

FINANCE COMMITTEE
Minutes
Zoom Meeting # 972 5794 4228

Date: February 22, 2021

Time: 6:30 p.m.

Present: Kuphal, Cooney, Gillmore, Wells, Cooper, Kupcinkas, O'Connell

Absent: None

Meeting called to order at 6:32 p.m.

Greg Myers, Justine Caggiano, Scott Despres and Jen Nietupski were present at the zoom meeting.

Jen O'Connor: I met with Justine today and we are looking at a 1% increase on the Town side. There are no new hires on the Town side. The Town Clerk did put in a request for another ½ position.

Justine Caggiano: Growth and the Downtown project are progressing. We will have to start looking at adding additional personnel to the Police Department and the DPW. The Parks Department will need an increase in their purchase of services line.

Jen O'Connell: I would like to see facts about the requests. I would like to see what percentage of the work is being done on line versus in the office. I would also like to see how much on-line traffic is occurring due to the fact that we are not able to have people in the Town Hall. How much of what is done requires the people to be in the Town Hall. I am looking at the staffing. I know that software was added to ensure that people could work remotely.

Russell Wells: Do we anticipate a carryover in the programs after COVID is over?

Justine Caggiano: We will continue with the on-line services after COVID is over. There are still some people that will want to come in person to pay their bills.

Jennifer O'Connell: Technology will also have to be looked at.

Jennifer O'Connell: I see that there are members of the School Committee here. When is the public hearing on your budget?

Jennifer Nietupski: Our public hearing is on Wednesday at 7:00 p.m.

Jennifer O'Connell: Salary increases are the lions share of the budget, which is contractual. How big of an impact on your budget was COVID?

Greg Myers: We had to add staffing and PPE and busing due to COVID. There were grants that covered this. We plan on the next school year being a normal year. We would like to keep the additional nursing staff.

Jennifer O'Connell: Is our cost up on the bussing?

Greg Myers: We are only paying for services rendered. They are only running 4 days a week. The plan is to bring Elmwood Street School back full time. The bus company is helping us out a lot.

Charles Cooper: Is Massachusetts going to require a COVID vaccine to all? If so, would there be an additional increase in your budget?

Greg Myers: I am not sure. They could make it a requirement, but I haven't heard anything yet. The staff embraces getting the vaccine.

Jennifer O'Connell: Will the feeding of the students continue through the summer?

Greg Myers: This is not in the budget. We have been able to provide free meals to the students. We do not qualify for full free lunch for the school. Our out of district tuition is anticipated to go down.

Charles Cooper: You need a new Resource Officer for the younger kids.

Greg Myers: Nicole Oliverio has had a large impact on our students. She supports the students and the staff. She spends a majority of her time at the Jr. Sr. High School. It leaves her little time to go to Elmwood or Shaw. The School Committee feels that there needs to be another Resource Officer.

Charles Cooper: Why aren't you asking for an additional 2 instead of 1?

Greg Myers: We think that one will be able to split their time between the two schools. We never thought to ask for a third person.

Nicole Cooney: Would we be adding an additional officer on duty for this?

Jennifer O'Connell: The School Department pays for $\frac{1}{2}$ of the salary of the person and the Police Department pays the other $\frac{1}{2}$.

Jennifer O'Connell: We will be asking BVT to a meeting around the middle of March. I have been in contact with several other FinCom Chairs concerning this budget. I feel that we shouldn't be spending as much for the amount of students that we send there. The focus should be on educating the students in our Town.

Jennifer O'Connell: I asked that a discussion on re-organizing be put on the agenda this evening. I am happy to let Kevin take over as Chair, as he has more time to dedicate to the Committee. If you want me to stay on as Chair, I will do that.

Albert Kupcinskis: I think you should stay on until Town Meeting. If you cannot make it to a meeting, then Kevin can hold the meeting.

The Board was in agreement that Jennifer O'Connell stay on as Chair, at least until Town Meeting.

Jennifer O'Connell: Our next meeting is Saturday, March 6th. I will not be able to attend the entire meeting. I will be there for the start of the meeting, then I need to leave.

Justine to check with Laurie Connors about attending the Saturday meeting or if a Monday is better for her.

Motioned by Cooney, seconded by Wells to adjourn the meeting at 7:30p.m. Cooney, yes:

Wells, yes; Kupcinskis, yes; Kuphal, yes; Cooper, yes; Gillmore, yes; O'Connell, yes

Albert P. Kupcinskis
Justine Wells
Nicole L. Cooney

Jennifer O'Connell