

**TOWN OF GREAT BARRINGTON  
MASSACHUSETTS**

**FINANCE COMMITTEE MEETING  
MINUTES**

**TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 2, 2021  
6:30 PM**

**LOCATION: REMOTE MEETING**

Conducted via Conference Call

1. **Meeting was called to order** by Chairperson A. O'Dwyer, at 6:30 pm. The meeting opened with a reading aloud of Remote Meeting Guidelines provided in response to Governor Baker's March 12 and 15, 2020 Orders Suspending Certain Provisions of the Open Meeting Law, G.L. c. 30A §18, in response to strict limitation on the number of people that may gather in one place.
2. **Attendance roll call** was called by Chairman A. O'Dwyer, at 6:00 pm. A roll call verified that present at the meeting: T. Blauvelt, W. Curletti, M. Loubert, M. O'Connor, and A. O' Dwyer were all in attendance.

Also in attendance: Town Manager, M. Pruhenski; Finance Director, S. Carmel; and Selectboard Chair, S. Bannon; Selectboard member, E. Abrahams.

3. **Approval of Minutes**

**Minutes of September 22, 2020 FC meeting.** A motion was made and seconded to approve the minutes of the September 22, 2020 meeting. A. O'Dwyer noted one correction. Roll call vote to approve minutes as corrected: All voted to approve.

**Minutes of December 15 2020 FC meeting.** A motion was made and seconded to approve the minutes of the December 15, 2020 meeting. M. Loubert noted one correction. Roll call vote to approve minutes as corrected: All voted to approve

4. **Finance Committee member committee reports**

Community Preservation Committee. T. Blauvelt reported that the CPC at its January 19 2021 meeting had conducted its final review of projects/applicants, and will be recommending \$652,959 in CPC funding for projects for FY 2022 for approval at the Annual Town Meeting.

5. **Update from Town Manager**

M. Pruhenski reported to the committee that the town continues to have some furloughed employees with the continued closure of some town facilities to the public; he also noted that several positions are not being filled in departments where work is lessened due to Covid restrictions. He also shared that at the request of the committee, Town staff had reached out Hillcrest Educational Center re: payment in lieu of taxes, and that the Center told the staff the non-profit anticipates making a payment in lieu of taxes this year, as they have in previous years.

6. **Update from Finance Director**

S. Carmel informed the committee that the Town's operating budgets are at approximately 50%, which is on par for the year. She also updated the committee on the Town's revenues, noting that just about all

indicators (e.g., collections, real-estate taxes, marijuana revenue) are robust or at least in line with prior years', although a few that would be expected to be hard-hit by Covid (e.g., meals and room taxes) are down. She further noted that the town had been able to leverage its AAA rating and the current low interest rates to secure a low interest loan to manage some of the town's debt. She also noted that the 2019 Audit is still in progress—the process made much slower due to Covid restrictions.

## **7. Finance Committee business**

FY 2022 Budget & Financial Policy. The committee members reviewed the FY 2021 Budget Policy (available at: <https://www.townofgb.org/finance-committee>) and opted not to make any changes. A motion was made and seconded to approve FY 2022 Policy with no changes from FY 2021. Roll call vote: all voted to approve.

## **8. Finance Committee Member Comments**

A. O'Dwyer informed the committee that citizen Vivian Orlowski had reported interest in presenting on the Senior Tax Deferral program at a future Finance Committee meeting. Committee member T. Blauvelt agreed to liaison with Ms. Orlowski re: this program. A. O'Dwyer shared that she had asked citizen Philip Orenstein to help in evaluating the financials of Southern Berkshire Ambulance Squad in anticipation of their request to the town for support in the FY 2022 budget. She also encouraged all in attendance to encourage citizens to run for the two open seats on the Finance Committee.

## **9. Citizen Speak Time/Media Speak Time**

No comments.

## **10. Adjournment**

Respectfully submitted,

*Anne O'Dwyer*

Approved by the Finance Committee on April 27, 2021