



Finance Committee
June 10, 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 Finance Committee is being conducted via remote participation.

Members participating remotely: De Angelis, Griesemer, Schoen, Pam, Steinberg, non-voting members Hegner, Kubiak, and Sheffler

Members absent: *None*

Others participating remotely: Town Manager Paul Bockelman, Finance Director Sean Mangano, Comptroller Sonia Aldrich, Assistant Comptroller Holly Bowser, Principal Assessor Liz Duffy, Town Clerk Athena O'Keeffe, Michelle Miller, and Minute Taker Scott Belden.

1. Call to Order

Steinberg declared the presence of a quorum, called the meeting at 2:03 PM, confirmed all participants could hear and be heard, and announced audio and visual recording.

Video link: [Amherst Media - YouTube](#)

2. African Heritage Reparation Coalition (AHRC) Charge and Reparations Funding Discussion and Possible Vote

Steinberg welcomed Miller into the meeting.

Mangano gave an overview of a memo sent to the Finance Committee regarding the Stabilization Fund for Reparations. Steinberg noted that the amount transferred each year would have to be voted on by the Council, and that transfers from the fund for use by the AHRC will also require Council vote.

Members discussed the following:

- Establishing a committee to handle the stabilization fund
- Fund income over a long term period
- Public versus private donations for the fund
- Whether the Town or AHRC dictated where funds could be used

- Other possible revenue streams for the fund, and if funds could carry over from previous years

Miller asked if there is a body to make recommendations on a yearly basis, and if the fund could be used as collateral with a bank for a potential loan. Mangano replied that there are currently no guidelines for allowable expenditures, and the Council would be responsible for making a body of recommendations. Steinberg noted that any proposal for expenditure in the future would have to be scrutinized to ensure it does not break the anti-Aid amendment before moving forward.

MOTION: Griesemer motioned, De Angelis seconded, for the Finance Committee to recommend to the Town Council the establishment of a Reparations Stabilization Fund for the purposes of providing a revenue stream for reparations.

Members discussed the wording.

Griesemer withdrew her motion, seconded by De Angelis

MOTION: Griesemer motioned, De Angelis seconded, for the Finance Committee to recommend to the Town Council the approval of Approval Order #:FY22-15 An Order Creating a Special Purpose Stabilization Fund for Reparations.

VOTE: 5-0-0, Unanimous vote. Non-voting members voiced their support.

Members briefly discussed the timeline of establishing the fund. Steinberg asked if the Council required a vote on the Amherst Heritage Reparations Assembly (AHRA) Charge. O’Keeffe replied that a vote was not required.

8. Public Comment

Steinberg opened the meeting up for public comment at this time.

No attendees raised their hands and the Committee moved onto the next agenda item.

5. Third Quarter Budget Report Presentation and Discussion

Bowser provided a brief overview for the third quarter budget report for FY21. Mangano noted that a few of the enterprise funds were currently underperforming, which could affect future decisions on the budget. Members discussed the following:

- Specific line items running under budget
- ARPA funds to address Enterprise fund shortages
- COVID Vaccine Fund information
- Amherst College funds
- Reopening of the UMASS Hotel

3. Optional Tax Exemption Presentation Discussion and Possible Vote

Duffy gave a brief overview of tax exemptions and who qualifies for them. Pam asked Duffy to walk through an example of a senior exemption, and Duffy provided an explanation of how to move forward with an application for an exemption as a senior.

Schoen suggested an informational sheet for seniors to use to learn of their eligibility and to navigate an application if they are eligible. Mangano and Duffy replied they were working on a flyer.

MOTION: Griesemer motioned, De Angelis seconded, that the Finance Committee recommend to the Town Council the approval of Approval Order FY22-11 An Order Approving the Acceptance of Optional Tax Exemptions for FY2022.

VOTE: 5-0-0 Unanimous Vote. Non-voting members voiced their support.

4. Capital Improvement Program Forum Discussion

Steinberg asked if there was any discussion on the Capital Improvement Program Forum.

Members briefly discussed the Capital Improvement Program.

6. Review of all Budget Recommendations

Griesemer shared her screen regarding a motion made on 6/1 and provided some clarifications on her specific wording regarding the community responder program.

MOTION: Griesemer motioned, De Angelis seconded, to request a reconsideration of her motion: To recommend to the Town Council that they direct the Town Manager to seek funds to fill eight community responder positions and the other elements of the program as proposed on May 27, 2021 and report back to the Town Council, and Residents of Amherst, how he plans to accomplish this no later than January 31, 2022.

Pam asked for clarification of what was changed and why the Committee would reconsider.

Schoen noted a typo in the amended motion.

Reconsideration VOTE: 5-0-0 Unanimous Vote. Non-voting members voiced their support.

MOTION: Griesemer motioned, De Angelis seconded, to recommend to the Town Council that it direct the Town Manager to seek funds to fill eight community responder positions and report back to the Town Council, and Residents of Amherst, no later than January 31, 2022 about how he plans to implement and evaluate the program and assure that funding can continue in FY23.

Griesemer noted that the first change from “they” to “it” was grammatical, and provided her reasoning for the various changes she made to the motion.

Schoen asked if the target number of employees is eight no matter what, and suggested revising to say “up to 8” and add “multi-year funds” to the wording.

Steinberg asked if Griesemer was content with changes, Griesemer agreed. De Angelis expressed concern with the “up to eight” wording, citing that staffing needs may change in the years to come.

MOTION: Griesemer motioned, Pam seconded, to amend the motion to add “multi-year” and “up to” into the wording.

Kubiak asked if these eight positions have to be Town employees. Griesemer noted her wording of “how he plans to implement” opens up the options for various implementations.

VOTE: 4-1-0 (Griesemer, Steinberg, Pam, Schoen voted Yes, De Angelis voted No). Motion passes. Non-voting members voiced their support.

MOTION: Griesemer motioned, De Angelis seconded, to recommend to the Town Council that it direct the Town Manager to seek multi-year funds to fill up to eight community responder positions and report back to the Town Council, and Residents of Amherst, no later than January 31, 2022

about how he plans to implement and evaluate the program and assure that funding can continue in FY23.

Pam asked for qualification on why the motion had “assure that funding can continue in FY23”.

Griesemer replied that it was to ensure town funds as well as other funding revenues could be maintained.

VOTE: 4-1-0 (Griesemer, Steinberg, Pam, Schoen voted Yes, De Angelis voted No). Motion passes.

Non-voting members voiced their support.

7. Auditor Selection Process, if time permits

Steinberg gave an overview of what he learned in a meeting on the auditor selection process the prior day.

De Angelis noted that the recommendation was rotation every 5-8 years. Mangano requested informal approval of the Request For Proposals (RFP) document to move forward on the process.

Members discussed the extent of the Committee’s responsibility to vote on the approval process before moving to vote.

MOTION: Pam motioned, Griesemer seconded, to recommend that the Town Council the approval of the Request For Proposals.

VOTE: 5-0-0 Unanimous Vote. Non-voting members voiced their support.

9. Topics not anticipated by the Chair 48 hours before the meeting

Steinberg noted that the report sent to the Committee the previous day did not include anything on general government and that he would be writing a report on it. Schoen and Mangano briefly discussed future improvements to the formatting of the budget book moving forward.

Steinberg recognized Toni Cunningham from the attendees section, who expressed her disappointment with the passing of the amended motion regarding CRESS. She noted that she believed the responsibility of the funding for CRESS falls onto the Committee, not the Town Manager.

10. Adjourn

Steinberg adjourned at 4:30PM.

Draft Respectfully Submitted,

Scott Belden, Minute Taker

Reviewed, revised, approved Schoen 8/9/21

Record of agenda packet materials and documents presented

Finance Committee Agenda 06.10.2021

3rd qtr Mar 31 2021 YTD Budget Report to FINCOM full document

AHRA Charge as voted at GOL 6-2-21 REDLINED

CO FY22 - 05A - Capital Improvement Program

CO FY22 - 06 - Capital Improvement Program - Borrowing Authorizations

CO FY22 - 11 Acceptance of Optional Tax Exemption

CO FY22 - 11 Acceptance of Optional Tax Exemption MEMO

DRAFT CO FY22 - 15 - Establish a Stabilization Fund for the purpose of Reparations
FY22 Capital Improvement Program Public Form 6.7.22
Memo to Finance Committee - Reparations - 06-09-2021
RFP ACCT 22-001 Auditing Services - Draft 2020-05-12