

Winthrop Finance Commission Minutes

Date: Wednesday, April 24, 2024, at 6:00pm
Attendees: TOW: Sarah Johnson (SJ), Steve Calla (SC)
FC: Brent Farrell (BF), Karin Chavis (KC), William Gault (WG), Matt Gorzkowicz (MG), Shannon Poulos (SP), Hannah Belcher (HB), John DaRos (JD), John Macero (JM), Max Tassinari (MT)
Absent: Joe Hanlon

Meeting called to order at 6:03 pm by KC.

Rollcall vote completed by KC. All present except individuals noted above. Motion by JM seconded by MT.

Focus of meeting will be on the discussion and review of the various departments and enterprise funds handled by SC. SC outlined various concerns related to operating expense increases against 2.5%

Highway Division

- Currently has 8 vacant positions, forcing reliance on outside contractors for certain work related to treework, landscaping, water / sewer repairs and asphalt services. All positions are fully funded in contract.
- Issues competing compensation wise with surrounding agencies including the City of Boston, MWRA, MA Highway, etc., especially for higher trained positions
- Personnel expense line item increase of \$22K driven by result of union negotiations
- Discussion related to food waste and composting and available third-party services to reduce tonnage

Cemetery Division

- Considering lottery system for lot selection of preferred sites and pre-sale of certain lots to raise additional capital
- Personnel line item increased due to union negotiations

Building Maintenance

- Personnel line item increased due to union negotiations
- Schools are separated from the building maintenance department
- Brightly Services identified deferred maintenance items across the town owned real estate portfolio, primary items are HVAC, roofing and window replacement
- Outside of fire houses, the EB Newton building needs significant upgrades / maintenance

Snow & Ice

- Material only is budgeted, with costs typically \$300-\$350K annually
- Salt costs are \$88 per ton, significant salt utilization this year with limited plowing
- 90 tons required for entire town each application, depending on storm 3-4x applications required

Solid Waste Enterprise Fund

- Waste removal contract increased 2.25% per existing contract, which ends this year
- Trash fee of \$160 per year for 5,935 deployed bins townwide
- Housing Authority fee should be \$50K per year instead of the current \$20K
- Receipts from bag fees was reduced significantly from \$250K to \$30K due to lack of demand
- 90% collections expected on new trash fee receipts
- Structural deficit exists and needs to be
- Replacing repairing 10-15 recycling bins weekly, replacement bins cost \$180 each

Water / Sewer Enterprise Fund

- Unaccounted water utilization is down to 11% from 25% in 2018, 12% is industry standard
- New sewer vacuum truck is ~\$550K in expected cost
- 46 total miles exist in the town, roughly 20 miles have been replaced
- New water meter replacement expected to begin in near-term – 600 still outdated out of 4,500 in total
- \$300K expected per year for five years to replace existing newer meters
- Lead line replacements on-going with 300 or so left, 100 occur per year and then partial replacement needs to occur

Various discussion points amongst the members included:

- Stormwater enterprise funds exist across most municipalities

MT motioned to adjourn; HB seconded. Approved by all present members.

Meeting adjourned at 6:08 pm.