

**TOWN OF STOCKBRIDGE, MA.
50 MAIN STREET
VIRTUAL AND IN-PERSON MEETING MINUTES
THURSDAY, MARCH 2, 2023 AT 6 PM**

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

TOWN ATTENDEES: PATRICK WHITE, JAMIE MINACCI AND MICHAEL CANALES

3. THE FINANCE COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES OF FEBRUARY 2, 2023 WERE PRESENTED FOR APPROVAL. BILL VOGT AND JORJA MARSDEN SUGGESTED THAT RATHER THAN INCLUDING THE BACKGROUNDS OF INDIVIDUAL COMMITTEE MEMBERS, A GENERAL STATEMENT BE INCLUDED AS TO THE FACT THAT THE MODERATOR HAS APPOINTED AN EXCEPTIONALLY QUALIFIED COMMITTEE, EACH WITH FINANCIAL EXPERTISE AND SEVERAL WITH PRIOR TOWN GOVERNMENT EXPERIENCE. A VOTE WAS CALLED TO INCORPORATE THIS CHANGE AND SIX (6) MEMBERS VOTED TO APPROVE, STEVE SHATZ ABSTAINED. THESE MINUTES WILL BE REVISED FOR APPROVAL AT THE NEXT MEETING.
4. DISCUSSION OF THE BHRSD PROPOSED OPERATING AND CAPITAL BUDGETS FOR FY 2024:

CHAIR BIKOFSKY REPORTED TO THE COMMITTEE THAT HE HAD RECENTLY SPOKEN WITH SHARON HARRISON, BHRSD BUSINESS ADMINISTRATOR, WHO PROVIDED THE FOLLOWING UPDATED BUDGET INFORMATION REGARDING THE FY 2024 STOCKBRIDGE ALLOCATIONS.

- OPERATING BUDGET \$ 3,654,693.00 AN INCREASE OF \$153,607.00 (4.39%)
OVER FY 2023
- CAPITAL BUDGET \$ 78,450.00 A DECREASE OF \$11,997.00 (13.36%)
LESS THAN FY 2023

5. THE CHAIR THEN CALLED UPON MICHAEL CANALES TO REVIEW THE PROPOSED TOWN OPERATING BUDGET:
 - GENERAL GOVERNMENT: MICHAEL REVIEWED FOR THE COMMITTEE THE FACT THAT SALARIES FOR THIS CATEGORY INCREASED \$20,711 DUE TO THE ASSIGNMENT OF ADDITIONAL DUTIES AS WELL AS A COST OF LIVING ADJUSTMENT OF 2.5% FOR THE NON-UNION EMPLOYEES, UNION SUBJECT TO NEGOTIATION. BILL VOGT ASKED IF THE COST OF LIVING ADJUSTMENT SHOULD BE INCREASED.

- **PUBLIC SAFETY:** MICHAEL WENT ON TO ADVISE THE COMMITTEE OF PROPOSED INCREASES FOR POLICE SALARIES AND A PROPOSED INCREASE IN THE COST OF CRUISERS; UPGRADES FROM HYBRID TO FULL ELECTRIC. HE ADDED THAT INCREASES IN FIRE DEPARTMENT SALARIES AND EXPENSES WERE PRESENTLY BEING REVIEWED AND DISCUSSED.
- **OPERATING BUDGET SUMMATION:**

MICHAEL CANALES MENTIONED THAT THE CURRENT PROJECTED DRAFT OPERATING BUDGET, INCLUDING EDUCATION , INCREASED FROM \$11,549,312.00 TO A CURRENTLY PROJECTED \$11,875,616.00 OR \$326,304.00.

CHAIR BIKOFSKY REMINDED THE COMMITTEE THAT THE TOWN IS MOST FORTUNATE TO HAVE AN EXCELLENT TEAM OF EMPLOYEES AND STAFF RETENTION IS MOST IMPORTANT.

PATRICK WHITE SUGGESTED CONSIDERING A ONE TIME COST OF LIVING INFLATION STIPEND (BONUS) TO BE REVIEWED ANNUALLY. JIM BALFANZ AND BILL VOGT SUPPORTED THE IDEA FOR SELECT BOARD REVIEW, CONSIDERATION AND COMMENT AS PART OF THIS BUDGET CYCLE.

6. MICHAEL CANALES THEN COMMENTED ON HIGHLIGHTS OF THE PROPOSED FY 24 CAPITAL BUDGET CURRENTLY BEING FINALIZED:

DEBT INTEREST PAY DOWN:

THE COMMITTEE WAS ADVISED THAT CONSIDERATION OF APPLYING \$100,000.00 OF FREE CASH TO REDUCE DEBT INTEREST PAYMENTS WAS UNDER REVIEW.

FIRE DEPARTMENT:

MICHAEL CANALES THEN MENTIONED THAT CAPITAL REQUESTS PROPOSED FOR THIS DEPARTMENT WERE CURRENTLY UNDER REVIEW AND DISCUSSION.

ROAD REPAIR AND RECONSTRUCTION:

DETAILS OF PROPOSING UP TO \$1.2 MILLION FOR THIS PURPOSE WERE CURRENTLY BEING FINALIZED. A CHAPTER 90 SPREAD SHEET WAS UNDER DEVELOPMENT FOR ROAD WORK PRIORITIES AND OPTIONS FOR THE CURTISVILLE BRIDGE.

AMERICAN RESCUE PROGRAM ACT (ARPA):

AN ARPA GRANT OF \$564,00.00 WAS RECEIVED. MICHAEL ADVISED THE

COMMITTEE THAT \$339,410.00 WAS YET TO BE ALLOCATED BUT PRIORITIES ARE UNDER CONSIDERATION FOR THIS BUDGET CYCLE.

HIGHWAY DEPARTMENT:

MICHAEL MENTIONED THAT ALLOCATION OF FREE CASH WAS BEING CONSIDERED FOR THE PURCHASE OF A REPLACEMENT HIGHWAY DEPARTMENT TRUCK.

WATER AND SEWER:

IT WAS NOTED THAT \$501,000.00 WAS AVAILABLE FOR WATER AND SEWER CAPITAL PROJECTS IN THIS BUDGET CYCLE. PRIORITIES WERE PRESENTLY UNDER DISCUSSION FOR PRESENTATION.

7. MICHAEL CANALES CONCLUDED DISCUSSION ON THE OPERATING AND CAPITAL BUDGETS BY INDICATING DRAFT COPIES WOULD BE FINALIZED, REVIEWED BY THE SELECT BOARD AND PRESENTED TO THE FINANCE COMMITTEE AT A FUTURE MEETING.

STEVE SHATZ REMINDED MICHAEL CANALES OF THE CONTINUANCE OF 10 % FREE CASH AND 10 % STABILIZATION ACCOUNT BALANCES.

PATRICK WHITE QUESTIONED EXPLORING THE UNSPENT BALANCE OF THE RESERVE FUND FOR POSSIBLE RE ALLOCATION.

8. THERE BEING NO FURTHER BUSINESS, THE MEETING WAS ADJOURNED AT 7:06 PM.