

## **Advisory Budget Committee**

### **Minutes**

October 12, 2021

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

Members Present: Steve Saunders, Michael Houst, Peter Royce and Scott Shephard

Alternates Present: None

Others Present: Conner MacIver and Amy Doherty

Steve Saunders called the meeting to order at 4:34pm.

Steve Saunders moves to approve the meeting minutes from the September 28<sup>th</sup> meeting. The group agrees.

Steve Saunders discussed with the group that the fire presentation was delayed at the last Select Board meeting due to an emergency call at the Fire Department. The presentation will take place at the next Select Board meeting on October 18, 2021.

The group discussed the Library budget and the impacts COVID had on their services and budget. The group would like to evaluate how an increase could be justified in the fiscal year (FY) 2022 when the data shows a decline in services.

The group discussed the recent change in the collection of fees (which was removed). And how this will affect the budget.

#### **Questions to be presented to the Library Director and Library Trustees regarding the budget:**

-On page 9 of the library narrative, the total 2022 budget amount is showing over an \$11,000 difference from the first page of the budget binder 2022 budget amount. Why is that different and which one is correct?

-The group would like details on the increase for library contracts line-item account number 01-4550-01-4321.

-Library books and multimedia account number 01-4550-01-4642 data shows it is decreasing but they are requesting an increase to their budget. What justification is there for an increase?

-The Library is looking to acquire a storage shed and the group would like to know which year the storage shed will be paid out of and which funding source will be utilized as it is not mentioned in the FY2022 budget presentation.

-The Library copier lease & maintenance line item number 01-4550-01-4443 shows that there is overage fees for color printing in the amount of \$650. The group feels this is a lot of money to be spent on color copies and would like more details. The group also discussed other options for color printing such as getting a smaller printer that would cost less money for color copies.

-The group discussed the expansion of 2 positions; one of which makes the position eligible for a single benefit plan. The group would like the details written out in the narrative explaining the increases. What are the current needs that justify a benefits eligible position?

- What are the details on usage of the different programs offered and should they consider adding a fee for these programs?
- Did the book volume go down and did the electronic volume go up? The group would like circulation data.

The group discussed the library warrant article request in the amount of \$75,000. The group discussed the Warrant Article request from last year in the amount of \$25,000 and how it was intended to potentially be used to reduce the amount of the bond. The funding source in FY 2021 was fund balance which passed the required 50% threshold but failed to secure 60% of voter approval which would be necessary for a bond vote. The group was concerned that the funds would continue to go unused like the \$25,000. The group consensus is that they don't support this warrant article as it is currently presented.

The group asked Conner MacIver to explain the outlook of unassigned fund balance. Conner MacIver pointed out the Targeted Fund Balance History sheet in section 6 of the budget binder and that if all the warrant article requests are approved this year that it would bring the Town below the targeted 12.5%. He pointed out section 22 which lists all proposed warrant articles.

The group discussed the purpose/needs for the new Library. The group discussed that the Library has been paying for architectural fees through fundraising money currently and it doesn't show the need to request \$75,000.

**Questions for the Library Director and Library Trustees regarding the \$75,000 warrant article request:**

- The group would like to get an update on the fundraising balance and any utilization in the past year.
- The group would like a detailed explanation of what this money will be used for.
- The group would like clarification on whether it's going to be considered a Library or a community center. What is the mission of the Library? What services will be expanded if a new Library is passed.

Steve Saunders discussed with the group the technology capital reserve request. The group feels that technology is an important item to request money for even though it lacks specificity. The group agrees that the library has been very responsible with the money and use of it. Conner MacIver explained the use of a network upgrade that took place in 2019. The group consensus is that they support this \$3,000 warrant article.

The group asked Peter Royce to e-mail the Library Director and Chair of the Library Trustees (copying the Library Foundation Chair) a summary of questions that the ABC has regarding their budget presentation and warrant article request.

In general, the group discussed prioritizing all warrant article requests and considering having some come from the tax rate instead of unassigned fund balance in order to maintain 12.5%.

Scott Shephard asked Conner MacIver when the new health insurance rates will be released. The rates were all estimated at 10%. Health insurance increase is expected to be 13%. Dental is going down a percent and a half. Life and long-term disability insurance premiums will not change and short-term disability insurance will increase slightly. This year the return of surplus is \$60,000. Based on uncertainty due to COVID-19, HealthTrust has larger-than-typical rate increases and surplus returns. In section 3 of the budget binder, the benefit cost is estimated.

Meeting Adjourned at 5:56 pm.

Respectfully submitted by Amy Doherty.

DRAFT