

Auburn Finance Committee
Minutes of the Meeting - March 31, 2021
Remote Participation Only

Members Participating: Anne Cavanaugh, Ed Coleman, Trevor Sansoucy and Michael Marshall
Not Participating: Kevin Kennedy
Present: Chief Financial Officer (CFO) 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 7:04 P.M. by the Chair Anne Cavanaugh.

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

- Ed Coleman - Here
- Michael Marshall - Here
- Trevor Sansoucy - Here
- Kevin Kennedy - Not Participating

Town officials/employees -

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

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

Ms. Cavanaugh gave an overview of the meeting agenda.

Review of FY2022 Budgets (Including CIP)

#01543 Veteran's Services:

Veterans Services Agent Lincoln Barber was participating remotely regarding the budget for the Veteran's Services Division of the Department of Public Services.

CFO Ed Kazanovicz explained that this budget has fixed costs except for the Relief and Medical Account that fluctuates up and down depending on claims. Mr. Kazanovicz said that right now the account is down and the administration is comfortable with recommending the appropriation of \$150,000.00.

Anne Cavanaugh asked about state reimbursement. Ed Kazanovicz confirmed that the Town gets 75% state reimbursement for all eligible expenses under the Relief and Medical line item.

The Finance Committee voted to recommend approval of a total budget appropriation of \$176,850.00 for #01543 Veteran's Services, as presented in the recommendation of the Town Manager for FY2022 (Motion made by Mr. Marshall; motion seconded by Mr.

Coleman) roll call vote: Mr. Coleman, Yes; Mr. Marshall, Yes; Mr. Sansoucy, Yes; Ms. Cavanaugh, Yes - passed 4 to 0.

#01610 Library:

Library Director Jean Collins was participating remotely regarding the budget for the Library Division of the Department of Public Services. She stated that the budget was stable right now and not fluctuating much from year to year.

Mr. Kazanovicz told the Committee that this budget has been revised to meet the State Required Contribution of \$652,633.00.

Mr. Marshall asked about the Library Associates Account. Director Collins advised that \$75,000.00 had been cut from the line item at last year's fall town meeting. CFO Kazanovicz said that the reason was because we were making reductions due to COVID and there were some vacancies at the Library. He said that now the administration was seeking to rebuild funds in the account.

Mr. Coleman asked how the state formula was calculated. Jean Collins informed him that generally the formula was calculated by taking the average of the previous three years and adding 1.5% increase. She said that this year she hadn't been sure what the requirement would be because of the impact of COVID.

Ms. Cavanaugh asked about grants. Ms. Collins said that there was a grant for \$4,000.00 from the Cultural Council this year and a state aid grant of about \$30,000.00 as a result of meeting budget spending requirements.

There were no questions on the Library Capital Improvements Budget.

The Finance Committee voted to recommend approval of a total budget appropriation of \$653,000.00 for #01610 Library, as presented in the recommendation of the Town Manager for FY2022 (Motion made by Mr. Marshall; motion seconded by Mr. Coleman) roll call vote: Mr. Coleman, Yes; Mr. Marshall, Yes; Mr. Sansoucy, Yes; Ms. Cavanaugh, Yes - passed 4 to 0.

#01543 Auburn Youth Commission:

Chairman Norman LaFlash was participating remotely, as well as the Executive Director of the Auburn Youth & Family Services (AY&FS) Sally D'Arcangelo, and their Treasurer Andy Paquette.

Mr. LaFlash explained the budget request and he said that the Youth Commission continues to advocate for increased funding to Contracted Services to offset the costs of the services that Auburn Youth & Family Services provides in Auburn. He emphasized the value of the work that the agency does for the town and its residents.

Sally D’Arcangelo thanked the committee for their meeting tonight and for their past support to AY&FS. She spoke about the ongoing challenges due to COVID and expressed gratitude to the Town Manager and her team and support with grant funds to the agency from the CARES Act.

There were no questions from the Finance Committee.

The Finance Committee voted to recommend approval of a total budget appropriation of \$136,914.00 for #01543 Youth Commission, as presented in the recommendation of the Town Manager for FY2022 (Motion made by Mr. Marshall; motion seconded by Mr. Coleman) roll call vote: Mr. Coleman, Yes; Mr. Marshall, Yes; Mr. Sansoucy, Yes; Ms. Cavanaugh, Yes - passed 4 to 0.

#01433 Solid Waste:

DDIS Director Darlene Coyle was present regarding the budget for Solid Waste. She stated that a new contract with Casella Waste Systems began on July 1, 2020. It is a three-year contract, with the option for a two-year extension. Ms. Coyle described some of the changes from the last contract, in particular that in the former agreement the Town did not pay for recycling processing, and now there are new restrictions as far as contamination in recycling streams. DDIS Director also advised that because people have been working from home more there has been an increase in curbside trash collection and recycling and less from the school buildings. Also the overflow bag revenue has risen. Ms. Coyle discussed yard waste pickup and household hazardous waste collection, which may occur in the fall or next spring.

Ms. Cavanaugh asked about the process for yard waste pickup.

Ms. Coyle said that yard waste pickup takes place in the spring and fall for some consecutive weeks for people to dispose of waste from cleaning up their yards. The yard waste is picked up by the haulers and brought to the DPW to be ground up.

The Finance Committee voted to recommend approval of a total budget appropriation of \$1,265,259.00 for #01433 Solid Waste, as presented in the recommendation of the Town Manager for FY2022 (Motion made by Mr. Marshall; motion seconded by Mr. Coleman) roll call vote: Mr. Coleman, Yes; Mr. Marshall, Yes; Mr. Sansoucy, Yes; Ms. Cavanaugh, Yes - passed 4 to 0.

#01220 Fire/Rescue Department:

CFO Ed Kazanovicz presented a revised budget for the Fire/Rescue Department. He discussed the Firefighters Account, from which Safer Grant funds of \$98,833.00 have been removed because the State pays 65% salary and fringe benefits.

The Finance Committee voted to recommend approval of a revised total budget appropriation of \$3,569,212.00 for #01220 Fire/Rescue Department, as presented in the

recommendation of the Town Manager for FY2022 (Motion made by Mr. Marshall; motion seconded by Mr. Coleman) roll call vote: Mr. Coleman, Yes; Mr. Marshall, Yes; Mr. Sansoucy, Yes; Ms. Cavanaugh, Yes - passed 4 to 0.

#01132 Reserve Fund:

The recommended appropriation was \$280,000.00. CFO Ed Kazanovicz explained that the appropriation requested in the Salary and Wage line item included 1% for performance evaluations of By-law (non-union) employees.

The Finance Committee voted to recommend approval of a total budget appropriation of \$280,000.00 for FY2022, as presented in the recommendation of the Town Manager (Motion made by Mr. Marshall; motion seconded by Mr. Coleman) roll call vote: Mr. Coleman, Yes; Mr. Marshall, Yes; Mr. Sansoucy, Yes; Ms. Cavanaugh, Yes - passed 4 to 0.

#01710 Maturing Debt:

The recommended appropriation was \$4,043,015.00. CFO Ed Kazanovicz explained that the recommended appropriation was a reduction from that of FY2021 (\$4,372,659.00) because some of the town's debt has been retired.

Ms. Cavanaugh asked when the high school debt would be retired. Mr. Kazanovicz replied that the high school debt would be retired in 2024.

The Finance Committee voted to recommend approval of a total budget appropriation of \$4,043,015.00, as presented in the recommendation of the Town Manager for FY2022 (Motion made by Mr. Marshall; motion seconded by Mr. Coleman) roll call vote: Mr. Coleman, Yes; Mr. Marshall, Yes; Mr. Sansoucy, Yes; Ms. Cavanaugh, Yes - passed 4 to 0.

#01752 Interest:

The Finance Committee voted to recommend approval of a total budget appropriation of \$1,115,994.00 for #01752 Interest for FY2022, as presented in the recommendation of the Town Manager (Motion made by Mr. Marshall; motion seconded by Mr. Coleman) roll call vote: Mr. Coleman, Yes; Mr. Marshall, Yes; Mr. Sansoucy, Yes; Ms. Cavanaugh, Yes - passed 4 to 0.

#01910 Pensions and Benefits:

The recommended appropriation was \$12,764,972.00. CFO Ed Kazanovicz discussed the Group Insurance Account. He said that the renewal increase was 11.5%, most of it COVID driven by market uncertainty that people have been holding off on routine or non-emergency medical treatments because of the pandemic and carriers believe that there will be an increase in claims because of that. Mr. Kazanovicz also advised that the actual increase was 5.5% because of the Town's self-insured trust that has a balance of 10.5 million. He said that the Town pays for our own claims and it's not premium driven.

Ms. Cavanaugh asked about the increase in Worcester County Retirement of \$340,739.00. Mr. Kazanovicz replied that the increase had been trending at 11%, but there were a few disability retirements this year that were out of the Town's control.

The Finance Committee voted to recommend approval of a total budget appropriation of \$12,764,972.00 for #01910 Pension & Benefits for FY2022, as presented in the recommendation of the Town Manager for FY2022 (Motion made by Mr. Marshall; motion seconded by Mr. Coleman) roll call vote: Mr. Coleman, Yes; Mr. Marshall, Yes; Mr. Sansoucy, Yes; Ms. Cavanaugh, Yes - passed 4 to 0.

Chair Anne Cavanaugh announced that the next meeting would be held on Wednesday April 7, 2021.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:55 P.M. (Motion made by Mr. Marshall; motion seconded by Mr. Coleman) roll call vote: Mr. Coleman, Yes; Mr. Marshall, Yes; Mr. Sansoucy, Yes; Ms. Cavanaugh, Yes - passed 4 to 0.

Submitted: Sharon A. Kwiatkowski
Assistant to Town Manager, Admin.

The following documents were part of the Finance Committee's Meeting of March 31, 2021 and are retained in the Executive Office of the Town Manager:

- March 31, 2021 Agenda
- FY2022 Department Budget Requests (Including Capital Improvements) - Veteran's Services, Public Library, Auburn Youth Commission, Solid Waste, Fire/Rescue Department (Revised), Maturing Debt, Interest, Pensions and Benefits