

Finance Commission Minutes

Date: Thursday, May 27, 2021 at 6:00pm via Zoom
Attendees: TOW: Robbie Powers, Paul Flanagan, Scott Wiley, Denise Quist, Al Legee
FC: Brent Farrell, Jim Letterie, Karin Chavis, Shannon Poulos, Tracey Honan, Matt Gorzkowicz, Jan Twombly, Bill Gault, Richard Ferrino, Joe Hanlon, Shannon Poulos
Public: Stacy Calla, Wendy Millar, Larry (Unknown)
Absent: None

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Meeting called to order at 6:00 pm by Letterie, Chairperson with attendee roll call by Chavis.

Minutes presented for approval from May 20th with motion for approval by Ferrino and second by Twombly. Minutes from May 24th with motion for approval by Twombly with second by Honan. Absent members abstained where appropriate.

Primary purpose of the meeting is to meet with various department heads including (i) Paul Flanagan and Scott Wiley from the Fire Department and (ii) Al Legee from Inspectional Services and dialogue / finalize potential budget modifications identified to date.

High level commentary regarding the various departments outlined below:

Paul Flanagan / Scott Wiley – Fire Department

- SAFER Grant for four firefighters for first year, 75% for second year and 50% for third year – grant period began in September.
- Noted that number of personnel have been poached by MassPort
- Bringing in outside firefighters as contractors
- Capital request for new engine, held \$50K from FY 2021 with goal of acquiring engine in FY 2022
- 2013 vintage unit borrowed from City of Boston in time being
- Ordering new engine with delivery in 10-12 months, \$649K total cost
- Ladder truck getting old with \$17K in repairs completed recently
- More difficult in providing services for small town
- Ceiling leaks are rampant - \$25K in capital for slate roof
- New firehouse(s) is crucial, exceedingly difficult to operate especially in COVID environment
- Roofs for firehouses are original for 1887 and 1904
- Two vacant positions held, required to keep SAFER grant
- New facility limited to available buildable land in town, currently looking at baseball fields
- Limited understanding of how ARPA dollars can be spent
- Have \$151K pending in reimbursements related to CARES funding
- Dispatch Center operationally been effective, with one firefighter / two police officers on street
- Deep water vehicle acquired recently with federal dollars

Al Legee – Inspectional Services

- Budget status quo
- Issued 120 building permits over prior year
- All inspectors are part-time as well as clerk
- New permit software is highly regarded and working effectively
- Department is strained to provide services as mandated
- Prefer to move building inspector to full-time
- Successful in liening properties and recouping dollars until new buyer can be identified
- COVID delayed moved forward with addressing problem properties
- Pest services believed to be contractual
- Stipend line item of ~\$30K for various extra services by existing personnel (weekend inspections, etc.)

- Desire \$30K for additional hours for building inspector and clerk hours
- \$18K short in salaries versus FY 2021
- Seeing potential issues with hoarding, etc. in near future
- TBD if additional hours can be addressed by CARES or ARPA funding
- Special articles for derelict properties and pest control were addressed in budget
- Chavis noted delta of \$45K from 2021 versus 2022 budget of ~\$10K for pest control

Inspectional services was the final interview for the review process.

Letterie mentioned interim CFO hired for 20 hours per week for the next 90 days. CFO noted certain other thoughts / estimates related to reallocation of dollars for revenues and expenses in comparison to suggestions.

Points made by various members related to budget adjustments include the below along with certain motions and votes:

- 1) Comb vacancies and when they might be filled
- 2) Honan and Twombly not supportive of cutting salary for Town Planner, reducing her to part-time
- 3) Need to clarify COA need for \$21K to reopen for same amount of hours
- 4) Motions to increase COA by \$21K for salaries. All in favor.
- 5) Motion to add conservation agent for \$23K by Letterie. All in favor.
- 6) Motion to increase union negotiation salaries by \$375K from ~\$75K. All in favor with exception of Gault and Chavis. Poulos abstained.
- 7) Motion to increase outside counsel by \$35K from \$65K to \$100K. All in favor.
- 8) Poulos advocated for thorough review and evaluation of IT providers and service suites.
Consensus to maintain existing line-item funding with strong recommendation to review and fund via ARPA.
- 9) Discussion surrounding school fund and adjustment to proposed funding. Motion to reduce funding for schools by \$50K.
- 10) Motion to remove funding for Granicus of ~\$8K from council reserve budget. All in favor.
- 11) Motion to reduce funding for cell phones of ~\$4K across town departments. All in favor.
- 12) Motion to reduce funding for trash removal enterprise fund by \$64K from \$1,264,000 to \$1.2MM.
Farrell and Ferrino voted no, all other members voted yes.

Next meeting scheduled for Thursday, June 3rd.

Chavis motioned to adjourn, seconded by all members.

Meeting adjourned at 9:01 pm.