPAC Annual Report FY22 – Final
- 8.a. CPAC Recommendations – Town Council Presentation
- 8.e-f. Memo on Stormwater Management and IDDE Bylaws with attachments_final 12-14-20
- 8.e-f. Stormwater Management and IDDE Bylaws 12_21_20 Town Council presentation
- Broad categories of Suggested Questions
- CO FY21 – 12 Free Cash to Stabilization Fund
- CO FY21 – 12 Free Cash to Stabilization Fund MEMO TO FINCOM
- CO FY21 – 13 Rescind Authorized Unissued Debt
- CO FY21 – 13 Rescind Authorized Unissued Debt MEMO TO FINCOM
- CO FY22 – 07 CPA – Project Allocations
- CPAC Annual Report FY22 – Final
- Finance Committee Agenda 03.02.2021
- Projected debt schedule (revised 2.25.21)
- Stormwater permit fees –town comparison