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MILBURY, MASS.

# FINANCE COMMITTEE

## Minutes

Zoom Meeting 816 2157 3359

Date: October 24, 2022

Time: 6:30 p.m.

Present: Pratt, O'Connell, Kuphal, Cooper

Absent: Wells, Cooney

Meeting called to order at 6:37 p.m.

Also present at the meeting: Jennifer Barrett, Finance Director; Sean Hendricks, Town Manager; Judy O'Connor; Kristen Livoti, Asa Waters Mansion; Scott Depres, Board of Selectmen; Chris Naff, Board of Selectmen/Asa Waters Task Force

Motioned by Cooper, seconded by Kuphal to accept the minutes of 10/17/22 as written. Cooper, yes; Kuphal, yes; Pratt, yes; O'Connell, yes

Jen O'Connell: We will be discussing 2 articles this evening. One will be for the additional hours for the Town custodians and the other is about improvements at Windle Field.

Article to increase custodial services in the Town-\$15,000

Chris Naff: I want to thank you for having a discussion on this. I want to give you more background on this. In early Spring, Kristen asked for more hours at the Mansion. The number of community non-profit events has grown substantially. This person is not just dedicated to the Mansion. I also want to let you know that the Task Force met and voted to contribute some funding for the additional hours. They voted to contribute \$5,000. This would bring the net contribution from the Town to \$12,000. We are not a for-profit institution. Every penny that is taken in, is put back into the building. We have a long-term plan for some of the money that has been collected from the events. I don't know if you realize, but the grounds of the property are also considered historic. The tent has brought a lot of income to the Mansion, but it cannot stay there indefinitely. We have a deadline of 2025, then it must come down. We are planning a greenhouse at the Mansion. We previously had one there. We will also be looking at grants to help with the cost.

Jen O'Connell: Is the greenhouse going to be for your outdoor events?

Chris Naff: Since the indoor space is limited to 80 people, most of our events are outdoors, so yes.

Jen O'Connell: I don't know if all of the money from the Task Force is going into the Revolving Fund. I don't want the Revolving Fund to be used for salaries, if it is being used for improvements to the Mansion. We should have added this to the budget in the spring.

Kristen Livoti went over a spreadsheet on the paid events vs free events and the income from the events.

Kristen Livoti: The free events have more than doubled from FY22 to FY23. We have a lot of events that occur during the week, either during the day or in the evening. We didn't address this earlier because it is not in my budget. I don't have the figures on the events before I started. The dollar amounts for each event is going up and the number of events is also going up. This article is not just for the Mansion. He is covering the Library for the month of October. He also works in the other buildings. I am estimating that the income from the events will be around \$100,000 by the end of the year.

Jen O'Connell: We should be prepared to put in what you need to cover the cost to run the Mansion, since we are using this as an event space.

William Pratt: I agree with Jen's comment that there should be two separate accounts. One for operating and one for capital.

Kristen Livoti: Do the other buildings in Town give a breakdown on their events?

Jen O'Connell: I have not seen one. I know that the Senior Center has more clerical staff. We just question how many hours they were used in each building.

Jen O'Connell: We need to vote on whether we want to reconsider our previous vote of indefinite postponement on this article.

Motioned by Kuphal, seconded by O'Connell to reconsider the previous vote of indefinite postponement on this article. Kuphal, yes; Cooper, no; Pratt, no; O'Connell, yes.

Jen O'Connell: What do we do in this case, where it is a tie?

Sean Hendricks: The motion fails.

Jen O'Connell: Unfortunately, we cannot add staff hours at this time. It will still appear on the Warrant at the Special Town Meeting and could possibly pass on the Town Meeting floor.

Article: Upgrades to the Tennis Courts and Basketball Courts at Windle Field

Jen O'Connell: Do we have a dollar amount on this article?

Sean Hendricks: If we go with the three courts; 1 tennis, 1 hybrid and 1 pickleball; it will be \$378,000. If we go for four courts it would be \$400,000. We have the \$100,000 original contribution and we have also been told we will get a \$200,000 contribution from the Rice Road project.

Jen O'Connell: What will be presented to the Town Meeting?

Sean Hendricks: I spoke to the School Department and they do not have any interest in tennis teams at this time. I am looking for \$300,000 at Town Meeting.

William Pratt: What happens if the developer doesn't come through? We have been promised donations before and they never came to fruition.

Sean Hendricks: I don't think the developer will be a problem.

William Pratt: I don't count on things until I see them.

Sean Hendricks: This will be in a signed agreement. If there was a default, we would pursue it or lower the scope of the project.

Charles Cooper: Will there be any improvements to the field?

Sean Hendricks: We are only improving what is in the article. The field will stay the same. We looked at overhauling the field, but there is a big cost in doing that, between drainage and irrigation.

Charles Cooper: Will there be additional seating for people waiting to play or wanting to watch?

Sean Hendricks: We could put benches in, but it isn't in the plan at this time. We all have to remember that this is a public park.

Jen O'Connell: There are some bleachers there that did face the courts at one time.

Kevin Kuphal: The Shaw School may have some bleachers available. They would just have to be moved.

Jen O'Connell: I still do not feel comfortable using 10% of the Free Cash at a fall meeting. This is a lot for a minimal amount of people that come to Town Meeting to decide.

Sean Hendricks: You are going to see less Free Cash used for Capital Expenses. This is the year to do it since we have used ARPA funds for the capital projects.

Jen O'Connell: People are not looking to see their taxes continue to go up, when we use the Free Cash for all of these capital projects instead of lowering or stabilizing the tax rate.

Sean Hendricks: Windle Field is a public park and we do plan to use some of the Free Cash towards the budget.

Jen O'Connell: I have heard that there has been some talk around Town about the money that was given to businesses during COVID. Were any of the employees given bonuses for working through COVID?

Sean Hendricks: There were three departments that did. The Police Department, Fire Department and the DPW were given bonuses.

Jen O'Connell: How much did they get?

Sean Hendricks: The Police Department received \$4,050 per person. The Fire Department about \$1,000, which I haven't paid out yet. The DPW received \$2,000.

Jen O'Connell: What about the ambulance workers?

Sean Hendricks: They are not Town employees.

Jen O'Connell: What about the School Nurses?

Sean Hendricks: The Schools did not request anything. The DPW didn't request anything either. I determined that they were affected by this too.

Charles Cooper: I agree that we need to do some upgrades to Windle Field, but we also have many roads that are in need of repair.

Sean Hendricks: We have a paving plan and we are working on this. Some roads are patched because they are already in the plan for the following year or two. I don't disagree with what you are saying, I am just trying to spread around what we have.

William Pratt: The Town has lost a lot of recreation facilities. This area is a sign of Town neglect. We need to take care of what we have.

Jen O'Connell: The whole renovation of Windle Field would cost millions of dollars. We are fortunate to have the booster club and other organizations to help with some of the upkeep.  
 Sean Hendricks: Drainage and irrigation is a costly proposition.

#### Article-Windle Field Renovations-\$300,000

Motioned by Pratt, seconded by Cooper to recommend to raise and appropriate, transfer from available funds or otherwise provide the sum of \$300,000 for the purpose of this article. Pratt, yes; Kuphal, yes; Cooper, yes; O'Connell, yes

Jen O'Connell: Unless something else comes up, our next meeting will be on November 15, 2022 at 6:30p.m. This will be prior to the Special Town Meeting.

Jen O'Connell: What is the quorum for this meeting?

Sean Hendricks: The quorum at this time is 100. If the Selectmen decide to change that, it will be at their meeting prior to the Special Town Meeting.

Meeting adjourned at 7:32 p.m.

*Jen O'Connell*  
*Sean Hendricks*  
*W. Pratt*  
*Rachel Welch*  
*K. Cooper*