

## FINANCE COMMITTEE

## Minutes

Zoom Meeting ID 749-184-730

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MILLBURY, MASS.

Date: April 6, 2020

Time: 6:30 p.m.

Present: Kuphal, Kennedy, Cooney, Cofske, Kupcinskis, Noonan, O'Connell

Absent: None

Meeting called to order at 6:40 p.m.

Scott Despres, Chris Naff, Keith Caruso, DPW, Andrew Vanni, Finance Director and James Kelley, Acting Town Manager were present at the Zoom meeting.

Jen O'Connell: I received a robo call on the Elections. What is the status of the Town Meeting?

James Kelley: It is scheduled for June 9, 2020.

Jen O'Connell: Is that set in stone?

James Kelley: The Moderator asked that it be subject to change.

Jen O'Connell: What about graduation?

James Kelley: So far as I know, it is still on.

Jen O'Connell: We are here tonight to go over the Town Meeting Warrant Articles. Will there be a Special Town Meeting prior to the opening of the Annual Town Meeting?

James Kelley: I don't know that we will need a Special Town Meeting.

Jen O'Connell: Are there no housekeeping items?

James Kelley: Not that I know of.

Jen O'Connell: Article 3 is for the Claims Settlements for \$500.

James Kelley: I am still waiting to get the Warrant back from legal, which is why I put together the spreadsheet, so you would know what we are looking at. The Claims Settlements are for mailbox destruction or any other small claims that come through.

Jen O'Connell: Article 4, Disposal of Abandoned Property, is a standard yearly article. Article 5, Senior Work off Program, is a standard yearly article. Article 6, Cable Access, is a standard yearly article.

James Kelley: Article 8 is to reauthorize prior year articles.

Jen O'Connell: Does this include the Schools?

James Kelley: No, it does not. We have an article for road improvements, Transfer Station improvements, and Cemetery improvements. I am waiting to hear from DOT concerning the article for the McCracken Road TIP Project. I may not need to have the money reauthorized.

Albert Kupcinskis: I think there was a misunderstanding on the McCracken Road tree project. This was done by a private contractor, not National Grid.

James Kelley: We have upgrades to the Library. We have water leaking above the door of the Library. We need to address that. We need to upgrade the equipment at Woolley World. Town Wide re-

evaluations has \$19,000 left in the account. We would need to reauthorize this money so we will not have to raise the amount again this year.

Andrew Vanni: Last year's amount came in lower than anticipated.

James Kelley: Next, you have the Sewer Department articles.

Jen O'Connell: We discussed those last week.

James Kelley: Article 12 is for the Bridge and Roadway account. This is to restructure, repair and repave the roads. We have to have BANs to continue the project.

Jen O'Connell: Articles 13, 14 and 15 are the Reserve accounts.

James Kelley: Article 13 would be for \$250,000 to the Stabilization Account. Article 14 would be for \$160,000 to OPEB. Article 15 would be \$100,000 to the Compensated Absence Fund. These would all be coming from Free Cash.

Jen O'Connell: Is the Compensated Absence Fund the vacation hours?

James Kelley: This is the vacation and sick buyout.

Jen O'Connell: What is the buyback amount for sick and vacation time?

James Kelley: I will have to look that up for you.

Jen O'Connell: At one point, we were looking at about \$1.5Million.

James Kelley: Things have changed with the union contracts.

Jen O'Connell: Article 16 is for the Mass Clean Water Trust. Is this part of the MS4?

James Kelley: This is a long program. We get 6.6% loan forgiveness on the principle. We have 20 years to pay this off. This should get you through the next couple of years.

James Kelley: Capital Improvements has a whole list.

\$265,000 for Downtown Signal Lights-waiting on legislature on this

\$ 60,000 for Engineering for Downtown

\$ 35,000 for Town Clerk Voting Machines

\$185,000 Second year of School Technology

\$ 65,000 Type A School Bus-8-10 year life span

\$ 35,000 COA-Storage Shed to replace rotting wooden sheds

\$ 25,000 Stairs and walkway at Library-Tripping hazard

\$ 50,000 Cemetery Repairs

\$ 25,000 Veteran Monument Repairs

\$131,000 Chapter 90 Deficit-Prior management overspent funds on roads

Andrew Vanni: If we don't cover the deficit, we get penalized on our Free Cash.

James Kelley: We also have an article for a chip truck for the Tree Warden. It is a good investment.

Keith Caruso: We have a limited amount of trucks that can transport the chipper. He can save the Town money by doing the jobs on our own instead of hiring out. He also plows for the Town and this would give us an additional Town truck on the road.

James Kelley: We have \$60,000 to complete the oil pollution project at the ASA Waters. Then we can file the final report. There is \$250,000 for our annual MS4 amount.

Jen O'Connell: It looks like this is in two articles. Is this a duplicate?

James Kelley: The other article is for the sewer project.

James Kelley: There are two articles for the Fire Department. One is for the design in the amount of \$315,000 and one for the construction and bid project in the amount of \$350,000.

Jen O'Connell: We should have both chiefs in next week to talk about this.

James Kelley: I am still waiting for legal to get back to me.

Dave Cofske: I don't think that the Finance Committee has what you are looking at.

James Kelley: I sent this out this afternoon to Jen. I don't have all the e-mails.

Jen O'Connell sent out copies to the Committee members

James Kelley: I am establishing a Health Insurance Stabilization Fund. We expect a large increase after this next year. There are two separate articles to increase the tax exemption for the Seniors and the Veterans. One is from the Board of Assessors and one is from the Board of Selectmen. We are still working on the wording.

Jen O'Connell: What is the monetary amount to the Town?

James Kelley: It is not a monetary amount to the Town. It is to the taxpayers.

Steve Noonan: How much more than we have now?

James Kelley: It could be as much as double the exemption.

Jen O'Connell: Is only one of the articles going on the Warrant?

James Kelley: It will be up to the voters on which one they will accept.

Jen O'Connell: We cannot have them vote yes on both or does it cancel out one if both are voted in?

James Kelley: One is higher than the other.

Jen O'Connell: What about the ASA Waters Special Exemption?

James Kelley: Under the law right now we cannot take commission from the vendors. This would give them a percentage back per event. It would also authorize vendors for more than 3 years. If we have a longer contract, we can get better rates.

Jen O'Connell: What is the sewer privilege fee?

James Kelley: That is to hook up to the sewer. You discussed this with Gary last week. We are waiting to hear back from Brian as to whether we can put the two sewer articles together.

Dave Cofske: Who is affected by the sewer privilege fee?

James Kelley: I believe that would be the developers, so that they have access to the system. I haven't seen the wording on the Soil Regulating By-Law. We are modifying the Solar Scale By-Law concerning the buffer zones. Some runoff has gone into the wetlands. This would increase the buffer zone to prevent this. Present solar projects would be under the existing By-Law. The Engineers have recommended a language change in the Storm Water Management. There are 4 articles from the Library Trustees. One is a domestic cone.

Jen O'Connell: Why is it under the Library? This is for a doorbell cam.

James Kelley: This were put on by an elected official.

Keith Caruso: Getting back to the sewer privilege fee. This is for residential hookups. There hasn't been an increase in many years. The pump station at Elm Court is going through so we will not have to repurpose the money in another article.

James Kelley: I excluded the Police Station design and construction bid for \$550,000. I felt that the Fire Station needed to be done first. We can wait until the fall Town Meeting to take on the Police Station.

Dave Cofske: Based on the Town Hall and the School closings, how is that affecting the FY2020 budget? Is there going to be a surplus?

James Kelley: We have people working from home and in the building. The inspectors and emergency management are in. We added a person at the Transfer Station. The DPW is working on a rotating schedule. Parks is working. Cemetery is working. Two thirds of the work at the Town Hall is being done at home. We do have people rotating through the Town Hall.

Chris Kennedy: Are you taking precautions on people's personal information, with work being done at home?

James Kelley: We have made sure to use the drop box.

Andrew Vanni: Denise is working primarily by herself and I am working by myself in the office.

Chris Kennedy: Is there a security on what they are doing at home to protect information?

James Kelley: Payroll is being done in the office. None of this is leaving the Town Hall.

Jen O'Connell: Students are not in the School using the supplies. Is there a savings there that can be brought into next year?

James Kelley: If you are looking for the savings from the school, you would have to ask them. The Council on Aging has doubled their Meals on Wheels program.

Dave Cofske: Departments providing services should be using their money. Has our spending gone down during this and will we see more going into Free Cash?

James Kelley: We are still holding a number of hearings that were previously scheduled. We have a 45 day grace period. The Town Clerk's office has an election on April 28 that needs to be processed. We are limiting contact in the building. You may see a small savings.

Nicole Cooney: I think we are spending more on cleaning supplies and keeping our services going.

James Kelley: We are keeping the DPW at a safe distance and Emergency Management has been trying to keep up with the supplies needed to keep everyone safe. Zoom is costing us \$15.00 per month. The free Zoom doesn't guarantee that it wouldn't crash.

Albert Kupcinkas: Schools would save on heat but they still have to pay their employees.

Nicole Cooney: Depending on how long the restaurants are closed will have an effect on the Town because the Town is not collecting the meals tax.

James Kelley: We are still getting the excise and real estate taxes. Restaurant and meals tax and the marijuana money isn't coming in.

James Kelley: I will not be in the Town Hall next week for the meeting. The building will be getting a thorough cleaning. I will zoom from home.

Jen O'Connell: We have our Public Hearing next week. I don't know how moving the Town Meeting changes our timeline. I will get in touch with Jayne. I would like to get everything completed as if the

Town Meeting were still on the original day. Everything in this Warrant seems straight forward. I do not foresee any problems.

James Kelley: This is a year that a rainy day fund should be started.

Jen O'Connell: We will have our Public Hearing on Monday, then vote the budget and Warrant and then we will be done. We should have the Police Chief and the Fire Chief in to discuss their projects.

Motioned by Noonan, seconded by Kupcinkas to adjourn at 7:50 p.m.

Roll Call Vote: Cofske, yes; Kuphal, yes; Cooney, yes; Kennedy, yes; Noonan, yes; Kupcinkas, yes; O'Connell, yes

