

**TOWN OF GREAT BARRINGTON  
MASSACHUSETTS**

**FINANCE COMMITTEE'S MEETING  
MINUTES**

**TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 19, 2019**

**5:30 PM**

**TOWN HALL**

**334 MAIN STREET**

1. **Meeting called to order** by Chairperson, A. O' Dwyer, at 5:30 pm. Those present: M. Loubert, T. Blauvet, and W. Curletti (arrived after first motion).
2. **Approval of Minutes from September 17, 2019**. M. Loubert made motion to approve, T. Blauvet, 2nd, All in Favor. ( 3 -0)
3. **Finance Committee member reports:**
  - A. **Community Preservation Committee:** T. Blauvet spoke for the Committee. Reminders of the December 4, review of Open Space and December 5, Affordable Housing application(s). There were 14 applications, totalling approximately, \$1.5 million. The committee will give out in the area of \$800,000. The CPA will give 1:1 match, the community is a 3% community. Different towns and municipalities are given different percentages.
  - B. **Economic Development Committee:** A. O'Dwyer updated the FC members on the work of the Economic Development Committee. She shared that the EDC had reported on their work thus far—focused mainly around recommendations for the Housatonic School building—at the recent Selectboard Meeting, November 13, 2019. M. Pruhenski, Town Manager, relayed, that he will meet with the DPW, S. VanDuesen, and C. Rembold, Assistant Town Manager, to talk about the EDC's recommendations. A. O'Dwyer anticipated the next EDC meeting will be in late November.
4. **Update from Town Manager:** M. Prunhenski, Town Manager, the Real Estate Taxes have been mailed, with payments due Monday, December 2, 2019.
5. **Update from Finance Director:** S. Carmel, gave overview of the Town's operating budget through October 31, 2019. At four months into the fiscal year, the overall budget should be around 33% expended; currently we're reflecting expenditures at 26.2%, this is mostly due to the first quarter of the school assessment not being reflected in Munis yet. She reminded the committee, that the bulk of the debt principal payments come due in the Spring. The

committee was reminded that the Town also anticipates the legal account to be over-expended, as expected.

A question from a member of the audience, Eileen Mooney, asked about Assistant Town Manager salary. She asked why the monies came from DPW and Wastewater lines. S. Carmel explained that part of the Assistant Town Manager's role was overseeing capital projects, many of which are related to the Public Works department. We were able to utilize funds in both of those departments because of vacancies that were not being filled until later in the fiscal year.

M. Pruhenski also made the committee aware of a potential shortfall in the Police Department's budget. The Chief has several new officers going off to the academy, that was not initially budgeted for. The new hires will be attending an academy a bit further away, creating additional travel, gas, and lodging expenses.

S. Carmel also directed attention to Veterans benefits—she also wants to keep on "eye" on this, percentage expended is running a little high and we need to watch it through the year.

S. Carmel also summarized FY20 Q1, Marijuana revenues; Theory Wellness, \$414,000 in impact fees; from 3% local option tax \$ 357,000. Total approximately \$1,080,000. Not available for use until FY22 budget year.

Finally, she reported that the auditors will come back around week of December 9, 2019 to complete the FY18 audit as well as the forensic audit. The audits will first be made available to the Town Manager, and then the regular audit to both the FC and SB.

6. **Finance Committee business:** S. McHugh, Principal Assessor, spoke of the the increase in Levy of 2.01%, increase in \$492,432 (page three of report). S. McHugh presented the report at the Selectboard Meeting, September 23, 2019, and distributed to the FC an updated/correct version.

The FC discussed with him the plan to review Tax Classifications well in advance of the August/Sept Hearings for next FY—during or even in advance of the Budget season. The Tax Classification Hearing is usually in August or September. He mentioned that there are 4 (four) options for Classification, He recommends the Single Tax Rate as most effective. He will give a presentation regarding possible Tax Rates policies at the upcoming joint Finance Committee /Selectboard meeting to speak further on the options. The Budget season typically begins in January (this year, it will begin in January 2020).

M. Loubert spoke that she felt the presentation from the Next Steps Chair, Kavanagh, at the Selectboard Meeting, was thorough and exhaustive. She also felt he was factual and clear. S. Bannon, from the audience, spoke that the committee is waiting for the State to approve the proposal. At that time, if approved, a Building Committee of different members can be formed. He feels it is very positive.

7. **Citizen Speak**: E. Mooney, asked again why the monies for the new Assistant Town Manager position came out of DPW line, were the monies in budget? S. Carmel reassured her that all the monies were there, due to two employee vacancies at the start of the fiscal year.
8. **Finance Committee Member Comments**: T. Blauvet, wanted to know if Finance Committee members need to prepare anything for the December 16, 2019, 6 pm., Joint Meeting with Selectboard re: Tax Classifications. M. Pruhenski and S. McHugh indicated no preparation was necessary, as S. McHugh would be presenting to the committee.
9. **Media Time**: no comments.
10. **Next Meeting**: December 16, 2019, 5pm, Finance Committee; 6pm., Joint Meeting with Selectboard, Town Hall.
11. **Ajourned at 6:30 pm.**, T. Blauvet made motion, M. Loubert, 2nd, All in Favor.(4-0)

Respectfully submitted,

Jamie Minacci & Anne O'Dwyer

*Approved on December 16, 2019*