

Auburn Finance Committee
Minutes of the Meeting - February 24, 2021
Remote Participation

Members Participating: Anne Cavanaugh, Ed Coleman, Kevin Kennedy, Trevor Sansoucy and Michael Marshall
Not Participating: Malory O'Brien
Also Participating: Town Manager Julie A. Jacobson and Chief Financial Officer Ed Kazanovicz

The Open Meeting of the Town of Auburn Finance Committee was being conducted remotely consistent with Governor Baker's Executive Order of March 12, 2020, due to the current State of Emergency in the Commonwealth due to the outbreak of the "COVID-19 Virus. The meeting was being recorded by Auburn Cable Television.

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 P.M. by the Chair Anne Cavanaugh.

The following Finance Committee members were participating remotely and could hear the Chair:

- Ed Coleman
- Kevin Kennedy
- Michael Marshall
- Trevor Sansoucy

Town officials/employees -

- Town Manager Julie Jacobson
- CFO /Asst. Town Manager Ed Kazanovicz
- Adm. Assistant Sharon Kwiatkowski

Police Chief Andrew Sluckis and Fire Chief Stephen Coleman were also participating remotely for the Public Safety Facility agenda item.

Each vote to be taken in the meeting will be conducted by roll call vote.

Ms. Cavanaugh gave an overview of the meeting agenda.

CFO Ed Kazanovicz introduced representatives from Tecton Architects that were participating in the meeting to present the Public Safety Facility report. They were Matt Salad and Jeff McElvray.

Their presentation reviewed the study findings of the existing public safety facilities of the Police Station, Fire Headquarters, Emergency Operations and Dispatch and recommendations for renovation, addition or new construction.

Among the findings presented were:

- Modern Public Safety Facility design overview

- Advantages to Department Consolidation
- Review of some project site test fits - Lowes, Shaws and Sears
- Review of project opinion of probable costs
- Public Safety project cost comparisons
- Construction cost escalation
- Precedent reviews - Shrewsbury Police Station and Charlton Public Safety

Town Manager Julie Jacobson presented the preliminary project proposal for the Library/Goddard Park/Pedestrian Bridge Project. Library Director Jean Collins was also participating in the discussion.

The proposed project was three-phased:

1. Install a large sunroom addition on the back of the library facility;
2. Implement various improvements to Goddard Park; and
3. Construct a pedestrian bridge over the brook to physically link the library parcel with Goddard Park

Ms. Jacobson spoke about the proposal in relation to some approved plans - Economic Development Plan, the Drury Square Vision Plan, the Master Plan and the Library Strategic Plan.

The total project cost of the three-phased initiative is estimated to be \$1 Million. The Town was just notified that the Town's grant request to the Arthur M. and Martha R. Pappas Foundation was approved by the Foundation in the amount of \$505,000.

CFO Ed Kazanovicz discussed the proposed financing plan for the local match and warrant articles to be brought to the annual town meeting.

Sale of Real Estate	\$ 8,791.77
Mass 10 Pro-Tanto Award	\$ 6,314.40
Sale of Mary D. Stone & Julia Bancroft	\$100,000.00
Ace Solar Legal Reimbursement	\$ 10,000.00
FEMA Snow 2018 Storm	\$ 16,127.30
Free Cash-Remaining 50% Allowed	\$147,236.00
Stabilization	\$ 80,000.00
Norma Card Expendable Trust	\$ 12,912.00
Overlay Surplus	\$ 25,000.00

Unexpended Bond Proceeds

Library Windows	\$ 1,256.45
Library Windows	\$ 21,076.91
Library HVAC	\$ 35,000.00
Library Foyer	\$ 9,826.00
Library Interior Paint	\$ 182.98
Randall School Windows	\$ 30,000.00

Total: \$503,723.81

Mr. Kevin Kennedy asked about the timeline for the project and about the unexpended bond proceeds for the Library Windows.

The Town Manager replied that all the funds being requested in the article are available after the necessary projects have been done.

Jean Collins added that the windows on the Southbridge Street side were not the priority and that the priority was the back windows and that area will be where the sunroom would be constructed.

Ed Kazanovicz added that the funds were several years old and there are no plans for using them. He said that if money was borrowed and not used in a certain time period that would create an arbitrage situation, which would result in fines and penalties. He said that if the funds were not repurposed for this project they would have to be repurposed and used for something else.

Julie Jacobson addressed Mr. Kennedy's question about the timeline and she said that, pending town meeting approval and depending on when construction could start, it would take **1 to 1½ years to complete all components of the project.**

Mr. Michael Marshall asked about additional costs for furniture and shelving.

Library Director Jean Collins gave additional information about the time frame.

In answer to Mr. Marshall's question, Ms. Collins replied that there are State Aid funds that are received annually and can be used for furnishings and movable tables and dividers to create mini spaces. She also stated that the Friends of the Auburn Public Library could supply some funding.

Jean Collins advised that the sunroom provided opportunities for more seating and that there would probably not be shelving in the sunroom, unless it was for magazines.

The Finance Committee reviewed transfer requests submitted for its consideration.

Department of Public Services - #01610 Library:

\$20,000.00 from Acct. #016101-511224 Administrative Position to Acct. #016102-5243 Building and Grounds. Jean Collins explained that funds are available because of an unfilled administrative position due to COVID-19 and the transfer is needed for partial funding for new boiler-emergency requirement. She said that the Library now has an annual maintenance agreement for the equipment.

The Finance Committee voted to approve the transfer (Motion made by Mr. Kennedy; motion seconded by Mr. Coleman) roll call vote: Mr. Kennedy, Yes; Mr. Marshall, Yes; Mr. Coleman, Yes; Mr. Sansoucy, Yes -passed 4 to 0.

#01220 Fire/Rescue:

\$1,813.69 from Acct. #012211-5130 Overtime to Acct. #012201-511211 Deputy Chief Salary Account, to cover a deficit in the account. The Finance Committee voted to approve the transfer (Motion made by Mr. Kennedy; motion seconded by Mr. Coleman) roll call vote: Mr. Kennedy, Yes; Mr. Coleman, Yes; Mr. Marshall, Yes; Mr. Sansoucy, Yes -passed 4 to 0.

\$3,250.00 from Acct. #012211-5130 Overtime to Acct. #012211-519001 Educational Stipend Account, to cover a deficit in the account.

Anne Cavanaugh asked if the transfers were related to a contract settlement. Deputy Fire Chief Glenn Johnson replied that the transfers were regarding the contract.

The Finance Committee voted to approve the transfer (Motion made by Mr. Kennedy; motion seconded by Mr. Coleman) roll call vote: Mr. Kennedy, Yes; Mr. Marshall, Yes; Mr. Coleman, Yes; Mr. Sansoucy, Yes -passed 4 to 0.

Department of Public Works - #01421 Highway Division:

\$250.00 from Acct. #014211-511103 Wages Fulltime to Acct. #014212-5310 Drug & Alcohol Testing, for DOT mandatory drug testing. The Finance Committee voted to approve the transfer (Motion made by Mr. Kennedy; motion seconded by Mr. Coleman) roll call vote: Mr. Kennedy, Yes; Mr. Coleman, Yes; Mr. Marshall, Yes; Mr. Sansoucy, Yes -passed 4 to 0.

#01161 Town Clerk:

\$371.00 from Acct. #011322-5782 Salary and Wage Reserve Account to Acct. #011611-511102 Clerical. The Finance Committee voted to approve the transfer (Motion made by Mr. Kennedy; motion seconded by Mr. Coleman) roll call vote: Mr. Kennedy, Yes; Mr. Coleman, Yes; Mr. Marshall, Yes; Mr. Sansoucy, Yes -passed 4 to 0.

Department of Public Services - #01541 Senior Center/Elder Affairs Division:

\$687.90 from Acct. #015411-511115 Van Drivers to Acct. #015411-511101 Salary, for Bylaw employee increase resulting from 1% COLA in FY2021. The Finance Committee voted to approve the transfer (Motion made by Mr. Kennedy; motion seconded by Mr. Coleman) roll call vote: Mr. Kennedy, Yes; Mr. Marshall, Yes; Mr. Coleman, Yes; Mr. Sansoucy, Abstain; Ms. Cavanaugh, Yes - passed 4-0-1.

CFO Ed Kazanovicz presented the Town of Auburn FY2022 Budget to the Finance Committee that included projected revenues, expenses and estimated Cherry Sheet State Aid numbers and Local Receipts. Mr. Kazanovicz said that the budget reflects appropriations totaling \$72.4 million and revenue offsets of about \$72.5 million. The budget uses 2.31 out of the 2.5% tax levy increase allowed under Prop 2½. As in past years, the administration will attempt to whittle down the percentage by the final budget.

He noted that Cherry Sheet receipts totaled \$14.9 million. The Governor's numbers reflected a \$72,000.00 increase in Chapter 70 (School) aid that is much lower than in

recent years. School enrollment numbers are down because of Covid. Local Receipts estimated are at 10 million.

Mr. Kazanovicz discussed the FY2022 budget priorities and concerns:

Priorities

- Replenish \$100,000.00 Roadway Reconstruction funds
- Replenish \$500,000.00 to OPEB annual funding
- Additional funding for an Senior Center Program & Activity Coordinator
- Shared clerical position Fire /DDIS
- Add .50 Clerk in Treasury/Collections - not part of the administration's budget request
- Monitor New Growth
- Maintain healthy Reserve and Stabilization Accounts
- Cost analysis on Trash Collection/Disposal and Recommend increase in trash collection fees to Solid Waste Advisory Committee

Concerns

- COVID-19 impacts on operations
- COVID-19 impacts on revenue collections
- Pending litigation costs
- Group health insurance renewal increase - COVID
- Blanket insurance coverage renewal
- Downturn in Federal, State or Local economy
- Increase in Veterans Services Benefits
- Uncertainty regarding unemployment costs
- Solid Waste and recycling costs - Tonnage up during pandemic
- Reduction in hotel/motel and meals tax revenues since COVID
- Unexpected SPED costs
- Stormwater mandates and other EPA mandates
- Aging sewer infrastructure
- Labor contracts expiring at the end of fiscal year 2022

CFO Kazanovicz advised that health insurance rates came in at 11.2%; the budget provides 5% and the administration is looking at creative ways to mitigate the remaining 6%, including utilization of the Town's health insurance trust that has a healthy balance.

Mr. Kennedy questioned the health insurance rate increases when there have been less elective surgeries because of the pandemic.

Mr. Kazanovicz said that the rates are up because of the projection that claims and costs will increase in FY22 on re-opening after COVID. He noted that the Town does

have a self-insured trust that pays only for actual claims and that the limited activity this past year has resulted in a surplus.

The Finance Committee discussed the meeting schedule for budget reviews. The next meeting was set for March 3, 2021.

The Chairman asked if there were any questions on the minutes of December 9, 2020. There being none, the Ms. Cavanaugh accepted the minutes of December 9, 2020 as written.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:41 P.M. (Motion made by Mr. Kennedy; motion seconded by Mr. Coleman) roll call vote: Mr. Kennedy, Yes; Mr. Coleman, Yes; Mr. Marshall, Yes; Mr. Sansoucy, Yes - passed 4 to 0.

Submitted: Sharon A. Kwiatkowski
Adm. Assistant to the Town Manager

The following documents were part of the Finance Committee's Meeting of February 24, 2021 and are retained in the Executive Office of the Town Manager:

- February 24, 2021 Agenda
- Presentation/Report on Auburn Public Safety Facilities by Tecton Architects - Pacheco Ross Architects
- Presentation by Town Manager on Library/Goddard Park/Pedestrian Bridge Project Proposal
- Transfer Requests - Town Clerk, Fire/Rescue Department, Department of Public Works - Highway; Department of Public Services- Library and Senior Center/Elder Affairs
- Town of Auburn FY2022 Budget Presentation
- Minutes of December 9, 2020