

 Board of Selectmen and Finance Committee

Date of Meeting: Monday, April 11th, 2021

Time: 6:30 PM – 8:36 PM

Members Present: Chair Matt Mecum; Selectmen Jamie Underwood and Seth Ridinger; April Steward, Town Administrator (Remote), Town Council, Stephen Madaus, Finance Committee, Town Moderator Kim Rozak and Alison Mack, Administrative Assistant to the Board

The meeting commenced at 6:30 PM.

Financial Warrants were signed in agreement.

Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

**Approval of meeting minutes: 03/28/2022**

One typo – legislatures should be legislators.

*Jamie Underwood made a motion to approve the meeting minutes with the one change, Seth Ridinger seconded. Voted all in favor.*

**Vote to approve Concert on the Common on July 16th at 2PM sponsored by the library:**

*Seth made motion to approve the Concert on the Common on July 16th at 2PM sponsored by the Library, Jamie seconded. Voted all in favor.*

**Vote to accept the funds of $5,000 from LEI for Police Department to lease a motorcycle:**

*Jamie Underwood made a motion to accept the funds of $5,000 for LEI for the Police Department to lease a motorcycle, Seth Ridinger seconded. Voted all in favor.*

**Review / Approve SEPAC Request to “light it up green” and hang lights on Town Property for Children’s Mental Health Awareness Week: 1st week in May: Rochelle Peret:**

*Seth Ridinger made a motion to approve the request for SEPAC to “light it up green” and hang lights on Town Property for Children’s Mental Health Awareness Week, Jamie Underwood seconded. Voted all in favor.*

**Review/Approve and Sign Building Inspectors Contract:**

Stephen has not had a chance to review the contract. Seth stated that he had questions. Jamie stated that it is something we already discussed. Seth stated that he had questions regarding the matching of health care. The board decided to wait for Stephen to review it.

**Vote to approve the structure of and advancement through the compensation plan process:**

The Board decided to put this off to the next meeting.

**Discussion on letter of support for the Hillside Restoration Project (HRP) application for funding in the FY 23 Federal Appropriations:**

The HRP would like to ask for $2.5 million dollars form the federal government. Jamie stated that he supports them asking for this. Matt stated that we will work with April to get that together. It is due to Nel Lazour by April 14th.

**Discussion on Notice of Intent Application: Stiles Road, 0, 176 &179: Mike Scott from Land Design Collaborative:**

Matt stated that the road Longley Hill is being submitted for approval as a town road. Before that happens, this work needs to be done. They need permission to do it since it is on town property. Matt Scott stated yes, there was some erosion that occurred on the road last fall and in order to remedy some of that they need approval. There is several hundred feet that needs to be cleaned up. Matt Scott showed the drawings to the board. Stephen asked whether the town would have any responsibility. Matt stated that the town is not on the hook and the applicant is Ansari Builders and if he fails to do this work, he will not get his road accepted. Seth asked what kind of work would specifically be done to the lower portion of Stiles Road itself. Matt Scott responded that it would be regraded, filling ruts, compacting, and removing some sediment. Seth asked how much of the road would be regraded and Matt Scott responded maybe 250-300 feet.

*Jamie Underwood made a motion to approve and sign the Notice of Intent Application for Stiles Road and have the chair sign, Seth Ridinger seconded. Voted all in favor.*

**Final Review of Warrant with Finance Committee:**

Matt read through the warrant. Articles 1-10 are the same every year.

Article 11: Compensation Plan – BoS and Fin Com good

Article 12: Personnel Plan and By-laws as printed in warrant. BoS and Fin Com good

Article 13: $30,000 – Salary compensation study. BoS and Fin Com good

Article 14: $75,000 - Feasibility Study

* Seth stated that we are going to appropriate that at Annual Town meeting and asked if the plan was to wait until we have the non-binding referendum to actually go forward on that. His only concern is that we spend $75,000 and then the referendum comes back a resounding no, then, assumes that’s the end of the project and we just spend $75,000.
* Matt stated that at some point we are going to have to make a decision. This is going to give us a ballpark figure.
* Jamie explained the non-binding aspect and how it will benefit us with knowing what direction we may want to go in.
* Matt stated that we have to make a decision and can’t always put these items on the ballot and wait for an answer. People will still have the opportunity to vote for it or not.
* Seth stated that if we are spending $75,000, we should be more committed. This project is going to be anywhere from $10-$20 million dollars and has that information based on a dozen surrounding communities.
* Jamie stated that we need to start somewhere.
* Matt stated that he is committed to trying to get this building built without the non-binding referendum question.
* David Butler stated that it is unfair to ask residents to make a decision without knowing the number. Do the study, get a more concrete number, then go to town meeting. At least the people had the chance to decide that.
* Howard Drobner asked if we have any idea to exactly what this number is going to get us.
* David Butler stated it’s all a part of the study.

Article 15: $20,000 Transfer from free cash for Improvements at Town Hall.

* FinCom okay on this
* BoS okay

Matt asked April if we are going to print a summary of the article in the warrant. Its helpful with answering a lot of questions ahead of time. We don not want to discourage people from asking questions, but it’s a good resource.

Article 16: Paying last year’s bills

* Fin Com and BoS okay

Article 17: Heat Pump units for Town Hall

* Unspent free cash articles from years past
* Fin Com and BoS okay

Article 18: $175,000 – Roadside motor for highway dept

* FinCom and BoS okay

Article 19: $20,000 funding the towns 50% matching – DCR salt reduction grant

* Matt has concerns with this. Wants to know what we are committing ourselves to. Has heard that most of the surrounding towns aren’t using this.
* Steve Mero state that part of this is geared towards pretreating. DCR wants to see liquid used since content is much lower. At some point in the near future, we are going to have to do our due diligence and it is starting to lean in that direction. We are not being forced at this moment.
* It’s a whole salt reduction program. Our newer equipment we bought has computer equipment to adjust to these items. If it’s something we want to think about the first thing would be getting into the liquid process
* Seth stated that he is all for it if it doesn’t tie us to the state, but if Steve doesn’t think so, then we skip over it
* Jamie stated that $20,000 doesn’t go far
* Matt suggested to push this off and get some more documentation/additional information needed
* Steve Mero stated that he doesn’t know enough about it.
* Dave Butler stated that maybe we wait for Steve to tell us he’s getting ready for the liquid
* Jamie stated that he is fine with striking it.

Strike Article 19.

Article 20: Appropriate $50,000 for roadway paving

* Dave Butler stated that we should throw the $20,000 from article 19 to article 20, totaling $70,000. Its already been accounted for in our free cash calculations
* BoS and Fin Com okay

Article 21: Radio Communications – Borrow the sum of funds $3,140,117.00 for a new radio system for Police, Fire, Light, and Highway Department

* SGT Cody Thomasian was here to present the information
* The work that the town would be required to do would be tree removal, tree trimming, paving and road work if the town feels its necessary. The Light Department will be able to help with this but, tree removal would be minimal money.
* Brief overview:
	+ 2019 Detective Ryel got hit by a vehicle, and was not able to use his radio and needed to use his cell phone to get in contact with dispatch
	+ Cody reached out to Motorola
	+ Originally project cost was 1.4 million in 2019
	+ Low band is good for long distances and very powerful but inside buildings it’s not very good
	+ Can’t use his portable without the car. This would alleviate that
	+ Right now, they can’t talk to light department, fire, highway and need to use dispatch as their middleman
	+ Understands the shock factor from $1.4 million to $3 million
	+ Has built a great relationship with Nick from Motorola
	+ Easily a five-million-dollar project through Motorola but able to purchase some equipment through Worad and that will save us money
	+ Cost savings: Light Department.
	+ We have already appropriated money at last ATM - $100,000
		- Light Dept would run the wires for us.
		- $30,000 of wire.
	+ There was a freeze on the frequencies and that’s what brought us here. It took a long time to acquire them.
	+ Police, Light, Highway and Fire would all have their own channels but would be able to communicate with each other
* Dave Butler stated that Cody mentioned that Motorola was who they would go with and asked if they were on the state bid list and if we must go out to bid for this. Cody replied that yes, Motorola is on the state bid list.
* It’s a huge safety issue and there have been bad communications in the past that puts everyone at risk. It would have a huge impact on the schools.
* It’s a big task and big undertaking.
* Cody explained that they could hold off on purchasing the consoles. That would bring that down to the $2million dollar area.
* Had a quote for new dispatch furniture and received that after the numbers were sent to April.
* Dave Butler asked if the town did vote to move forward, if we didn’t start the project until next fiscal year, would we not have to start making payment until next fiscal year.
* Ninotchka is on vacation sow e were unable to get an answer for that.
* Matt Mecum stated that the fall would be the soonest.
* Cody stated that if approved at the ATM, July 1st would be ordering the parts
	+ Looking at a year – lead time
	+ Passionate about it since its increased from 2019 to now
* Cody reiterated that the original proposal was $1.4 million
	+ Equipment has grown to $1.8 million (increase of $400,000)
	+ Consoles that we have now are capable of uhf frequencies but the issue they run into is that the new radio system has a lot of new technology in it that we wouldn’t get initially.
	+ Crucial part of the system is at the Police Station
		- In the event we get a new building and have to move the equipment to the new building, we have to have 24/hour access to the station and would have to purchase an access station and place it next to the tower
		- The project includes fencing, compass, new tower, generator, bulkheads. Repeater site would stay where it is.
* Dave Butler stated that if the Board is in favor of moving forward with this article, what number would you want to put forward.
* Matt Mecum stated that he can’t get a computer for 7-9 weeks. Wonders if we want to phase it. If the infrastructure is $1 million dollars, should we ask for that now and then in a year ask for another million.
* Jamie suggested laying it all out to everyone that this is what it’s going to cost in full
	+ Fear is that it’s such a big number it will probably get shot down
	+ Saying its 1 million now and more next year he feels that it may get approved the first year but next year when we need that extra money, it will get shot down then. He is torn, he would like to see it go through at $3 million but feels like $ 2million is a better number
* Cody added that the $3 million includes a 15% buffer.
* Dave Butler stated that maybe that’s the way to go and put $2 million forward
* Steve Mero stated that we can’t single it out that it’s just for the Police Department, it’s for everyone
* More discussion continued regarding which number they are comfortable with.
* Howard Drobner asked if we already had an agreement with the Light Department stating they would perform those activities and what those expenses would be: String and fiber cable.
* Cody responded that there will be no fee for labor. That’s their share of the radios. We are going to purchase the fiber with the previous warrant article and then they are going to run it apart of their daily work. Everyone needs new radios; all departments. Cody stated that phasing may be an issue only because not doing everything all at once would cause issues in certain areas of equipment working correctly.
* Dave Butler suggested changing this to $2million dollars, assuming that we don’t have to borrow the $2 million.
* More discussion occurred regarding town wide internet and the equipment being bought through Motorola.
* Cody stated that this is the initial bite with building the system. We are setting it up for the future.
* Matt asked if this takes any vehicles out of commission for an extensive period of time. Cody responded that he does not believe so. They would bring in the equipment to facilitate the transition and it should be seamless.
* Seth asked if it takes a couple years for the public safety building to be built, is he confident that the existing dispatch console would suffice for our needs for the new system for the duration. Cody stated that it should be, and all the technology should be compatible.
* Matt Mecum asked if everyone was okay with $2 million. Jamie suggested coming through with a hard figure. Dave suggested going through with $2 million. If we do or don’t do the building, we will know if we need to appropriate more money and we can do it then.
	+ - If we approve the article, we should just talk about borrowing. We don’t plan on applying the free cash for the article. Motion needs to say approval to borrow.
* Cody thanked the board for letting him come present this information.
* Matt thanked Cody for doing a ton of work and research on this project; he has worked on this since 2019. He has been nothing but professional during this process.

Finance Committee Motion:

*Karen Mcgahie made a motion to approve $2 million dollars for article 21. Dave Butler seconded. Voted all in favor.*

Being proposed by the Fire Department, Police Department and Highway Department.

Finance Committee recommends approval.

Article 22: $55,000 – Replacing computer servers, PCs, and IT at Police Department

* Howard Drobner mentioned setting up a sub-committee to look into the IT between different departments throughout the Town. SGT Thomas was in attendance to speak regarding the IT at the Police Department.

Article 23: $10,000 – replacing Police Officers firearms

* BoS and FinCom okay

Article 24 - $28,000 – Officer furniture

* Originally $40,000
* Bos and FinCom okay

Article 25 - $6,000 – Transfer from Ambulance Receipts Reserve Fund - replacement tires for ambulances

* BoS and FinCom okay

Article 26: - Longley Hill Road

* Work needs to be done first before Conservation and Planning Board can approve the road
* This is to approve the current road as a town road.
* BoS okay – FinCom does not need to comment

Article 27 – Zoning bylaws

* Planning Board.

Article 28: CPA – Park and Rec sponsoring

Article 29: Giving the Board the authority to sell a piece of property near Tower Hill

* Seth mentioned that the idea was to have a conservation restriction
* Discussion about why we are putting a conservation restriction/deed restriction on it occurred.
* Jamie stated that he doesn’t believe it’s our point to put restrictions on things
* Dave Butler stated that if it wasn’t 100 % land locked, then he would agree with it.
* Matt is fine with putting the restriction on it but could go either way.
* Stephen stated that the Board will need to decide and let him know if they want that in the article.
* It has been on tax title since 1934

Article 30: Citizen’s petition

Article 31: Budget

Board of Health:

* $10,000 is what they are getting for nursing services, but their ask was $16,000
* Matt: We have the collaborative and have it for another 2 years. Concern: what he doesn’t want to do is have two competing groups.
* Sarah: that’s not our intention
* Matt: Would like us to see us work closely with them. What we learned over the past years; we don’t have the infrastructure to deal with.
* Dennis: Stated that we have been trying for the past two years to get more health/medical services. We need more services in town.
	+ Tried to get a nurse for basic services.
	+ Nursing service that we have right now is excellent and I wouldn’t give them up for the world, but we don’t have access to them like we would on a day-to-day basis.
	+ He thinks that the board really needs their own liaison. We need someone local, with the board. Keep it local.
	+ Matt stated that none of us have the staff, programs, and things that the greater Burroughs are getting done. He does not want to get us back into the position prior to having the collaborative. We have all been saying that our seniors need our attention more.
* David Butler stated that one concern he had was that speaking with Sarah she listed a ton of things regarding the seniors (balance training and other things), and that is more of the COA so they need to make sure they are getting them involved.
* Sarah stated that she emailed COA yesterday. Boylston residents would benefit greatly from our own nurse.
* We are already up ticking – 2-5% covid surge
	+ Not trying to step on the greater Burroughs toes
	+ Matt asked is there anyone that is collaborating with the greater Burroughs collaborative in the BOH Dept. Need to be using the collaborative to the full potential. The collaborative offers 15 hours of time.
	+ Is anyone collaborating with this collaborative to use the services they are providing – answer is no.
	+ Matt asked who is the one who is going to work with the collaborative on a regular basis? Sarah stated that would be her.
	+ Erice Brose stated that right now in the budget its $10,000 for a nurse, and to date they spent about $1,500. He is wondering why we are not spending that money now to show that we need an additional nurse, or do we need the $16,000 just to be able to hire someone.
		- The Hourly rate would be $45/$60 dollars per hour. – 4 hours a week of nursing services
* Dennis stated that what we have right now is a contract nurse that only does communicable diseases. We have not had the opportunity with bringing in a nurse prior. Everything falls on the wrong day and wrong time for Dennis and the Board. This nurse would be the one working with the collaborative.
* Matt stated that he wants to make sure that we are using the services that we have to the fullest potential.
* Matt stated that he is 100% for doing it and adding it to the budget but would like to see some sort of job description of working with the collaborative and what the roles are of the nurse.
* Sarah stated that she did write up a job description and will add in working with the Collaborative.She is seeing a trend in a nursing shortage there are literally hundreds of nursing jobs in Worcester County. The sooner that they do this, the better.
* Greg Cusimano asked if $15,000 enough to get a nurse in here. Matt stated that he is all for $16,000 as long as that job description includes collaborating with the greater Burroughs.
* More discussion continued regarding the numbers.

*David Butler made a motion that we go to $15,000, Howard Drobner seconded. Voted all in favor.*

Sarah thanked the board for having the BOH there.

Article 31. - $19,091,316.00 – Added $5,000 for BOH nurse

*Karen Mcgahie made a motion to approve the budget at $19,091,316.00, Dave Butler seconded. Voted all in favor.*

Motion to approve the warrant with edits:

* Article 19 strike
* Article 20 is going from $50,000 to $70,000 for road repairs
* Article 21 is going to $2 million
* New budget is 19,091,316 – budget increased by $6,000

*Jamie Underwood made a motion to approve the warrant with edits, Seth Ridinger seconded. Voted all in favor.*

**Flagg Estate Property Discussion:**

* Wanted to discuss what the towns plans are with the property since for a period of time the town has been doing renovations on it. In that time, we are losing lease payments. Some people have looked at the property and suggested that the town sell it to not have the responsibility. If we are truly going to do a master plan for hillside, then a decision like that should be in there. It’s about two years away from that.
* Jamie would not be opposed to contacting a few real estate agents to see what it’s worth. It doesn’t commit us to anything.
* Seth stated that at the very earliest, unless we had a Special Town Meeting, we would be waiting until next year to even have the authority to sell this.
* The Board agreed to get a value from a real estate agent/get a few ideas/suggestions.
* Matt added that it’s a good point to get a professional opinion and they may have some suggestions on what to do with the property.
* Seth added that we are in the process of finishing a master plan and may be commissioning a specific master plan for hillside. We recently had housing production plan which was accepted by the state and outlines a lot of creative solutions for blighted properties such as this and might be an avenue and some type of advantage to use for the town instead of just selling it off. Not opposed to selling it but believes there are avenues to explore first.
* Jamie suggested getting the ball rolling and getting some ideas for the property and getting it appraised.

Nel Lazour asked what we were getting for rental to You Inc.

* Was getting $45,000 a year from You Inc.
* Nel added that with recent construction in the area it lowers the value since it isn’t as beautiful of a location anymore. Jamie disagreed.
* Matt stated that it’s a tough property and you would have to find the perfect tenant. No one is going to look at that building and sink a ton of money into it to make it what they want. Jamie added that we did our due diligence in upkeeping it to get it to what it is now. Nel stated that Bob Bourassa has done a beautiful job on the building so far. We need to be creative with the building like this, building with a commercial business. Jamie stated that we can’t save every building that comes up in town.
* Seth added that it’s a beautiful property and beautiful house. The point is that it’s not the responsibility of the town to maintain abandoned buildings. With the HPP, there are portions on creative ways that could be handing off these properties that could be beneficial to the town and at the same time unloading the burden for the town.
* The board agreed that we need to find out from a professional how much its worth and get suggestions for use.

April suggested revote the LEI motion and add in maintenance.

*Jamie Underwood made a motion to accept the funds of $5,000 from LEI to lease and maintain the motorcycle, Seth Ridinger seconded. Voted all in favor.*

*At 8:36 PM, Seth Ridinger made a motion to adjourn, Jamie Underwood seconded. Voted all in favor.*

Respectfully submitted,

Alison Mack, Assistant to the Board of Selectmen

**Meeting Materials**

DRAFT Warrant On File in The Board of Selectmen’s Office

Motions for Warrant On File in The Board of Selectmen’s Office

Agenda On File in The Board of Selectmen’s Office

Communications Project SGT Thomasian On File in The Board of Selectmen’s Office

Town Administrator’s Report On File in The Board of Selectmen’s Office

Land Design Collaborative Packet On File in The Board of Selectmen’s Office

Building Inspectors Draft Contract On File in The Board of Selectmen’s Office

03/28/2022 Meeting Minutes On File in The Board of Selectmen’s Office

Chief of Police Report On File in The Board of Selectmen’s Office

Highway Superintendents Report On File in The Board of Selectmen’s Office