

Finance Committee

October 13, 2021

7:00PM

Meeting held via remote participation

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Meeting called to order at 7:00pm

**Attendance:** Aimee Sawyer, Bonnie Yezukevich, Paula Daniels, Michael Fiore, Yelena Gordon, William Rotondi, Stephen Evans (joined late),

**Absent:** Kevin Snyder, Joe Parker, Zach Tsilis

**Guests:** Denise Ellis, Shawn Simmons, Matt Wells, John Harrop, Brian Clark, Sandy Ollerhead, David Wluka

**Article Two – Operating Budget Amendments**

- The first amendment is under 001141510; assessors' salaries. The request is for \$7,824
- Around \$1,000 of this was for budgeting error
- The rest is to increase the hours of one of the staff members in the office. This individual currently works 28 hours/week, this would increase the hours to 37.5 hours/week
- This will carry over to the next fiscal year if it is approved
- The second amendment is treasurer, \$5,000 under salary
- At one time there were two treasurers' working together, one has left, and Jacqueline Bourdreau came on. This salary adjustment would be to amend that
- The third amendment is under town clerk is under 001161570. This is the expense budget, it is \$5,000. This is for general code
- There have been some zoning changes made at the town meetings and because of this the general code needs to upgrade the by laws
- The next is the salary for Charlene and data processing. When Charlene proposed her budget, she did not put in our salary increase
- Police salary overtime: the request was for \$45,000, but \$27,000 is what is being recommended. Hopefully they will be able to make it through with that and if they need more money in May, we will have to look at it then.
- Police salary new hires: the request was for two new hires. This would allow for one new hire this year. \$27,500
- Salary additional hours is not being recommended at this time
- Fire department over time: request is \$125,000, but \$75,000 is what is being recommended
- Fire department emergency medical expense: request is \$3,450 for training/licenses
- Norton Public Schools: the request was for \$457,824 for transportation and nothing under salaries
- Discussion on the grants that the school has received, the total amounts, where the money had to be spent, and when they needed to be used by

- Last year Southeastern Regional Highschool gave an option to the town to have the selectman approve using SR funds towards the budget and then they came back after town meeting to let us know that they could not use SR funds for the budget. \$80,000 is what was anticipated to come out of the SR funds.
- Medicare is \$14,000, this will cover Medicare expense for new hires
- The total is \$704,628 from free cash
- The next item is for the school fields, Town Hall, and senior center project. This borrowing has been done. \$59,840. This would be raised and appropriated and would come out of the debt exclusion

Bonnie – I move that we recommend Article Two as printed with \$704,628 coming from free cash and \$59,840 coming from raised and appropriated from the debt exclusion

Seconded

Vote: Yes – 6 Abstention – 1 Motion Passes

#### **Article Four – Water Operating Budget Amendments**

- At this time there are no amendments that need to be made
- Recommended to vote “no action” for now

Bonnie – I move that we take no action on article four

Seconded

Vote: Yes – 7 No – 0 Motion passes unanimously

#### **Article Five – Sole Operating Budget**

- The town accountant is asking that you vote to amend the vote that was taken at the May town meeting
- This would amend the sources of funds to say that \$80,000 would be from the sewer betterment account
- Just wanted to clarify for the DOR that there would be money coming from the sewer betterment account to help pay off the note on the West Main Street Sewer Project

Bonnie – I move that we recommend for sources of funding for the sewer operating budget \$80,000 from the sewer betterment account

Seconded

Vote: Yes – 7 No – 0 Motion passes unanimously

#### **Article Seven – Capital Plan Amendments**

- The recommendations approved by the capital committee were \$35,000 for data processing
- This is so we are not replacing all the computers at the same time, this would be for any upgrades that are needed on laptops, workstations, printers, etc.
- Next item is under the police department. In the fall they had requested three cruisers and we were not able to fully fund it so this would provide for another cruiser at \$70,000
- Portable radios \$20,000. This is a replacement program for radios that are outdated.
- Tasers \$21,000

- School department: \$69,000 is for a minibus for athletics and \$85,000 is for technology displays
- There was a request for parking lot re-engineering, the superintendent has asked to hold off on this
- Highway department: Peterbilt truck that was previously approved and then Keith found out that it would be \$12,000 more than he originally anticipated. The additional \$12,000 is being requested.
- \$71,952 requested for a Chevy Silverado that will have a plow
- Total requests: \$383,952 and this would come from the capital funds already appropriated

Bonnie – I move that we recommend \$383,952 from the capital budget for capital plan amendments for fiscal year 22

Seconded

Vote: Yes – 7 No – 0 Motion passes unanimously

#### **Article Ten – Bike Trail**

- This is for the bike trail. Mansfield is extending their bike trail to Norton and then we will connect and run all the way down to Crane Street
- Right now, the plans are at a 75% plan stage. There are a few adjustments that have to be made to the plans
- The Aeronautics Administration came in and said that you cannot have a bike path in a certain area near the airport. It is a flight protection zone
- The bike trail is being built on the right of way where the sewer line is that Mansfield owned the property and put the sewer line in. Mansfield bought that property in bankruptcy court from the railroad, because we are using federal funds to construct the rail trail a complete title search had to be done. As part of that title search it was discovered that on 39 of those properties along the railroad right of way, the railroad never actually took the property. The railroad took rights across the property.
- The hope is that the MFN will be able to straighten this out by doing a confirmatory deed and taking ownership of that entire right of way
- We have hired an appraiser and the appraiser told us to figure about a \$1.50-\$2.00/square foot
- The plan is to have the bike trail in the tip in 2022
- This was presented to capital, and they voted their support to authorize borrowing up to \$700,000 to cover the acquisition of easements along the trail

Bonnie – I move that we recommend article ten to borrow up to \$700,000 to fund the acquisition of easements along the rail trail

Seconded

Vote: Yes – 7 No – 0 motion passes unanimously

#### **Article Twelve**

- The water/sewer department has decided to pull that article off, there is no need for it right now

#### **Article Thirteen – Home rule petition**

- This article is to authorize the town to file for a special legislation to grant two additional licenses for the sale of all alcoholic beverages not to be drunk on the premises (two liquor stores)

- David Wluka is speaking on this matter. Mr. Wluka is with Wluka Real Estate Corp. Mr. Wluka represents a group that has a lease in place at the blue star industrial park for a full package store subject to the availability of an appropriate license from the town
- When his client expressed interest in the site, they were unsure if there were any licenses available. Mr. Wluka called town and learned that there weren't any, but the town was considering adding licenses
- Discussion on legislation pertaining to the licenses, where the potential liquor stores would be located in Norton, how liquor licenses are obtained, etc.
- Discussion on how adding more liquor licenses could potentially lead to licenses for a marijuana establishment license
- The select board has not voted on this article yet, they want a presentation first and then they will vote on it

**Waiting to vote on this article until next week**

Bonnie – I move that we adjourn this meeting

Seconded

Vote: Yes – 7 No – 0 motion passes unanimously

Meeting Adjourned at 8:50pm

Respectfully submitted by

Rachel Medas, FinCom Secretary

Minutes Approved by Committee on:

6/6/2022

Signature:

  
Aimee Sawyer, Finance Committee Chair