



Finance Committee and Town Council Meeting

May 10, 2022, 9:00 AM

Virtual Meeting

Minutes

Pursuant to Chapter 20 of the Acts of 2021, this meeting was conducted via remote means.

1. Call to order, Review Agenda

Members participating remotely: Steinberg; Griesemer; Schoen; Miller; Walker; non-voting members: Hegner; Holloway; Kubiak

Members absent:

Others participating remotely: Town Manager Paul Bockelman; Town Councilor Ana Devlin Gauthier; Town Councilor Dorothy Pam; Finance Director Sean Mangano; Comptroller Sonia Aldrich; Clerk of the Council Athena O'Keeffe; Minute Taker W. Kaizen

Steinberg declared the presence of a quorum, called the meeting to order at 9:03 am, confirmed all participants can hear and be heard, and announced audio and video recording

Griesemer declared the presence of a quorum of the Town Council and confirmed Councilors could hear and be heard.

2. FY23 Budget Review: overall budget review, questions, and discussion

Hegner asked about finding recovery funds in budget; Mangano replied that ARPA funds are not in there but said that he will add info on how those funds are being spent

Griesemer asked that new councilors be reminded what and how the council can change the budget; Steinberg said that the council can only reduce amounts in budget, with special exceptions for schools; Mangano described how the budget process works over the course of the year; Steinberg that after the budget is done in July is a good time to review the process

Griesemer noted that other towns are concerned about spending all ARPA funds before the midterm elections; Mangano described the town's current use of ARPA funds

Schoen asked for more guidance about how ARPA funds could contribute to the new elementary school building project; Kubiak discussed other uses for ARPA funds

3. FY23 Capital Improvement Program

Members discussed the expense and uses of the proposed purchase of a new platform ladder truck for the Fire Department

Members discussed the new cost escalation reserve that will help cover inflation on capital expenses

Schoen asked Bockelman about surplus/unused buildings like the South Amherst School and the Hitchcock Center; Bockelman said that town staff is currently working on an inventory of the buildings that the town owns; Kubiak said we should also look at developing property for future use

Hegner spoke in support of the new ladder truck and against the shelving for the library

Devlin Gauthier and Schoen reviewed capital requests at JCPC beyond the fire truck, including Cherry Hill, the HR and assessor studies, and the resident capital request; Pam spoke against the idea of having studies be part of capital expenditures; Schoen and Steinberg responded that these studies are legally required and go for more than one year so don't fit into the operating budget; members further discussed issues related to these studies, including HR cost increases

Schoen asked about voting on the one-year vs. the five-year Capital Improvement Plan—Steinberg said that they could potentially split the vote; regarding the five-year plan, Schoen expressed concerns about building both new fire station and DPW buildings; members discussed conducting a future review of the four building projects

4. FY23 Water/Sewer Rates

Hegner asked Mangano to review issues surrounding water rates and Mangano reviewed the Water Fund Budget Projections document in the packet; Griesemer asked Mangano to review issues related to the Centennial Water Plant repairs; Mangano said that only what's been authorized by Council is in the current budget; he said that several sources of additional funds from the state may help to cover cost escalation; Bockelman said that cost escalation may not be as dire as previously thought

VOTE

MOTION: Griesemer moved and Schoen seconded that the Finance Committee recommend that the Town Council approve Approval Order FY23-10 Water and Sewer Rates

DISCUSSION: none

VOTED: unanimously in favor

5. Third quarter FY22 budget report

Aldrich reviewed the Third Quarter FY22 budget report document in the packet

Steinberg asked if there would be surplus at the end of the year as usual; Aldrich said she didn't know how much surplus there will be, but there will be some, although lower than previous years

Members discussed with Aldrich, Mangano and Bockelman how unspent funds are dealt with at the end of the fiscal year; members also discussed caps on moving amounts from one area to another and the review process that takes place with the state D.O.R.

Griesemer noted that marijuana related revenue has been impacted by the growth of stores in neighboring towns

Members discussed with Mangano the water/sewer fund; Mangano expressed concern about the revenue side of the water fund; he said that there are currently enough reserves in the fund to help for the moment, although they will need to be build back up in the near future

6. Public Comment

None

7. Items not anticipated by the Chair 48 Hours in advance

None

8. Announcements and next agenda preview

Next meeting: 5/12/22

9. Adjourn

Steinberg declared the meeting adjourned at 10:55 am

Minutes prepared by W. Kaizen

Record of Agenda Packet Materials and Documents Presented:

05-10-2022 Finance Committee Agenda

3rd qtr Report for Period Ending March 31, 2022

9610 - Jones Special Collections Shelving

AFD Platform versus ladder rationale

FY23 Capital Improvement Program - Final 5.2.22

JCPC shelving request - additional information