

Call to Order

Chair Moffitt called the meeting to order at 7:01p.m. in the Select Board Conference Room. Chair Moffitt advised the committee that Paul Monticciolo was participating remotely and initiated roll call. Present were: Chair Eugenie (Janie) Moffitt-Y, Linn Anderson-Y, Paul Russo-Y, Andrew Betts-Y, Mary Ellen Logee-Y, Mr. Barry –Y, Bojay Taylor-Y, Paul Monticciolo (remotely)-Y and Spiro Christopoulos-Y. Also present were Donna Walsh, Finance Director, Patrick Lawlor and the Town Manager. The meeting was videotaped and live cablecast.

FY21 Budget Overview – Town Manager

The Town Manager presented an overview of the FY21 budget (see attached PowerPoint presentation.) Discussion ensued including the following highlights:

- a) In light of the fact that the average increase in taxpayer bill over a ten-year period has been 3.65%, the Select Board voted that this metric be used in building the FY21 budget, i.e. that the projected taxpayer bill will not exceed 3.65%.
- b) The ten-year average lookback was a good reflection of the ebb and flow in the rate setting process and a tool to build predictability into the budget.
- c) The report generated by the newly formed Revenue and Expenditure Task Force advised the Town Manager in the budget setting process.
- d) As result of extraordinary new growth realized in the Columbia Gas settlement, the Municipal Revenue Growth Factor determined by the state was the highest it has been and resulted in less state aid.
- e) Using the ten-year average rather than five-year average resulted in a budget of \$.5M less than last year due to the fact that new growth was higher than average the last five years.
- f) As a result of the Columbia Gas settlement, the average increase to the taxpayer was kept at 3.65% and the remaining \$1.7M funds were designated for unfunded liability.
- g) The advisability of lowering the five-year 5.72% allocation for CIP to reduce overall budget (return on capital investments high per the Town Manager.)
- h) The administration's responsibility to deliver a level service budget while adhering to best practices of public policy for financial planning and while at the same time not exceeding the ten-year average increase to the tax bill.
- i) The advisability of the select board developing a policy that would apply differential due to unexpected high new growth to unfunded liability.
- j) The role of the Finance Committee to present clear and reasonable explanation of above and convey the importance of the regularity of addressing unfunded liabilities and not reducing the taxpayer bill.
- k) Conveying to the taxpayer that addressing the unfunded liability has long-reaching implications of maintaining our AAA credit rating.
- l) Moving FTEs from one department to another at no increase in the budget, i.e. new titles and not new positions.
- m) New position of Sustainability Coordinator has earned a positive return on her salary through obtaining local and federal grants.
- n) When vacancies occur, positions are evaluated in order to make decisions on how to best fill positions.
- o) The Finance Committee will share its opinion at the Select Board Meeting on March 9 as well as Triboard Meeting on March 7.

Citizen Petition – Ms. Robb

Ms. Moffitt announced that Ms. Robb may be present at a future meeting.

Department of Community Services – Ms. Lambert

Ms. Lambert presented her FY21 budget (see attached PowerPoint presentation.) Discussion ensued including the following highlights:

- a) Focus on reaching veterans not previously contacted has been a challenge, since census identification is voluntary, but nevertheless outreach was successful - over 200% increase.
- b) Adult participation in recreation events is high, including health and wellness programs.
- c) Afterschool care is high at 200 students.
- d) Youth annual membership is steady but increase in “drop-in” students at the youth center.
- e) Renovation at senior center will necessitate future increase in budget for increased senior citizen participation and resultant programming.

Liaison Updates

Ms. Anderson – Mr. Monticciolo reported that he is working on the letter. The revised report schedule is attached. The committee needs to focus on reaching consensus on recommendations to be made on the unfunded liability and modelling of the average tax bill as well as pension obligation bond. This topic will be presented at next meeting by Town Manager and the subcommittee. The impact on the average tax bill will be presented in the report of the \$1.7M retirement contribution.

The warrant is expected to be closed on March 9, and Ms. Anderson will distribute tracking sheet.

Mr. Russo – The school committee meets Thursday night to review preliminary warrant articles.

Fire Department – Chief Mansfield

Mr. Puzzanghera presented his FY21 budget (see PowerPoint presentation attached) and discussion ensued on the following highlights:

- a) Still responding to gas-related calls as a result of the 2018 explosion.
- b) Columbia Gas is now obligated to advise department of any related calls.
- c) Regulators are designed to release pressure with “burb” on outside meter which creates increase in call volume and resident not understanding is normal.
- d) Personnel dynamic is being realized in that difficulty filling detail shifts and overtime.
- e) Ultimate FTE impact in the future addressing the need traditionally filled by overtime.
- f) The market for used apparatus has diminished and residual value is nil.
- g) Replacement of air compressor is critical and well as installation of bidirectional amplifier system on a phased in process advised by current statistics of building risk.
- h) Defibrillators installed on highest priority fields and nine more fields are projected for installation. One tragedy recently was averted by the use of one of these AED’s.
- i) Two grants were awarded by the state to purchase two extractor washing machines.

Next Meetings

March 4 – Pension Oblig Bond - Ms. Walsh, Mr. Frazier, Town Manager and POB Subcommittee
March 7 – Saturday Department Heads Budget Meeting
March 9 – Finance Committee and availability to Select Board
March 11 – Triboard
March 16 and 18 – Review and Vote on Warrant Articles
March 23 and 25 – ATM Finance Committee Report Review

Approval of Minutes – January 12, 2020

Upon motion duly made by Mr. Christopulos and Ms. Anderson, it was unanimously voted to approve above minutes. Chair Eugenie (Janie) Moffitt-Y, Linn Anderson-Y, Paul Russo-Y, Andrew Betts-Y, Mary Ellen Logee-Y, Mr. Barry-Y, Bojay Taylor-Y, Paul Monticciolo (remotely)-Y and Spiro Christopulos-Y. Motion passed 9-0.

Approval of Minutes – February 12, 2020

Upon motion duly made by Mr. Christopulos and Ms. Anderson, it was voted to approve above minutes. Chair Eugenie (Janie) Moffitt-Y, Linn Anderson-Y, Paul Russo-Y, Andrew Betts-Y, Mary Ellen Logee-Y, Mr. Barry-A, Bojay Taylor-Y, Paul Monticciolo (remotely)-Y and Spiro Christopulos-Y. Motion passed 8-0-1 with Mr. Barry abstaining.

Mr. Monticciolo remotely left the meeting.

Adjournment

Upon motion duly made by Mr. Christopulos and seconded by Mr. Betts, it was unanimously voted to adjourn. Chair Eugenie (Janie) Moffitt-Y, Linn Anderson-Y, Paul Russo-Y, Andrew Betts-Y, Mary Ellen Logee-Y, Bojay Taylor-Y, Mr. Barry-Y, and Spiro Christopulos-Y.
Motion passed 8-0.

Respectfully submitted,

Christine Martin Barraford
Recording Secretary

Attachments:

FY21 Budget Overview – Town Manager
Dept of Community Services Overview – Ms. Lambert
Fire Department Overview – Chief Mansfield
ATM Finance Committee Report Schedule