

Advisory Budget Committee

Minutes

November 24, 2020

This meeting was at the Barrington Town Hall with remote participation available.

Members Present: Steve Saunders, Peter Royce, Dannen Mannschreck, and John Morris

Others Present: Conner MacIver, Amy Doherty, Chief Walker, Tracy Hardekopf (remote)

Tracy Hardekopf joined and left the meeting a couple times with reception issues.

Steve Saunders called the meeting to order at 4:37.

The group discussed how to fund the fire equipment replacement needs in future years. The group determined that the fund will be about \$500,000 short in year 2032 based on the way the Town is currently funding the Capital Reserve. The group discussed a lease purchase option and is not in favor of that due to interest charges. The group agrees to work with the Select Board and the Fire Chief to come up with a reasonable plan to save for new Ambulance and Fire Equipment more effectively and to adopt a policy solidifying that plan. The discussion included a plan to eliminate the annual Capital Reserve contributions, phase out expenses from the Ambulance Revolving Fund and phase in 100% of the revenues. The group would like to discuss this at the deliberative session, so the community is aware. To allow for additional funding options, the group recommends asking voters to change the wording for the Ambulance Revolving Fund to include the purpose of Fire Services on the 2021 warrant. No further action would be necessary until after that article is decided by voters. The savings plan and policy can be developed after March of 2021.

Chief Rick Walker exited the meeting at 5:25

Steve makes a motion to approve the meeting minutes from November 10th. The motion passes.

The group discussed the Recreation Budget.

The group is pleased that the Recreation Commission put the expenses to the revolving account.

The group discussed Estimated Revenues for 2021. There are expected decreases of about \$167,000. The major categories are from State Aid (Meals and Rooms Tax and Highway Block Grant), Interest and Penalties on delinquent taxes (lower delinquency rate), as well as Interest on Investments Revenue. The increased Fee Schedules for the Building Department and Transfer Station will help offset some of the expected revenue decreases.

The group discussed Wage Increases, which include Cost of Living and Step Increases. The group consensus is that they are in favor of the Step and 1% Cost of Living Increases.

The group discussed the Tax Rate Impact. As it stands, the budget is expected to have no impact on the property tax rate. Conner MacIver explained that overlay as well as the estimated new property value help make up the difference from revenues and expenditures.

The group discussed Warrant articles from Unassigned Fund balance. Next year, the midpoint will only be off by 108,000 which is 3/10ths of a percent from the midpoint.

The group discussed the Warrant Article for Highway and Paving as well as other funding sources for the 2021 Paving Projects. The Select Board will make their recommendation on how much money they feel is reasonable after they have a better idea of the expected revenue decreases.

The group would like to recommend the use of spending an additional \$100,000 for paving projects from the Transportation Fee Capital Reserve Account and \$150,000 for Orchard Hill Road Project. This would still leave a decent amount of money in the Transportation Fee Capital Reserve Account.

The group went through the list of Capital Reserves:

Bridge and Culvert CR \$150,000-The group supports this.

Highway Equipment CR \$150,000-The group supports this.

Library CR \$75,000-The group is not comfortable with allotting that amount to a project that has no specific details and is too broad. The group would like the Capital Reserve to have more specific language and to be only used for designing a building and reduce the amount to \$25,000. The group suggested that the article be funded by the tax rate, not fund balance. The group made no formal recommendation, but asks that Select Board to consider the feedback they provided.

Fire Truck CR \$60,000-The group supports this.

Emergency Communication CR \$50,000-The group supports this.

Police Equipment CR \$25,000- The group supports this. The group would also like to see a replacement schedule.

Swains Lake Dam CR \$25,000- The group supports this.

Fire Rescue Equipment CR \$10,000- The group supports this.

Cemetery CR \$5,500- The group supports this.

Tricentennial Celebration CR \$5,000- The group supports this.

Library Technology CR \$3,000- The group supports this.

Meeting Adjourned at 6:28 pm. Respectfully submitted by Amy Doherty.