



Town of Swampscott

Finance Committee Meeting Minutes

Monday, March 30, 2020

Meeting Conducted via remote participation on the zoom.us application

Pursuant to Governor Baker's March 12, 2020 Order Suspending Certain Provisions of the Open Meeting Law, G.L. c.30A, §18, and the Governor's March 15, 2020 Order imposing strict limitation on the number of people that may gather in one place, this meeting of the **Finance Committee** was conducted via remote participation utilizing the zoom.us application. Specific information and the general guidelines for remote participation by members of the public and/or parties with a right and/or requirement to attend this meeting was made available on the meeting posting. No in-person attendance of members of the public was permitted, and every effort was made to ensure that the public can adequately access the proceedings in real time, via technological means.

MEMBERS PRESENT

Tim Dorsey (Chair), Mary Ellen Fletcher (Vice Chair), Gail Rosenberg, Cinder McNerney, Eric Hartmann, Joan Hilario, Jill Sullivan, James Goldman, Matthew Kirschner

MEMBERS ABSENT: None

OTHER TOWN OFFICIALS PRESENT:

Peter Spellios (Chair, Select Board); Michael McClung (Town Moderator); Sean Fitzgerald, (Town Administrator); Ronald Mendes (Assistant Town Administrator); Marilyn Hurwitz (Senior Center Director); Alyce DeVeau (Library Director)

Chairman Tim Dorsey called the Finance Committee meeting to order at 7:01pm. Mr. Dorsey asked Mr. Fitzgerald to provide an overview of the budget referencing the adjustments to the Town Administrator's Budget that was shared with the Finance Committee this afternoon.

Mr. Fitzgerald offered some remarks thanking both Ms. DeVeau and Ms. Hurwitz for their hard work. He referenced that both departments have been recommended for additional funding to expand the services these departments provide to the community. Included among these are requested funding for a full-time Senior Center Director and added funding for expanded services to seniors.

Mr. McClung asked Mr. Fitzgerald for a brief review of the current situation concerning the budget and the adjustments being proposed.

Mr. Spellios indicated that he will be having a conference call tomorrow morning to set the date for both the Town Election and Town Meeting. He indicated that the exact dates will be determined this week, but the committee should expect that neither the election or town meeting will take place before June 1st.

Mr. Dorsey asked Ms. DeVeau to provide some remarks concerning her budget request. Ms. DeVeau discussed several of community programs that will be funded with the additional \$20,000 in funding that is suggested for her budget. She referenced a development of book mobile that would provide delivery services to residents; a technology fair; more outreach with gardening on the grounds of the library; a children's performance fair.

Mr. Dorsey asked if there are any questions on the Library Budget. Ms. Fletcher had a question about the additional funding for community programs asking if this additional funding is really needed. She asked about the utilization data, and Ms. DeVeau said the utilization is over 100,000 people per year. She also asked about capital improvements into the Library. Ms. DeVeau updated the committee on the several improvements, such as the remodeled 2nd floor, the bathroom, etc. Mr. Mendes also updated on the status of the elevator sleeve project and the technology upgrades that have been recently installed.

Mr. Dorsey asked Ms. Hurwitz if she had any remarks. Ms. Hurwitz offered her remarks regarding some comparable budgets in several other communities. She also spoke about the work done by Ms. Bush over the last several years indicating that she would like to advocate for additional funding for salary increases for Senior Center staff like she has in years past. Ms. Hurwitz also expressed concerns regarding the funding level that is recommended for vehicle maintenance. She said she is pleased to see the additional funding for Adult Day Care Services in the recommended budget, but she needs to find a location that can accept these seniors since the Senior Center is not equipped to serve these individuals.

Mr. Dorsey asked about the set up of the staff at the Senior Center. Ms. Hurwitz discussed the administrative structure of how the Senior Center operates. Ms. Sullivan asked Mr. Fitzgerald if the recommended new funding for the additional FTE in the recommended budget is for a full-time Director. Mr. Fitzgerald indicated that the additional FTE is funding intended to hire a full-time Director. Mr. Spellios then indicated that the plan is to hire a full-time Director and indicated that he is amazed that we have been able to provide the level of service with only a part-time Director. He also indicated that the adjustment to the budget now reflects a 2% increase to all non-union staff across the board, and recognized that what Ms. Hurwitz is asking for additional increases beyond the 2% that is recommended and indicated that further changes to the Senior Center budget may be coming. Ms. Hurwitz also responded to a question from Ms. Fletcher answering the question of exactly what services constitutes "adult care services."

There was discussion about the Senior Center revolving account about how money is being spent. Ms. Fletcher expressed concerns that certain items being paid for out of the revolving account perhaps should be paid from the operating account and this should be reviewed.

Mr. Fitzgerald also provided input, indicating that it is planned that initially Adult Day Care Services will be a contracted service, and that we will have to monitor utilization initially and we may need to adjust in future years if there is a great need for these services. Ms. Fletcher asked for a detailed quote for the services that are included in the additional \$50,000 that is requested. Ms. Fletcher also asked for a brief overview of the Senior Center's revolving fund, which Ms. Hurwitz provided describing some of the self-funded programs that are funded through the revolving fund.

Mr. Dorsey asked if there were any additional questions for either Ms. Hurwitz or Ms. DeVeau, and there were none.

Mr. Dorsey asked if the committee wanted to discuss the revisions to the Town Administrator's recommended budget at this time or discuss them at a future meeting. Ms. Sullivan asked for a complete revised spreadsheet of the budget that incorporates the adjustments. Mr. Mendes will send an updated spreadsheet to the committee.

Ms. McNerney asked for an update to how the coronavirus issue is affecting the Town. Mr. Fitzgerald provided and update to how the pandemic is affecting the town. Ms. McNerney asked if there will be a revenue impact. Mr. Fitzgerald indicated that he expects an impact to Meals Tax, and other economy-based revenue line items. Mr. Mendes also provided an update on revenue items that could be impacted by the closures resulting from the coronavirus pandemic.

Ms. McNerney also asked for an update on how the School Dept. is planning out the rest of the year, and Mr. Spellios provided an update.

Mr. Spellios then provided an overview of the adjustments to the Town Administrator's recommended budget that was distributed this afternoon. There is an adjustment to the Solid Waste budget and increases to non-union staff are now included in department budgets instead of the salary reserve. Also we now know the GIC rates, so the Health Insurance budget is revised with the knowledge of the new rates.

There was a question from Ms. McNerney about whether the individuals with the virus are in a health care setting or in their homes. Mr. Spellios indicated that although that information is not public at an individual level, it is a combination of people being at home and people receiving care in a health care setting. He also indicated that the Public Health Nurse, Ms. Illingworth, believes that there are many other people in the community that have the virus, but have not yet been tested.

Mr. McClung also reminded the committee that volunteer opportunities are available, and members of the community can sign up on the town website. Mr. Mendes also reminded the committee that the capital improvement committee will be meeting tomorrow evening (Tuesday March 31st) at 5:00pm and members of the finance committee are welcome to attend as well.

There was also some discussion about the cost implications of the pandemic on special education costs.

On **MOTION** (Ms. Fletcher) **SECONDED** (Ms. Rosenberg) it was **VOTED** (unanimous) to adjourn.

Meeting adjourned at 8:42pm

True Attest,

Ronald Mendes, Assistant Town Administrator

Minutes APPROVED by vote of the Finance Committee 05/26/2020