



Finance Committee Meeting

Special Meeting of the Town Council

April 26, 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; Kubiak; Holloway

Members absent: none

Councilors participating remotely: Shalini Bahl-Milne, Pat De Angelis, Dorothy Pam, Pam Rooney, and Jennifer Taub

Councilors absent: Hanneke, Lopes, and Devlin Gauthier

Others participating remotely: Finance Director Sean Mangano; ARPS Finance Director Doug Slaughter; Comptroller Sonia Aldrich; Clerk of the Council Athena O'Keeffe; Assistant Superintendent of Public Works Amy Rusiecki; Superintendent of Public Works Guilford Mooring; Building Commissioner Rob Morra; Minute Taker W. Kaizen

Steinberg declared the presence of a quorum, called the meeting to order at 9:00 am, confirmed all participants can hear and be heard, and announced audio and video recording; Steinberg left for another meeting and Schoen took over as Chair at 10:00 am; Holloway left at 11:00 am. Steinberg returned at 11:00 am. Schoen continued to chair the meeting.

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

2. Regional Budget and Debt Authorization – Discussion and Possible Recommendation

Mangano presented a document with questions about school budget; Slaughter reviewed the document in detail, which included his replies to these questions (see packet); issues addressed by Slaughter include:

- what happens when current grant money runs out
- funding the capital plan and the debt schedule
- budget comparison to FY19, including school choice
- staffing

- revolving funds, including food services fund, school choice tuition, athletic revolving fund

Pam and Slaughter discussed the fees paid by student to participate in athletics—Pam expressed concern that students are charged fees for participation in athletic programs.

Members discussed the capital debt schedule with Mangano and Slaughter—Amherst is assessed 80% of what's on chart in packet on the Q&A page on Capital Debt included in the packet; Slaughter described the process that happens if one of the towns rejects the proposed budget.

VOTE

MOTION: Griesemer moved and Miller seconded to recommend that Town Council approve APPROVAL ORDER FY23-01, Amherst-Pelham Regional School District Regional Assessment

DISCUSSION: none

VOTE: unanimously in favor

VOTE

MOTION: Griesemer moved and Schoen seconded to recommend that Town Council approve the APPROPRIATION AND TRANSFER ORDER FY23-02, Amherst-Pelham Regional School District Capital TK

DISCUSSION: LG noted that the SC met TC's guidelines

VOTE: unanimously in favor

VOTE

MOTION: Griesemer moved and Walker seconded to recommend that Town Council approve APPROVAL ORDER FY23-03a, Amherst-Pelham Regional School District Capital Debt Authorization

DISCUSSION: Members noted that the high school's track has been separated out from this authorization

VOTE: unanimously in favor

VOTE

MOTION: Griesemer moved and Miller seconded to recommend that Town Council approve APPROVAL ORDER FY23-03b, Amherst-Pelham Regional School District Capital Debt Authorization

DISCUSSION: Miller noted that this is for the track and field; Mangano described how the process will work moving forward with the Amherst Town Council and other towns in the region; he said all four towns need to approve this order and shared a power point on the track and field funding; members discussed the estimated financial impact on Amherst; Hegner expressed the concern that the expense is not yet well enough defined; Griesemer said that's she is going to vote "yes" because it sends a signal that the town of Amherst supports building a new track; Kubiak spoke in support as well, as did Schoen, who noted that at the very least this will cover the repair of the track if not the entire project; members discussed if the full plan to repair both the track and field is feasible; Pam expressed her opposition to artificial tuft, but her support for rebuilding the track; Walker expressed her opposition because she supports just repairing the

track and not the expense of the field as well; she also expressed concerns over spending money on the full project when we're charging students fees for participating in sports

VOTE: 4-1-0 with Walker as no; nonvoting members: 2-1-0, with Hegner as no

3. Water and Sewer Regulations – Discussion

Mooring responded to questions raised regarding regulations regarding the cost to the town and timeline for potential changes to the town policy surrounding water line and sewer main breaks; he said that \$200K per year is currently spent for fixing both water and sewer breaks for home owners along the public way only; if the town became responsible all the way to the house, it would cost \$2M per year, maybe more if it includes fixing landscaping and other affected features as well; for the university and colleges this would as well, this would be a much bigger cost; he said that the town can make whatever rules it wants regarding eligibility under these changes, if they were made; Mooring said that now the town typically only goes to the property line for larger institutions and apartment buildings; Griesemer noted that this change would increase water/sewer rates for customers; Taub discussed the possibility of buried line insurance coverage becoming available for home owners; Mooring said they were meeting with insurance provider to discuss this issue; Hegner raised several questions, which he also submitted in writing to the DPW, including due process for home owners, as built drawings, and the technical terminology in the existing regulations and Rusiecki responded to some of these concerns; Griesemer said TSO, not the Finance Committee should handle these concerns; this issue will return for discussion in June.

4. Optional Tax Exemption – Discussion and Recommendation

5. Public Comment

6. Rental registration fee

Decision need by May 16th

Discussion on two topics: proposed fee increase and revenue for additional staffing; Morra said that there is currently no fee for compliance inspections; Steinberg said that the policy needs to be clarified; Miller said that the current policy is by complaint and per unit; Taub noted that CRC is currently reviewing the issue.

VOTE

Motion: Griesemer moved and Miller seconded that the Finance Committee recommend that Town Council approve of the proposed rental fee schedule

Discussion: Steinberg said that he's not ready to vote because of lack of clarification regarding whether the charges would be per unit or for an entire building; Morra said that having the flexibility was good; Pam also expressed similar concerns; Schoen said that as currently worded, the fee is imposed per inspection, not per unit; Steinberg was satisfied with Morra's response

Vote: unanimously in favor, with Holloway absent

7. Announcements and next agenda preview

Members choose the division of labor for the upcoming budget review and who would focus on each section of the budget.

FC is recommending that the public hearing on budget be scheduled for 5:00 pm Monday, May 16th before the regular Town Council meeting.

8. Items not anticipated by the Chair 48 Hours in advance - *None*

9. Announcements and next agenda preview

Next meeting: May 3 at 9:00 AM

10. Items Not Anticipated by the Chair 48 Hours in Advance - *None*

11. Adjourn

Griesemer declared the Town Council adjourned at 11:27 am

Schoen declared the meeting adjourned at 11:28 am

Minutes prepared by W. Kaizen

Record of Agenda Packet Materials and Documents Presented:

04-26-2022 Town Council and Finance Committee Agenda

Regional School Budget Q&A 4.26.22