

**TOWN OF STOCKBRIDGE, MA.
50 MAIN STREET
JOINT FINANCE COMMITTEE- SELECT BOARD
REMOTE ZOOM MEETING MINUTES
THURSDAY FEBRUARY 25, 2021 AT 6:30 PM**

1. FINANCE COMMITTEE CHAIR BIKOFSKY WAS ASKED TO MODERATE THIS SESSION AND HE CALLED THE JOINT MEETING TO ORDER AT 6:35 PM.
2. ATTENDEES: SELECT BOARD: CHUCK CARDILLO, ROXANNE MCCAFFREY AND PATRICK WHITE
FINANCE COMMITTEE: JAY BIKOFSKY, JIM BALFANZ, PAM BOUDREAU, NEIL HOLDEN, DIANE REUSS AND STEVE SHATZ
TOWN GOVERNMENT ATTENDEES: MICHAEL CANALES
OTHER ATTENDEES: CLARENCE FANTO (EAGLE) AND STEVE BORNS (CTSB)
3. THE FINANCE COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES OF FEBRUARY 18, 2021 WERE PRESENTED AND A MOTION WAS MADE BY STEVE SHATZ AND SECONDED BY JAY BIKOFSKY. A VOTE WAS CALLED AND THE MINUTES WERE UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED BY THE FINANCE COMMITTEE.
4. REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT PLANNING BOARD (RSDPB) PRESENTATION: LUCY PRASHKER OF CAIN, HIBBARD AND MYERS PC AND PETER TAYLOR, VICE CHAIR OF THE REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT PLANNING BOARD WERE CALLED UPON TO UPDATE THE JOINT COMMITTEE ON PLANS AND A FUNDING REQUEST FOR FY 2022.

LUCY REMINDED THE JOINT COMMITTEE THAT THE RSDPB WAS COMPRISED OF THE EIGHT (8) MEMBER TOWNS OF THE BHRSD AND SBRSD. SHE ADDED THAT ONE YEAR AGO, MARCH 2020, THIS PLANNING GROUP WAS FORMED TO STUDY AND EVALUATE THE EDUCATIONAL AND FINANCIAL FEASIBILITY OF CONSOLIDATING THE TWO DISTRICTS.

PHASE 1: THIS FIRST STEP CONSISTED OF HIRING A CONSULTANT, SUPPORTED BY RECEIPT OF A \$50,000.00 GRANT, TO STUDY THE OPERATION OF EACH DISTRICT, ANALYZE ENROLLMENT DECLINES AS WELL AS CURRENT AND PROJECTED FINANCIAL TRENDS ASSOCIATED WITH THE OPERATION OF THE TWO DISTRICTS. THE RESULTS OF PHASE 1 SUGGESTED A CONTINUATION OF DECLINING ENROLLMENT TRENDS, INCREASED OPERATING COSTS, AN INCREASED NEED FOR STATE FUNDING AND INCREASED ASSESSMENTS TO EACH MEMBER TOWN.

THE CONCLUSION OF THE PHASE 1 STUDY SUGGESTED THE RECOMMENDATION OF A PHASE 2 TO ANALYZE THE EDUCATIONAL AND FINANCIAL ADVISABILITY OF FULL CONSOLIDATION, INCREMENTAL CONSOLIDATION, SHARED SERVICES/ MANAGEMENT WITH COMBINED AND EXPANDED EDUCATIONAL OFFERINGS OR POSSIBLY THE CREATION OF A NEW REGIONAL HIGH SCHOOL TO SERVE BOTH DISTRICTS.

PHASE 2: THE PROPOSED NEXT STEP PRESENTED BY THE RSDPB WAS, OVER THE NEXT 12-18 MONTHS, TO GATHER AND ANALYZE RELEVANT DATA AND DEVELOP POTENTIAL OPTIONS FOR PRESENTATION TO MEMBER COMMUNITIES IN THE SPRING OF 2022. THE ESTIMATED BUDGET FOR THIS PHASE WAS \$154,000.00-\$184,000.00 FOR THE MANAGEMENT/FACILITATION, ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT, CONSULTANT EXPERTISE AND LEGAL ADVICE. IT WAS MENTIONED THAT A STATE GRANT OF \$125,000.00 HAD BEEN APPLIED FOR WITH NOTIFICATION DUE WITHIN THE NEXT SEVERAL WEEKS AND A REQUEST OF \$15,000.00 ADDITIONAL SUPPORT MADE FROM EACH OF THE MEMBER TOWNS.

ACTION: A MOTION WAS MADE REGARDING THE JOINT COMMITTEE'S INTEREST IN THE SECOND PHASE, FUNDING BEING SUBJECT TO TOWN MEETING APPROVAL, BY STEVE SHATZ AND SECONDED BY JIM Balfanz. A VOTE WAS CALLED AND THE SELECT BOARD VOTED UNANIMOUSLY IN FAVOR AS DID THE FINANCE COMMITTEE.

5. FY22 OPERATING BUDGET DEPARTMENTAL PRESENTATIONS:

POLICE: CHAIR BIKOFSKY CALLED UPON CHIEF FENNELLY TO REVIEW THE HIGHLIGHTS FOR THE JOINT COMMITTEE.

* THE CHIEF ADVISED THE COMMITTEE THAT SALARIES INCREASED 2% DUE TO COLLECTIVE BARGAINING, A SPECIAL POLICE SALARY LINE WAS ELIMINATED FROM THIS YEARS BUDGET, OVERTIME EXPENSES WERE REDUCED AND A TOTAL NET CHANGE OF \$167.00 FROM LAST YEAR WAS PROPOSED.

* CHIEF FENNELLY WENT ON TO REVIEW THE DEPARTMENT'S EXPENSES:

- RADIO REPAIRS WERE REDUCED BY \$1,500.00 (60%)
 - VEHICLE REPAIR AND MAINTENANCE WAS LEVEL FUNDED
 - SUPPLIES WERE REDUCED BY \$2,000.00 (33.33%)
 - TRAINING EXPENSES WERE REDUCED BY \$9,000.00 (39.13%)
 - PURCHASE OF A HYBRID POLICE CRUISER WITH NEW LIGHTS AND A PRISONER CAGE INCREASED (50.31%) OR BY \$17,977.00 FROM \$35,733.00 IN FY 21. CHIEF MENTIONED THAT THE INCREASED COST WOULD BE OFF SET BY AN ANNUAL REDUCTION IN FUEL COSTS AND AN EXTENDED WARRANTY ON THE DRIVETRAIN AND BATTERY.
- HE CONCLUDED BY MENTIONING TO THE JOINT COMMITTEE THE TOTAL EXPENSE BUDGET INCREASED ONLY 3.21% OR \$4,567.00.

WATER DEPARTMENT: MIKE BUFFONI WAS THEN CALLED UPON TO REVIEW THE HIGHLIGHTS OF THE WATER DEPARTMENT PROPOSED FY22 BUDGET.

* HE MENTIONED THAT AS A RESULT OF COLLECTIVE BARGAINING, SALARIES INCREASED 2% OR \$5,094.00

* MIKE NOTED A \$6,300.00 REDUCTION IN THE DEPARTMENT'S EXPENSES. THIS INCLUDED REDUCTIONS IN ELECTRICITY COSTS WITH THE NEW SOLAR ARRAY, REDUCED HEATING COSTS, WATER METER REDUCED COSTS, REDUCED POSTAGE AND OFFICE SUPPLIES, SDWA REDUCED ASSESSMENTS, AND

REDUCED INTER-MUNICIPAL HOUSING AGREEMENT EXPENSES. MIKE BUFFONI CONCLUDED BY HIGHLIGHTING A 4.9% WATER DEPARTMENT EXPENSE REDUCTION IN THE PROPOSED FY 22 BUDGET.

SEWER DEPARTMENT: TONY CAMPETTI ADVISED THE JOINT COMMITTEE OF:

- * AN INCREASED 2% SALARY PROPOSED BUDGET DUE TO COLLECTIVE BARGAINING, AMOUNTING TO \$3,572.58.
- * HE MENTIONED A \$6,000.00 PROPOSED SEWER DEPARTMENT EXPENSE REDUCTION FOR FY 22.

6. OTHER BUSINESS:

MICHAEL CANALES ADVISED BOTH THE SELECT BOARD AND FINANCE COMMITTEE THAT AN ADDITIONAL JOINT MEETING WOULD BE SCHEDULED ON THURSDAY MARCH 11, 2021 AT 6:30 PM TO DISCUSS SALARY AND EXPENSE BUDGETS FOR THE FIRE AND HIGHWAY DEPARTMENTS. IN ADDITION, THE PROPOSED CAPITAL REQUESTS AND WARRANT ARTICLES TO DATE WILL BE PRESENTED.

PATRICK WHITE MENTIONED THE NEED TO DISCUSS A TREE INVENTORY AND REMOVAL PLAN ESTIMATED AT \$6,000.00 FOR ICE GLENN ROAD. MORE TO FOLLOW ON THIS ITEM.

7. THERE BEING NO FURTHER BUSINESS CHAIR BIKOFSKY ADJOURNED THE JOINT COMMITTEE MEETING AT 7:53 PM.