

**TOWN OF STOCKBRIDGE, MA.
50 MAIN STREET
FINANCE COMMITTEE IN PERSON AND VIRTUAL MEETING MINUTES
THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 22, 2024 AT 6 PM**

- 1. CHAIR BIKOFSKY CALLED THE MEETING TO ORDER AT 6 PM**
- 2. COMMITTEE ATTENDEES: JAY BIKOFSKY, JIM BALFANZ, PAM BOUDREAU, ED LANE
JORJA MARSDEN, DIANE REUSS, STEVE SHATZ AND BILL VOGT**

TOWN GOVERNMENT ATTENDEES: MICHAEL CANALES

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE: CLARENCE FANTO, REMOTELY

- 3. CHAIR BIKOFSKY TOOK THE OPPORTUNITY TO THANK THE MEMBERS OF THE
COMMITTEE FOR THEIR PARTICIPATION AND DEDICATED SERVICE AS WE ENTER THE
FY25 OPERATING AND CAPITAL BUDGET CYCLE.
HE OFFERED A SPECIAL THANKS TO MICHAEL CANALES AND THE DEPARTMENT HEADS
FOR THEIR ROLE IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE FY25 BUDGETS ALONG WITH THE
SELECT BOARD FOR THEIR INPUT AND SUPPORT OF THE PROCESS.
HE EXPRESSED A SPECIAL THANKS TO MODERATOR GARY JOHNSTON FOR HIS
APPOINTMENT OF AN EXCEPTIONALLY QUALIFIED FINANCE COMMITTEE WITH
MEMBERS POSSESSING INDIVIDUAL AND CORPORATE FINANCIAL EXPERTISE AND
SEVERAL WHO HAVE SERVED IN VARIOUS TOWN GOVERNMENT ROLES.**
- 4. THE FINANCE COMMITTEE MINUTES OF OCTOBER 2, 2023 WERE THEN PRESENTED
FOR COMMITTEE REVIEW, DISCUSSION AND APPROVAL. A MOTION TO APPROVE WAS
MADE BY BILL VOGT AND SECONDED BY JIM BALFANZ. A VOTE WAS CALLED AND THE
MINUTES WERE UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED BY THE COMMITTEE.**
- 5. PRESENTATION OF THE TOWN'S OPERATING BUDGET FOR FY2025:
THE CHAIR CALLED UPON MICHAEL CANALES TO REVIEW THE PROPOSED FY25
OPERATING BUDGET.**
 - GENERAL GOVERNMENT: MICHAEL REVIEWED FOR THE COMMITTEE THE INCREASE
OF \$17,311.00 IN THIS CATEGORY DUE PRINCIPALLY FOR DEPARTMENTAL SALARY
INCREASES. THE INCREASE IN GENERAL GOVERNMENT EXPENSES WERE
MODERATED AS A RESULT OF TRANSFERING THE ASSISTANT TREASURER/
COLLECTOR POSITION TO THE HIGHWAY DEPARTMENT.**
 - PUBLIC SAFETY: MICHAEL CONTINUED THE PRESENTATION OF THIS CATEGORY BY
NOTING AN INCREASE OF \$51,714.00 DUE PRINCIPALLY TO CONTRACT SALARY
NEGOTIATIONS FOR POLICE AS WELL AS AN INCREASE IN THE SALARY AND**

BENEFITS ALLOCATION FOR THE BUILDING INSPECTOR POSITION NOW SHARED BY GREAT BARRINGTON, LEE, LENOX AND STOCKBRIDGE. HE CONCLUDED BY MENTIONING THAT THE REPLACEMENT POLICE CRUISER, HISTORICALLY AN EXPENSE ITEM IN THIS CATEGORY, HAS BEEN MOVED TO THE CAPITAL BUDGET.

- **EDUCATION:** MICHAEL REVIEWED THE FY25 BHRSD STOCKBRIDGE OPERATING AND CAPITAL BUDGET ALLOCATIONS FOR THE COMMITTEE:
OPERATING BUDGET.....\$3,797,541.00 AN INCREASE OF \$198,869.00 OVER
FY 2024
CAPITAL BUDGET.....\$69,145.00 A DECREASE OF \$9,305.00 LESS THAN
FY 2024
HE ALSO NOTED AN EXPENSE SAVINGS OF \$80,000.00 FOR OUT OF DISTRICT VOCATIONAL TUITION, AS IT WAS NOT REQUESTED FOR FY25.
- **PUBLIC WORKS AND FACILITIES:** THE COMMITTEE WAS ADVISED THAT THIS CATEGORY PROJECTED A FY25 BUDGETED INCREASE OF \$467,301.00 OVER FY 2024. MICHAEL MENTIONED TO THE FINANCE COMMITTEE INCREASED SALARY AND EXPENSES FOR THE HIGHWAY, WATER AND SEWER DEPARTMENTS. HE ADDED THAT, FOR THIS BUDGET CYCLE, WATER AND SEWER SALARIES AND OPERATING EXPENSES HAD BEEN INCORPORATED INTO THIS CATEGORY. HE THEN HIGHLIGHTED THE FACT THAT THE TRANSFER STATION SALARIES AND EXPENSES WERE PROJECTED TO BE SIGNIFICANTLY HIGHER FOR FY25 DUE TO INCREASED DISPOSAL COSTS. HE CONCLUDED BY MENTIONING THAT THESE COSTS WERE BEING CONSIDERED AS RESPECTS TO PROPOSED INCREASED STICKER FEES, NOW BORNE BY TRANSFER STATION USERS, COMBINED WITH AN INCREASED LINE-ITEM EXPENSE, ULTIMATELY TO BE INCORPORATED INTO THE NEW TAX RATE.
- **HUMAN SERVICES:** MICHAEL MENTIONED THAT THE EXPENSES FOR THIS CATEGORY HAD INCREASED \$31,790.00 PRINCIPALLY DUE TO EXPENSES RELATED TO THE STOCKBRIDGE TRI-TOWN HEALTH ALLOCATION.
- **CULTURE AND RECREATION:** THE COMMITTEE WAS ADVISED OF A \$103,952.00 INCREASE OVER FY 2024 DUE PRIMARILY TO INCREASES IN SALARIES, BOOKS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY LIBRARY EXPENSES.
- **DEBT SERVICE:** MICHAEL CANALES REPORTED TO THE COMMITTEE THAT THIS CATEGORY PROJECTED A \$102,360.00 REDUCTION FROM FY 2024 DUE TO A DECREASE IN THE PUMP STATION PRINCIPAL AND INTEREST PAYMENTS AS WELL AS A DECREASE IN PRINCIPAL PAYMENTS FOR THE FIRE TRUCK.

PAGE 3 FINANCE COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES OF FEBRUARY 22, 2024 CON'T.

- **EMPLOYEE BENEFITS:** AN OVERALL FY25 PROJECTED INCREASE OF \$68,229.00 IN THIS CATEGORY WAS PRESENTED TO THE COMMITTEE. MICHAEL NOTED THAT THE INCREASE WAS DUE TO INCREASED RETIREMENT BENEFIT PLAN CONTRIBUTIONS AS WELL AS INCREASES IN HEALTH AND DENTAL INSURANCE COSTS. FUNDING FOR OPEB WAS NOT INCLUDED IN THE FY25 PROPOSED BUDGET.
 - **TOWN INSURANCE:** IT WAS MENTIONED THAT THIS CATEGORY PROJECTS A FY25 OPERATING BUDGET INCREASE IN PROPERTY AND LIABILITY INSURANCE COSTS OF \$9,975.00 OVER FY2024.
 - **OPERATING BUDGET SUMMATION:** MICHAEL CONCLUDED HIS COMMENTS ON THE FY25 PROJECTED OPERATING BUDGET BY PROJECTING A 5.4% INCREASE OVER THE PRECEEDING YEAR. HE NOTED A TOTAL PROPOSED OPERATING BUDGET OF \$12,319,246.00 , A \$632,688.00 INCREASE, INCLUDING EDUCATION, OVER FY24.
6. **PRROPOSED FY 2025 TOWN CAPITAL BUDGET REQUESTS:** CHAIR BIKOFSKY ASKED MICHAEL CANALES TO PRESENT AN OVERVIEW OF THE FY25 CAPITAL REQUESTS TO DATE:
- **CPC:** MICHAEL ADVISED THAT THE COMMUNITY PRESERVATION COMMITTEE WAS PRESENTLY IN THE PROCESS OF RECOMMENDING FY25 FUNDING REQUESTS TO INCLUDE THOSE FOR ADMINISTRATION, GENERAL UNDESIGNATED, HOUSING, HISTORIC AND OPEN SPACE FOR REVIEW BY THE SELECT BOARD AND FINANCE COMMITTEE AND ULTIMATE PRESENTATION AT TOWN MEETING. MORE TO FOLLOW ONCE THESE REQUESTS ARE FORMALLY RECEIVED.
 - **FIRE DEPARTMENT:** MICHAEL MENTIONED THAT THE FIRE DEPARTMENT HAS REQUESTED SELF CONTAINED BREATHING REPLACEMENT APPARATUS, \$13,000.00, FIREFIGHTING REPLACEMENT HOSE NOZZLES, \$25,000.00, AND REPLACEMENT POSITIVE PRESSURE VENTILATION FANS, 20,000. THESE REQUESTS WILL BE DISCUSSED AT A FUTURE MEETING.
 - **POLICE DEPARTMENT:** MICHAEL WENT ON TO MENTION THE POLICE DEPARTMENT REQUEST OF \$53,363.42 FOR REPLACEMENT OF PORTABLE RADIOS AND VEHICLE MOUNTED REPEATERS FOR DISCUSSION AT A FUTURE MEETING.
 - **HIGHWAY DEPARTMENT:** MICHAEL PRESENTED THIS DEPARTMENT'S REQUESTS INCLUDING A JOHN DEERE 3046 MOWER, \$65,000.00, A LARGE TRUCK REPLACEMENT, \$270,000.00, A ROADSIDE MOWER, \$175,000.00, A ONE TON TRUCK REPLACEMENT, \$70,000.00 AND COMPACTOR REPAINTING, \$25,000.00.

THESE HIGHWAY REQUESTS WILL BE DISCUSSED AT A FUTURE MEETING.

- **GLENDAL MIDDLE ROAD BRIDGE:** THE COMMITTEE WAS ADVISED THAT AN ENGINEERING STUDY WAS NECESSARY FOR REPAIR/REPLACEMENT OF THIS BRIDGE. MORE INFORMATION TO FOLLOW.
- **SEWER DEPARTMENT:** MICHAEL NOTED THAT REQUESTS FROM THIS DEPARTMENT INCLUDING SEWER LINE REPAIRS, \$138,000.00 AND SLUDGE PUMP DEMOLITION AND REINSTALLATION, \$12,000.00 WOULD BE DISCUSSED AT A FUTURE MEETING.
- **WATER DEPARTMENT:** THE COMMITTEE WAS ADVISED THAT THIS DEPARTMENT REQUESTED 5 NEW HYDRANTS, \$25,000.00, WATER PLANT LOADING DOCK REPLACEMENT, \$15,000.00, WATER PLANT EPOXY FLOOR COATING, \$24,500.00, GEOLOGICAL SURVEY OF THE LAKE AVERIC WATER SUPPLY, \$50,000.00, WATER MAIN REPLACEMENT ENGINEERING, \$25,000.00 AND WATER LINE REPLACEMENT AND REPAIRS, \$450,000.00. THESE REQUESTS WOULD BE DISCUSSED AT A FUTURE MEETING.
- **SUMMATION OF CAPITAL BUDGET REQUESTS FOR FY 2025 :** THE REQUESTS PREVIOUSLY NOTED REPRESENT A PORTION OF THE TOTAL RECEIVED TO DATE. FUTURE DISCUSSIONS WILL BE REQUIRED AS RESPECTS REQUEST DETAILS, FUNDING SOURCES TO INCLUDE DEBT CREATION, FREE CASH, STABILIZATION FUNDING WATER AND SEWER SURPLUS AND CPC SOURCES TO NAME BUT A FEW. DEPARTMENT HEADS WILL BE ASKED TO PARTICIPATE WITH THE TOWN ADMINISTRATOR AND COMMITTEE AS MAY BE APPROPRIATE. MORE TO FOLLOW.
- **COMMITTEE MEMBERS RAISED SEVERAL POINTS:**
JIM BALFANZ ASKED IF ITEMS ON THE CAPITAL BUDGET SHOULD BE INCORPORATED INTO A FIVE (5) YEAR PLAN. MICHAEL CANALES INDICATED HE WOULD RESPOND AT A FUTURE MEETING.

ED LANE QUESTIONED THE USE OF FREE CASH VS. MULTIPLE YEAR FUNDING FOR HIGHWAY EQUIPMENT TO WHICH MICHAEL INDICATED HE WOULD PREPARE A FUTURE RESPONSE.

DIANE RUESS ASKED AS TO THE STATUS OF THE NEW FIRE TRUCK TO WHICH MICHAEL RESPONDED 36 MONTHS FROM ORDER TO DELIVERY.

STEVE SHATZ SUGGESTED FUTURE DISCUSSIONS FOR THE EXTENSION OF WATER AND SEWER CAPABILITIES.

7. THERE BEING NO FURTHER BUSINESS, THE MEETING WAS ADJOURNED AT 7:27 PM

