

**TOWN OF STOCKBRIDGE, MA.
50 MAIN STREET
FINANCE COMMITTEE IN-PERSON AND VIRTUAL "BABY TOWN" MEETING MINUTES
MONDAY. MAY 8, 2023 AT 6 PM**

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

TOWN GOVERNMENT ATTENDEES: PATRICK WHITE AND MICHAEL CANALES

OTHER ATTENDEES: RICH BRADWAY, DENNY ALSOP AND MARIE RAFTERY

- 3. CHAIR BIKOFSKY WELCOMED ALL IN PERSON AND VIRTUAL ATTENDEES AND MENTIONED THAT THIS "BABY TOWN" MEETING WOULD DEAL WITH THE FINANCE COMMITTEE'S REVIEW OF THE PROPOSED FY 24 OPERATING AND CAPITAL BUDGET/ WARRANT ARTICLES WITH FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS FOR THE TOWN OF STOCKBRIDGE THAT WOULD BE PRESENTED AT THE ANNUAL TOWN MEETING ON MAY 15, 2023.**

HE INTRODUCED THE MEMBERS OF THE FINANCE COMMITTEE AND THANKED THEM FOR THEIR COMMITMENT, PARTICIPATION AND DEDICATED SERVICE TO THE TOWN OF STOCKBRIDGE. HE ALSO THANKED MICHAEL CANALES, OUR TOWN ADMINISTRATOR, AS WELL AS OUR DEPARTMENT HEADS FOR THEIR ROLE IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE BUDGET AND WARRANT DOCUMENTS ALONG WITH THE SELECT BOARD FOR THEIR INPUT AND SUPPORT OF THE PROCESS. HE FURTHER EXPRESSED APPRECIATION TO GARY JOHNSON, THE TOWN MODERATOR, WHO APPOINTED AN EXCEPTIONALLY QUALIFIED FINANCE COMMITTEE WITH MEMBERS POSSESSING INDIVIDUAL AND CORPORATE FINANCIAL EXPERTISE AS WELL AS SEVERAL HAVING SERVED ROLES IN THE TOWN'S GOVERNMENT.

- 4. THE CHAIR THEN REVIEWED THE MEETING AGENDA AS WELL AS THE PURPOSE OF THE "BABY TOWN " MEETING ALONG WITH THE ROLE OF THE FINANCE COMMITTEE AS THE TOWN'S FINANCIAL AND RECOMMENDING BODY.**
- 5. THE FINANCE COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES OF APRIL 20, 2023 WERE PRESENTED FOR COMMITTEE REVIEW, DISCUSSION AND APPROVAL, A MOTION FOR APPROVAL WAS MADE BY JIM BALFANZ AND SECONDED BY ED LANE. A VOTE WAS CALLED AND THE MINUTES WERE APPROVED BY FIVE MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE WITH STEVE SHATZ ABSTAINING AS HE DID NOT ATTEND THE SESSION.**

6. REPORT OF THE FINANCE COMMITTEE FOR FY 2022:

CHAIR BIKOFSKY PRESENTED THE HIGHLIGHTS OF THIS REPORT AND ADDED THAT ALL TOWN DEPARTMENTS CONTINUED TO EXERCISE FISCAL DISCIPLINE AND COMPLIANCE WITH THEIR BUDGETS. HE NOTED THAT THE FY 22 TAX RATE WAS \$9.38 A DECREASE OF \$.40 FROM FISCAL YEAR 2021. THE CERTIFIED FREE CASH BALANCE OF \$2,523,773.00 WAS MENTIONED AS WELL AS SUPPORT FOR PROJECTS SUCH AS A REPLACEMENT FIRE ENGINE, SEWER SYSTEM EXPANSION AND UPDATING, REPLACEMENT OF TWO HIGHWAY DEPARTMENT MID-SIZED TRUCKS, A KAMPOOSA BOG HYDROLOGICAL STUDY, A REPLACEMENT HIGHWAY DEPARTMENT BACK HOE, BOBCAT AND TOOL CARRIER, REPAIR OF THE GLENDALE AND INTERLAKEN FIRE STATIONS AND IMPROVEMENTS TO THE TOWN PUBLIC BEACH AND SWIMMING AREAS. APPROVAL OF OTHER LARGE EXPENDITURES WERE ALSO MENTIONED TO INCLUDE REPLACEMENT OF AN AVERIC ROAD BRIDGE AND REPLACEMENT OF THE SALT SHED IN THE TRANSFER STATION. THE CHAIR ADDED THAT THE FINANCE COMMITTEE WOULD CONTINUE TO WORK CLOSELY WITH THE TOWN ADMINISTRATOR AND DEPARTMENT HEADS ON DEVELOPMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION OF MULTI YEAR CAPITAL AND OPERATING BUDGETS ALONG WITH EXPLORING REFINANCING AND ACCELERATION OF PAYMENTS TO REDUCE LONG TERM INDEBTEDNESS.

7. REVIEW AND DISCUSSION OF THE PROPOSED ARTICLES AND WARRANTS TO BE PRESENTED AT THE ANNUAL TOWN MEETING ON MAY 15, 2023:

TWO ARTICLES WERE PRESENTED REQUIRING CLARIFICATION:

- UNDER PROPOSED ARTICLE 4 OF THE FY 24 OPERATING BUDGET, AN OMISSION WAS NOTED IN THE DEBT SERVICE SECTION. AN INCLUSION WAS SUBSEQUENTLY ADDED IN THAT SECTION RELATED TO THE REVISED PARK STREET PUMP STATION PRINCIPAL FOR \$40,000.00 AND INTEREST OF \$23,600.00. THIS PROJECT HAD BEEN PREVIOUSLY APPROVED AT THE MAY 16, 2022 ANNUAL TOWN MEETING. THE ADDITION NOW CHANGES THE FY 24 BUDGET TOTAL TO \$11,686,560.00 INCLUDING EDUCATION OR A \$137,246.00 INCREASE OVER FY 23. A MOTION TO APPROVE WAS MADE BY JIM Balfanz AND SECONDED BY STEVE SHATZ. A VOTE WAS CALLED AND THE FINANCE COMMITTEE APPROVED THE CORRECTION 6-0.
- UNDER PROPOSED ARTICLE 12 OF THE FY 24 OPERATING BUDGET, A NEW # 8 WAS PROPOSED FOR APPROPRIATION OF \$25,000.00 FOR THE DESIGN, ENGINEERING, PERMITTING AND IMPROVEMENTS TO THE STOCKBRIDGE BOWL BOAT RAMP. THIS INCLUSION HAD PREVIOUSLY BEEN PROPOSED AND ACCEPTED AT THE

APRIL 27, 2023 SELECT BOARD MEETING IN ADVANCE OF FINANCE COMMITTEE DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATION.

CHAIR BIKOFSKY ASKED FOR ANY COMMITTEE COMMENTS, JIM Balfanz EXPRESSED CONCERNS ABOUT THE USE OF ARPA FUNDING AND THE PROPOSED USE OF FREE CASH RECOMMENDED BY THE SELECT BOARD. HE SUGGESTED THE USE OF STATE FUNDING BE EXPLORED.

CHAIR BIKOFSKY MADE A MOTION TO APPROVE SECONDED BY STEVE SHATZ. A VOTE WAS CALLED AND JAY BIKOFSKY, JORJA MARSDEN AND STEVE SHATZ VOTED IN FAVOR WITH JIM Balfanz, DIANE REUSS AND ED LANE IN OPPOSITION. AS A TIE OCCURRED, NO RECOMMENDED ACTION WAS TAKEN BY THE COMMITTEE.

- ARTICLE 4: CHAIR BIKOFSKY REVIEWED THIS ARTICLE, THE PROPOSED TOWN’S FY 24 OPERATING BUDGET INCLUDING EDUCATION. HE MENTIONED THE TOTAL OF \$11,686,560.00 AN INCREASE OF \$137, 246.00 OR 1.17% OVER FY 23. HE ALSO NOTED A 2.5% COST OF LIVING INCREASE FOR NON-UNION EMPLOYEES AND 2% FOR UNION EMPLOYEES. DETAILS WERE PRESENTED AS FOLLOWS:

GENERAL GOVERNMENT: REDUCTIONS IN THE SELECTMEN’S LITIGATION EXPENSES, TOWN FACILITIES EXPENSES, GLENDALE SOLAR MAINTENANCE AND AN OVERALL TOTAL EXPENSE REDUCTION IN THIS SECTION WAS NOTED.

PUBLIC SAFETY: INCREASES IN POLICE SALARIES AND EXPENSES, FIRE SALARIES AND EXPENSES, BUILDING INSPECTOR SALARIES REPRESENTED AN OVERALL TOTAL EXPENSE INCREASE IN THIS SECTION.

EDUCATION: NOTED WAS AN INCREASE IN THIS OPERATING BUDGET, A DECREASE IN THE TOWN’S CAPITAL ASSESSMENT, AND AN INCREASE IN OUT OF DISTRICT VOCATIONAL TUITION REPRESENTING A TOTAL OVERALL INCREASE IN EDUCATION OF \$221,610.00.

PUBLIC WORKS AND FACILITIES: INCREASES IN HIGHWAY, WATER AND SEWER SALARIES AS WELL AS EQUIPMENT MAINTENANCE, FUEL COSTS AND SUPPLIES RESULTED IN AN INCREASE IN THIS CATEGORY.

HUMAN SERVICES: THE CHAIR NOTED AN INCREASE IN FOREST AND AGRICULTURE, COUNCIL ON AGING SALARIES WITH AN OVERALL INCREASE IN THIS CATEGORY.

CULTURE AND RECREATION: AN INCREASE IN LIBRARY AND TOURISM COMMITTEE EXPENSES REPRESENTED INCREASES IN THIS CATEGORY.

DEBT SERVICE: A DECREASE IN TOWN OFFICES, AND WATER TREATMENT PLANT PRINCIPAL AND INTEREST (STABILIZATION FUNDING) ALONG WITH AN INCREASE IN THE PARK STREET PUMP STATION PRINCIPAL AND INTEREST RESULTED IN AN OVERALL CATEEGORY DECREASE.

EMPLOYEE BENEFITS: AN INCREASE IN COUNTY RETIREMENT ALONG WITH HEALTH AND DENTAL INSURANCE REPRESENTED AN OVERALL INCREASE IN THIS CATEGORY.

UNCLASSIFIED EXPENSES: THE CHAIR NOTED AN INCREASE IN THS CATEGORY DUE TO UNANTICIPATED RETIREE INSURANCE EXPENSES

CHAIR BIKOFSKY CONCLUDED BY REMINDING THE COMMITTEE THAT THE OVERALL PROPOSED FY24 OPERATING BUDGET INCREASE WAS 1.17% OVER FY23 TOTALING \$11,686,560.00 INCLUDING EDUCATION.

- **ARTICLE 5: THE CHAIR REPORTED THE PROPOSED FY 24 BHRSD EDUCATION OPERATING STOCKBRIDGE ASSESSMENT OF \$3,654,693.00, AN INCREASE OF \$153,607.00 OVER FY 23.**
- **ARTICLE 6: HE THEN MENTIONED THE PROPOSED FY 24 BHRSD STOCKBRIDGE EDUCATION CAPITAL BUDGET ASSESSMENT OF \$ \$78,450.00, A DECREASE OF \$\$11,997.00 FROM FY23.**
- **ARTICLE 7: THE CHAIR LASTLY NOTED A NEW PROPOSED OUT OF DISTRICT STOCKBRIDGE VOCATIONAL TUITION BUDGET EXPENSE ITEM OF \$80,000.00.**

STEVE SHATZ WAS THEN CALLED UPON TO PRESENT PROPOSED FY24 ARTICLES 8, 12, 13 AND 14.

- **ARTICLE 8: STEVE MENTIONED THAT THIS ARTICLE PROPOSED USE OF \$1,198,826.00 STABILIZATION FUNDS FOR THE PURPOSE OF DEBT SERVICE REDUCTIONS OF THE TOWN OFFICES PRINCIPAL AND INTÈREST PAYMENTS AS WELL AS THOSE FOR THE WATER TREATMENT PLANT.**
- **ARTICLE 12: STEVE REVIEWED A NUMBER OF PROPOSED ITEMS UTILIZING FREE CASH FUNDING HIGHLIGHTED BELOW:**
 1. **TRANSFER AND APPROPRIATION OF \$100,000.00 TO PAY THE INTEREST OF THE TOWN'S INFRASTRUCTURE ISSUES PROJECT APPROVED AT THE MAY 16, 2022 ANNUAL TOWN MEETING.**

2. TRANSFER AND APPROPRIATION OF \$50,000.00 FOR FUNDING ENGINEERING FOR TOWN PROJECTS.
 3. TRANSFER AND APPROPRIATION OF \$90,000.00 FOR FUNDING THE PURCHASE OF STOCKBRIDGE FIRE DEPARTMENT TURNOUT GEAR.
 4. TRANSFER AND APPROPRIATION OF \$1,200,000.00 FOR FUNDING ROAD RECONSTRUCTION AND REPAVING.
- **ARTICLE 13:** STEVE NOTED THE USE OF AVAILABLE SEWER SURPLUS FUNDS FOR SEVERAL PROPOSED PROJECTS:
 1. TRANSFER AND APPROPRIATION OF \$259,800.00 TO FUND PHASE 4 OF THE SEWER COLLECTION MANAGEMENT PROGRAM.
 2. TRANSFER AND APPROPRIATION OF \$49,990.00 TO FUND THE SEWER NEEDS ANALYSIS PROJECT.
 3. TRANSFER AND APPROPRIATE \$36,500.00 TO REPLACE THE SLUDGE PUMP AT THE WASTE WATER TREATMENT PLANT.
 4. TRANSFER AND APPROPRIATE \$12,300.00 TO OVERHAUL THREE RAW WASTE WATER PUMPS AT THE WASTE WATER TREATMRNT PLANT.
 - **ARTICLE 14:** STEVE SHATZ CONCLUDED BY PRESENTING THE USE OF AVAILABLE WATER OPERATIONS RESERVE FUNDS FOR SEVERAL PROPOSED PROJECTS:
 1. TRANSFER AND APPROPRIATE \$30,000.00 TO FUND INSTALLATION OF NEW GATE VALVES.
 2. TRANSFER AND APPROPRIATE \$25,000.00 TO FUND ENGINEERING FOR ELM AND MAPLE STREETS WATER MAIN REPLACEMENT.
 3. TRANSFER AND APPROPRIATE \$23,000.00 FOR FUNDING THREE NEW ON-LINE ANALYZERS FOR THE WATER TREATMENT PLANT.
 4. TRANSFER AND APPROPRIATE \$48,000.00 TO FUND PAINTING OF THE WATER TREATMENT PLANT INTERIOR.
 - **ARTICLE 15:** JORJA MARSDEN WAS THEN CALLED UPON BY THE CHAIR TO PRESENT THE FY 2024 COMMUNITY PRESERVATION PROPOSED BUDGET REQUESTS:
 1. APPROPRIATE \$50,000.00 FROM THE COMMUNITY PRESERVATION UNDESIGNATED FUND FOR AFFORDABLE HOUSING PURPOSES TO BE USED BY RIVERBROOK TO REPLACE A FIRE ESCAPE.
 2. APPROPRIATE \$15,000.00 FROM THE UNDESIGNATED FUND FOR AFFORDABLE HOUSING PURPOSES FOR HEATON COURT WALKWAY LIGHTING.
 3. APPROPRIATE \$125,000.00 FOR COMMUNITY HOUSING PURPOSES FOR PINE WOODS DRIVEWAY RECONSTRUCTION.

4. APPROPRIATE \$20,000.00 FROM THE UNDESIGNATED FUND FOR HEATON COURT SIDING REPLACEMENT.
 5. APPROPRIATE \$42,000.00 FROM THE UNDESIGNATED FUND FOR HISTORIC PRESERVATION AND RESTORATION OF THE SERGEANT TOMB SLABS.
 6. APPROPRIATE \$185,617.00 FROM THE UNDESIGNATED FUND TO BE USED BY THE WALDORF SCHOOL FOR ROOF PRESERVATION OF THE OLD TOWN HALL.
 7. APPROPRIATE \$20,000.00 FROM THE UNDESIGNATED FUND FOR LAUREL HILL'S CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS TO THE MARY FLYNN TRAIL.
 8. APPROPRIATE \$11,500.00 FROM THE UNDESIGNATED FUND FOR OPEN SPACE AND RECREATION PURPOSES TO REMOVE INVASIVE SPECIES AND REQUIRED PERMITTING OF WORK AT BULLARD WOODS.
 9. JORJA THEN CALLED UPON RICH BRADWAY TO DISCUSS A PROPOSED ACQUISITION OF THE FENN FARM (SWANN) PROPERTY. RICH ADVISED THE "BABY TOWN" MEETING ATTENDEES THAT THIS REQUEST FOR \$300,000.00 CPC FUNDS WAS BEING WITHDRAWN AS THE SWANN ESTATE HAD FOUND AN ALTERNATIVE FUNDING SOURCE.
 10. JORJA CONTINUED WITH THE PROPOSED APPROPRIATION OF \$11,917.00 FROM THE UNDESIGNATED FUND FOR GOULD MEADOWS OPEN SPACE PRESERVATION TO REMOVE INVASIVE SPECIES, IMPROVE WALKWAYS, ALONG WITH TREE AND GARDEN WORK.
 11. APPROPRIATE \$5,200.00 FROM THE UNDESIGNATED FUND FOR OPEN SPACE AND CONSERVATION OF THE FOOT BIRD SANCTUARY PROPERTY.
 12. APPROPRIATE \$3,875.00 FROM THE UNDESIGNATED FUND FOR CONSERVATION AND REPAIR OF THEE LIBRARY'S ANSON CLARK DAGUERREOTYPE PHOTOS.
 13. APPROPRIATE \$10,000.00 FROM THE UNDESIGNATED FUND FOR THE FY24 ADMINISTRATIVE BUDGET.
 14. JORJA CONCLUDED BY MENTIONING THAT THE HISTORIC RESOURCES RESERVE, COMMUNITY HOUSING RESERVE, AND THE OPEN SPACE RESERVE FROM COMMUNITY PRESERVATION FY 24 ANNUAL REVENUES WOULD MEET THE MINIMUM REQUIRED AMOUNTS UNDER MA. GENERAL LAW.
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8. THERE BEING NO FURTHER COMMENTS OR DISCUSSION, CHAIR BIKOFSKY CONCLUDED BY MENTIONING THAT THE FINANCE COMMITTEE LOOKS FORWARD TO WORKING CLOSELY WITH THE SELECT BOARD, TOWN ADMINISTATOR, DEPARTMENT HEADS AND STAFF DURING FY 24 ON FINANCIAL MATTERS THAT IMPACT OUR TOWN. HE REMINDED ALL OF THE ANNUAL TOWN MEETING DATE SCHEDULED ON MAY 15, 2023. THE FINANCE COMMITTEE "BABY TOWN" MEETING WAS THEN ADJOURNED AT 6:50 PM.

