

TOWN OF STOCKBRIDGE, MA.  
50 MAIN STREET  
FINANCE COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES  
MONDAY, FEBRUARY 28, 2022 AT 6 PM

1. CHAIR BIKOFSKY CALLED THE MEETING TO ORDER AT 6:05 PM.
2. COMMITTEE IN-PERSON ATTENDEES: JAY BIKOFSKY, JIM BALFANZ, PAM BOUDREAU, DIANE REUSS, STEVE SHATZ AND WILLIAM VOGT  
REMOTE ATTENDEES: NEIL HOLDEN (BY TELEPHONE)

TOWN GOVERNMENT ATTENDEES: PATRICK WHITE (REMOTELY) AND MICHAEL CANALES (IN-PERSON)

OTHER ATTENDEES: CLARENCE FANTO (REMOTELY)

3. THE FINANCE COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES OF SEPTEMBER 30, 2021 WERE PRESENTED AND A MOTION WAS MADE BY JIM BALFANZ AND SECONDED BY STEVE SHATZ. A VOTE WAS CALLED AND THE MINUTES WERE APPROVED 6-0 (WILLIAM VOGT HAD NOT AS YET JOINED THE MEETING.)
4. MICHAEL CANALES THEN REVIEWED THE FIRST DRAFT OF THE FY 23 TOWN OPERATING BUDGET AND ADDED THAT DEPARTMENT HEADS HAD UNTIL MID-MARCH TO SUBMIT THEIR FINAL REQUESTS. BELOW WERE SOME OF THE HIGHLIGHTS PRESENTED:

GENERAL GOVERNMENT:

- A 2% SALARY INCREASE WAS PROPOSED FOR EMPLOYEES IN THIS CATEGORY.
- AN INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY PROPOSED INCREASE OF \$20,000. WAS INCLUDED WITH THE ENHANCEMENT OF CYBERLIABILITY EXPERTISE.
- THE GENERAL GOVERNMENT PROPOSED FY 23 DRAFT OVERALL BUDGET INCREASE PRESENTED WAS \$41,498.00.

PUBLIC SAFETY:

- A 2% SALARY INCREASE WAS PRESENTED BY MICHAEL FOR POLICE AND FIRE EMPLOYEES.
- MICHAEL THEN NOTED A PROPOSED \$13,796.00 INCREASE IN AMBULANCE EXPENSES WITH THE STOCKBRIDGE ALLOCATION DISCUSSIONS STILL ONGOING WITH LENOX.
- INITIAL PROPOSED PUBLIC SAFETY FY 23 BUDGET INCREASES WERE \$43,620.00.

EDUCATION:

- MICHAEL THEN ADVISED THE COMMITTEE OF A SIGNIFICANT BHRSD OPERATING BUDGET INCREASED ASSESSMENT TO STOCKBRIDGE OF \$460,760.00 DUE TO INCREASED EXPENSES AND AN INCREASE IN THE NUMBER OF STOCKBRIDGE ENROLLED STUDENTS. THE COMMITTEE ASKED THAT DETAILS OF THE INCREASE BE PRESENTED AT THE NEXT FINANCE COMMITTEE MEETING FOR DISCUSSION.

PUBLIC WORKS AND FACILITIES:

- A 2% SALARY INCREASE WAS MENTIONED BY MICHAEL FOR HIGHWAY, TRANSFER STATION AND WATER AND SEWER DEPARTMENTAL EMPLOYEES.
- ALSO MENTIONED WAS A STATE MANDATED INCREASE IN SEWER TESTING WHICH WAS REPRESENTED BY A \$12,200.00 PROPOSED BUDGET INCREASE.
- THE OVERALL PROPOSED PUBLIC WORKS AND FACILITIES FY 23 BUDGET INCREASE WAS \$44,979.00.

HUMAN SERVICES:

- THIS PROPOSED BUDGET CATEGORY SHOWED AN OVERALL DECREASE OF \$15,604.00 PRINCIPALLY RELATED TO A REDUCTION IN COUNCIL ON AGING SALARIES.

CULTURE AND RECREATION:

- MICHAEL MENTIONED THAT A PROPOSED INCREASE OF \$13,692.00 WAS INCLUDED FOR THIS BUDGET CATEGORY, PRINCIPALLY TO SUPPORT THE LIBRARY.

DEBT SERVICE:

- THE COMMITTEE WAS THEN ADVISED THAT ALTHOUGH A FY 23 DEBT SERVICE INCREASE OF \$34,427.00 WOULD BE INCLUDED, FY 24 AND FY27 WOULD ACTUALLY SHOW FUTURE REDUCTIONS.

EMPLOYEE BENEFITS:

- THIS CATEGORY WAS PRESENTED WITH AN OVERALL INCREASE OF \$38,424.00 PRINCIPALLY IN THE AREAS OF RETIREMENT AND UNDESIGNATED COMPENSATION EXPENSES.

SUMMARY OF THE DRAFT FY 23 OPERATING EXPENSE BUDGET:

MICHAEL CONCLUDED THE DISCUSSION ON THE FIRST DRAFT OF THIS BUDGET BY ADVISING THE COMMITTEE THAT A \$678,745.00 INCREASE WAS BEING PROPOSED AT THIS TIME, PRINCIPALLY REPRESENTING INCREASES IN THE ALLOCATION OF BHRSD EXPENSES TO STOCKBRIDGE.

5. OTHER FY 23 OPERATIONAL AND CAPITAL BUDGET CONSIDERATIONS:

- MICHAEL ADVISED THE COMMITTEE THAT ADDITIONAL OPERATING BUDGET MEETINGS WOULD BE JOINTLY HELD BETWEEN THE FINANCE COMMITTEE AND SELECT BOARD AND INCLUDE PRESENTATIONS BY POLICE, FIRE AND HIGHWAY AS WELL AS OTHER DEPARTMENTS AS MIGHT BE APPROPRIATE. A REQUEST FOR AN ADDITIONAL POLICE OFFICER, A NEW FIRE ENGINE AND RELATED EQUIPMENT AS WELL AS HIGHWAY DEPARTMENT TRUCK AND BACKHOE REPLACEMENTS ALONG WITH UNANTICIPATED SNOW AND ICE REMOVAL WOULD BE INCLUDED IN THESE DISCUSSIONS.
  - DISCUSSIONS ARE ONGOING WITH LENOX TO REDUCE THE AMBULANCE EXPENSE ALLOCATION TO STOCKBRIDGE.
  - THE MATTER OF UNANTICIPATED INCREASES IN FUEL COSTS WOULD HAVE TO BE ADDRESSED IN THE FY23 OPERATING BUDGET.
  - FUTURE MEETINGS WOULD INCLUDE BUT NOT BE LIMITED TO DISCUSSIONS AND REVIEW OF PROPOSED FY 23 CAPITAL PROJECTS INCLUDING REPLACEMENT OF TUCKERMAN'S, THE SECOND AVERIC AND CURTISVILLE BRIDGES, REPLACEMENT OF THE TRANSFER STATION SALT SHED, 7/20 INTERSECTION AND MAIN STREET UPGRADES, WATER SEWER AND CEMETARY PROJECTS AS WELL AS INTERLAKEN AND GLENDALE FIRE STATION REPAIRS.
  - DISCUSSIONS OF THE ABOVE CAPITAL PROJECTS WOULD ALSO REQUIRE FUNDING PROPOSALS UTILIZING FREE CASH AND NEW DEBT BORROWING, AS WELL AS SURPLUS APPROPRIATIONS IN THE CASE OF CEMETARY AND WATER AND SEWER PROJECTS.
  - FUTURE MEETINGS WOULD REQUIRE CONSIDERATION OF MAINTAINING OR INCREASING RESERVE FUND, STABILIZATION, SURPLUS AND OPEB BALANCES.
  - MICHAEL CANALES CONCLUDED THE MEETING BY ADVISING THE COMMITTEE THAT CURRENT RESERVE FUND, STABILIZATION, WATER AND SEWER AS WELL AS OPEB FUND UPDATED BALANCES WOULD BE UPDATED ALONG WITH THE REPLACEMENT STATUS OF MONUMENT MOUNTAIN HIGH SCHOOL.
6. THERE BEING NO ADDITIONAL BUSINESS, CHAIR BIKOFSKY ADJOURNED THE MEETING AT 6:59 PM.