

**SELECTBOARD & FINANCE COMMITTEE MINUTES –
Mar 02, 2021 06:30pm**

Selectboard Members Present: Leigh Davis, Steve Bannon, Ed Abrahams, Bill Cooke, Kate Burke
(at 6:35pm)

Finance Committee Members Present: Anne O'Dwyer, Michelle Loubert, Meredith O'Connor, Tom Blauvelt, Will Curletti (at 6:55pm),

1. Called to Order at 6:30pm by S. Bannon.
2. FY 22 Discussion and Vote
 - a. Chris Rembold noted that the Rte 7 Greenway Path grant came in. A Regional Application for a community development block grant was just awarded – over \$1,000,000. Additional updates were discussed. Board members congratulated C. Rembold on his successful applications.
 - b. Selectboard/Town Manager Budget: E. Abrahams moved to approve the budget, B. Cooke seconded. Selectboard unanimously approved. T. Blauvelt moved to approve the budget, with A. O'Dwyer seconding. Unanimous.
 - c. Finance Committee: Motion to approve by E. Abrahams. B. Cooke seconded. K. Burke noted that the contingency in the Finance Committee budget incorporated raises, which we had talked about holding off until the Salary Study. A. O'Dwyer agreed with Kate. M. Pruhenski pointed out that these administrative/not-management positions K. Burke and A. O'Dwyer are referring to (Firefighters & Administrative Assistant). Discussion ensued regarding whether these positions should be included in the study. Roll call vote; unanimous. Finance committee motion by T. Blauvelt; seconded by M. Loubert. A. O'Dwyer asked to clarify that M. Pruhenski would be coming to the committees before making the recommended raises. M. Pruhenski agreed. Unanimous vote.
 - d. Finance Director & Accountant: Motion by E. Abrahams to approve; seconded by B. Cooke. Unanimous. Finance Committee motion by T. Blauvelt, seconded by M. Loubert. Unanimous.
 - e. Technology: Reduction to \$20,000. Motion by E. Abrahams to approve as amended; seconded by B. Cooke. Unanimous. Finance Committee motion by T. Blauvelt; seconded by M. Loubert. Unanimous.
 - f. Assessor: Motion to approve by E. Abrahams. Seconded by B. Cooke. Unanimous (all votes by roll call). Finance Committee motion by T. Blauvelt; seconded by M. O'Connor. Unanimous.
 - g. Collector/Treasurer: Karen Fink noted that she made a small error which results in a reduction by \$200. Motion to approve as amended by E. Abrahams; seconded by B. Cooke. Finance Committee motion by T. Blauvelt; seconded by W. Curletti. Unanimous.
 - h. Town Clerk: Motion to approve by E. Abrahams; second by B. Cooke. Unanimous by roll call. Finance Committee motion by T. Blauvelt; seconded by M. Loubert. Unanimous.
 - i. Conservation: Motion to approve by E. Abrahams; second by B. Cooke. Unanimous. Finance Committee motion by T. Blauvelt; seconded by M. O'Connor. Unanimous.
 - j. Planning Board: Motion to approve by E. Abrahams; second by B. Cooke. Unanimous. Finance Committee motion by W. Curletti; seconded by T. Blauvelt. Unanimous.
 - k. Zoning Board of Appeals: Motion to approve by E. Abrahams; second by B. Cooke. Unanimous. Finance Committee motion by T. Blauvelt; seconded by M. O'Connor. Unanimous.
 - l. Planning/Community Development: Motion to approve by E. Abrahams; second by B.

- Cooke. Unanimous. Finance Committee motion by M. O'Connor; seconded by T. Blauvelt. Unanimous.
- m. Buildings & Grounds: Motion to approve by E. Abrahams; second by B. Cooke. Unanimous. Finance Committee motion by T. Blauvelt; seconded by W. Curletti. Unanimous.
 - n. Police Department: Motion to approve by E. Abrahams; second by B. Cooke. Unanimous. Finance Committee motion by W. Curletti; seconded by T. Blauvelt. A. O'Dwyer asked for clarification as to what they are voting for: new Police Chief salary, \$10,000 toward new Community Outreach officer, minor increase in Overtime, increase in Holiday Pay, increase for Administrative Assistant. Unanimous.
 - o. Fire Department: K. Burke noted that we should look at salaries for everyone. M. Loubert noted we should be mindful that salary increases are affecting tax increases. Additional discussion ensued. Motion to approve by E. Abrahams; second by B. Cooke. Unanimous. Finance Committee motion by T. Blauvelt; seconded by W. Curletti. T. Blauvelt noted that he shared M. Loubert's & K. Burke's sentiment. Chief Burger noted that an entry level custodian makes \$24.50/hr, whereas firefighters make \$23.50/hr – hence the increase to \$29.00/hr. S. Bannon noted that it may be useful for M. Pruhenski to give the boards an executive summary of salaries for non-union personnel. M. Loubert strongly agreed. Additional discussion. Approved 4-1, with M. Loubert dissenting.
 - p. Emergency Management: Motion by E. Abrahams, second by B. Cooke. Unanimous. Finance Committee motion by T. Blauvelt, second by W. Curletti. Unanimous.
 - q. Building Inspector: Motion by E. Abrahams, second by B. Cooke. Unanimous. Finance Committee motion by W. Curletti, second by T. Blauvelt. Unanimous.
 - r. Animal Control Officer: Motion by E. Abrahams, second by B. Cooke. Unanimous. Finance Committee motion by W. Curletti, second by T. Blauvelt. Unanimous.
 - s. DPW Highway: Motion by E. Abrahams, second by B. Cooke. Unanimous. Finance Committee motion by T. Blauvelt, second by M. Loubert. Unanimous.
 - t. Health Department: Motion by E. Abrahams, second by B. Cooke. Unanimous. Finance Committee motion by T. Blauvelt, second by W. Curletti. Unanimous.
 - u. Community Services: Motion by E. Abrahams, second by B. Cooke. Unanimous. Finance Committee motion by T. Blauvelt, second by M. Loubert. Unanimous.
 - v. Council on Aging: Motion by E. Abrahams, second by B. Cooke. Unanimous. Finance Committee motion by W. Curletti, second by T. Blauvelt. Unanimous.
 - w. Veteran's Affairs: Motion to approve at \$18,000 by E. Abrahams. Second by B. Cooke. Unanimous. Finance Committee motion to recommend budget as amended by T. Blauvelt, second by W. Curletti. M. Loubert thanked S. Bannon for the recommendation of increasing the Veteran's Affairs line item. Unanimous
 - x. Libraries: Motion to approve by E. Abrahams, second by B. Cooke. Unanimous. Finance Committee motion by M. Loubert, seconded by W. Curletti. Unanimous, with T. Blauvelt recused.
 - y. Parks & Recreation: Motion to approve by E. Abrahams, second by B. Cooke. Finance Committee motion by T. Blauvelt, second by W. Curletti. Unanimous.
 - z. Boards & Commissions: Motion by E. Abrahams, second by B. Cooke. Unanimous. Finance Committee motion by T. Blauvelt, second by M. Loubert. A. O'Dwyer asked to clarify that the increase is due to scheduled cleaning of the winged liberty statue. M. Pruhenski confirmed. Unanimous.
 - aa. Celebrations & Events: Motion by E. Abrahams, second by B. Cooke. Unanimous. Finance Committee motion by W. Curletti, second by T. Blauvelt. Unanimous.

- bb. Debt Service: Motion to approve by E. Abrahams, second by B. Cooke. Unanimous. Finance Committee motion by T. Blauvelt, second by W. Curletti. Unanimous.
- cc. Retirement: Motion to approve by E. Abrahams, second by B. Cooke. Unanimous. Finance Committee motion by W. Curletti, second by M. Loubert. Unanimous.
- dd. Insurance: Motion to approve by E. Abrahams, second by B. Cooke. Unanimous. Finance Committee motion by T. Blauvelt, second by W. Curletti. Unanimous
- ee. Wastewater: Motion to approve by E. Abrahams, second by B. Cooke. Unanimous. Finance Committee motion by W. Curletti, second by T. Blauvelt. Unanimous.
- ff. (Begin Capital Requests) – Police: S. Carmel noted that the speed trailer was not able to be funded by the applied-for grant. K. Burke suggested that the portable radios, new laptops, speed trailer, and parks improvements which comes out to \$160,000 should come out of free cash instead of accruing debt. K. Burke moved to approve the capital requests for the police and to use free cash as the funding source. Second by E. Abrahams. Unanimous. Finance Committee motion to approve the police capital requests as amended by T. Blauvelt, second by W. Curletti. Unanimous.
- gg. DPW Capital Requests: Motion to approve by E. Abrahams, second by B. Cooke. Unanimous. Motion by E. Abrahams to add \$100,000 (borrowing) for a new police station generator. Second by B. Cooke. Unanimous. Finance Committee motion to approve the DPW capital requests as amended by T. Blauvelt, second by W. Curletti. T. Blauvelt brought up the parking lot... motion withdrawn. Motion to endorse DPW Vehicles & Equipment capital request funding budget as amended by T. Blauvelt, second by W. Curletti. M. Loubert asked about the ticket kiosk (\$53,000). Sean clarified that the purchasing of dumps sticker will be done through the ticket kiosk instead of the Town Clerk's office. M. Loubert stated that she was not comfortable with this expenditure, but she trusts Sean's expertise. Unanimous by roll call vote. Motion to approve building & grounds DPW budget by T. Blauvelt, second by W. Curletti. Unanimous by roll call vote. Motion to approve DPW street & bridge improvements request at \$420,000 funding level by T. Blauvelt, seconded by M. Loubert. A. O'Dwyer amended the motion – to \$720,000. Seconded by M. Loubert. E. Abrahams interjected that we should allow the general public decide, not the board. M. Loubert responded that this is what the public hearing is for. L. Davis added that she supports E. Abrahams's view. A. O'Dwyer asked why we are asked to recommend things if there is no point. S. Bannon asked that the Selectboard move this to Special Articles, so it will progress to Town Meeting regardless. Roll call vote on Finance Committee's motion: unanimous. Motion by Selectboard to move the parking lot capital request to special articles by B. Cooke, second by Kate. Unanimous. Motion by Selectboard on parks as free cash by E. Abrahams, second by B. Cooke. Unanimous. Motion by Finance Committee to approve as amended by T. Blauvelt, second by W. Curletti.
- hh. Wastewater Capital: Motion by E. Abrahams, second by B. Cooke. Unanimous. Finance Committee motion by W. Curletti, second by T. Blauvelt. Unanimous.
- i. (Special Articles) Community Impact Funding: Motion by E. Abrahams, second by B. Cooke. Unanimous. Finance Committee motion by W. Curletti, second by T. Blauvelt. Unanimous.
- jj. Emergency Medical Services: S. Carmel thanked B. Cooke Hathaway for sending the financials. She asked him a few questions about the financials. Further discussion on S. Carmel. S. Bannon and L. Davis noted they had a lack of confidence in the ambulance squad. M. Loubert asked for clarification about the foundation which seems to have \$820,000. Dennis Hogan responded that the foundation is independent and take request for

emergency services. M. Loubert asked why the ambulance squad did not ask the foundation for the amount we are being asked for? Dennis responded that they have not gone to the board. E. Abrahams asked if we are prepared to provide the service ourselves. Discussion continued. S. Bannon clarified our choices: turn down the request, approve it, or table the request and ask S. Carmel & M. Pruhenski to come back to us with recommendations.

E. Abrahams added that we should pull in the FireChief & Fairview. M. Loubert asked why we are not asking the other towns to contribute to the feasibility study. S. Bannon noted that E. Abrahams is discussing short term, whereas M. Loubert is talking about long term solutions. K. Burke added that she has full confidence in the Town after the success of the senior transit. Motion by L. Davis that the Selectboard does not recommend funding to Southern Berkshire Ambulance Squad. Seconded by Kate. Chief Burger noted that there is a lot to discuss going forward, but there is no way the Town can put in a medic unit tomorrow. S. Bannon stated that he would like to table a funding decision until the Town Manager comes back with a recommendation. A. O'Dwyer agreed, and asked for a breakdown of what would happen based on various funding levels. L. Davis asked for a timeline—S. Bannon suggested by the public hearing. L. Davis rescinded her motion. New motion: Selectboard table the decision until the Town Manager come back with a recommendation. Moved by L. Davis, seconded by B. Cooke.

Unanimous. Finance committee motion to table by T. Blauvelt, seconded by W. Curletti. M. Loubert added that this is a complex issue. S. Carmel and she is not sure that March 30 is enough time for a recommendation. M. Pruhenski responded that he would be able to at least initiate a conversation with Chief Burger and S. Carmel by this March 30 meeting. S. Bannon commented that this recommendation is the best alternative even though we do not have as much time as desired. A. O'Dwyer asked for a multi-town meeting to be scheduled prior to the March 30 public hearing. It was decided to hold off on this meeting. Roll call vote taken on the Finance Committee motion. Passed 4-1, M. Loubert dissenting.

kk. School Consolidation Feasibility Study: S. Bannon let the board know that the group received maximum grant funding. Motion to table by E. Abrahams, second by B. Cooke.

Unanimous. Finance Committee motion to table by W. Curletti, second by T. Blauvelt. Unanimous.

ll. Berkshire Hills Reg. Vocational Transport & Tuition: Motion by E. Abrahams, second by B. Cooke. Unanimous. Finance Committee motion by T. Blauvelt, second by W. Curletti. Unanimous.

mm. Stabilization: Motion to approve by E. Abrahams, second by B. Cooke. Unanimous. Finance Committee motion by T. Blauvelt, second by W. Curletti. Unanimous.

nn. Capital Stabilization: Motion to approve by E. Abrahams, second by B. Cooke. Unanimous. Finance Committee motion by W. Curletti, second by T. Blauvelt. Unanimous.

3. Board Time
 - a. None
4. Citizen Speak
 - a. None

Meeting adjourned at 9:31pm

Respectfully submitted by Tate Coleman, Board Clerk.

Approved by Finance Committee on December 12, 2021