

Swampscott Finance Committee
22 Monument Avenue
7:00 PM
October 30, 2017

Present: Marzie Galazka (Chair), Tim Dorsey (Vice Chair), Gail Rosenberg, Joan Hilario, Cinder McNerney, Jill Sullivan, Mary Ellen Fletcher, Bill Jones.

Absent: Polly Titcomb

Also attending: Sean Fitzgerald (TA), Ron Mendes (ATA- Administration), Cheryl Stella (Town Accountant), Michael McClung (Town Moderator)

Mr. Fitzgerald discussed the warrant. Town Hall staff has spent a lot of time digging into the financial information for the upcoming town meeting and both they and the Selectmen plan to have more interaction with town meeting members regarding the warrant.

Ms McNerney asked if the 5-year financial forecast will be done at town meeting. He indicated that he wants to do a much deeper dive into that forecast than is appropriate for town meeting. He and Mr. Mendez have spent a lot of time analyzing values and tax classifications. They are modeling that in new ways. The forecasting will be built more from the bottom up than just adding a 2% inflation number.

Article 2 is a presentation about the FY '18 Real Estate Tax Rate setting and the budget process. Ms. McNerney asked that the finance committee see that presentation before town meeting. Looking to change some of our processes with respect to how we manage our fiduciary responsibilities. We signed a community compact that will give us support from UMass Boston in building a detailed financial forecast. The selectmen want to keep the "tax rate" front and center in all of our conversations about financial priorities.

Article 3: Unpaid bills from prior years. Ms. Fletcher asked about an amount of \$2,356.50 for ballot printing relative to the \$11,000 that was shuffled. Mr. Mendes indicated that it simply was a bill that came in after the books closed. We are improving the discipline of closing the books on time in order to improve the flow of financial information: certify free cash, audit etc. We are also implementing a new purchasing policy that will provide discipline for timely receipts, etc.

Motion to approve: Jones/Fletcher 8-0.

Article 4: Mr. Fitzgerald was asked to look for reductions the might be available in the budget. Found \$50,000 in employee group health and \$25,000 in property/casualty. These reductions still leave contingency based on historical amounts.

Motion to approve: Jones/McNerney 8-0.

Article 5: This article reflects changes made in MGL allowing us to apply bond premiums to project costs so that we can reduce the amount we can borrow. We are retroactively applying that provision to some borrowing we did in January.

Motion to approve: McNerney/Fletcher 8-0.

Article 6: This is a placeholder for collective bargaining agreements that haven't yet been negotiated. Mr. Fitzgerald had the goal of completing a contract with our bargaining units. That seems unlikely at the moment, but this allows for the issue to come to town meeting if something does get resolved.

No vote was taken at this time.

Article 7: Asks the town meeting to accept the provisions of MGL regarding revenue funds related to our cable TV contract. This allows us to follow PEG funds better. We do a great job with educational programming, but not as much with government and public programming.

Motion to approve: Hilario/Rosenberg 8-0.

Article 8: Does not require a vote from the Finance Committee – pedestrian safety.

Next meeting, we will approve minutes for May 10, July 10, September 11, and October 30.

Ms. Galazka asked that the finance team come back in November to give us an update on the first quarter finances. Ms. Stella has been doing some benchmark calculations relative to prior year spending, etc. This would be in addition to the required five-year forecast.

Motion to adjourn at McNerney/Jones. 8-0.