



Board of Selectmen and Finance Committee

Date of Meeting: Monday, November 15th, 2021
Time: 5:30 PM – 6:02 PM
Members Present: Chair Matt Mecum; Selectmen Jamie Underwood and Seth Ridinger; April Steward, Town Administrator, Members of the Finance Committee, Town Accountant Ninotchka Rogers, and Alison Mack, Administrative Assistant to the Board

The meeting commenced at 5:30 PM.

Please click the link below to join the webinar:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83583284053>

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Joint Meeting with Finance Committee: Final Review of STM Warrant:

April mentioned that the Special Town Meeting was driven by the Town being the recipient of a PARC Grant. One of the stipulations with the PARC Grant was to appropriate the funds for the PARC Grant before December 31st. The PARC Grant is for 60% of the purchase of the land that we call the former Camp Harrington property. Sum not to exceed \$160,000. April read the Article. Sponsor is the Parks and Recreation Committee. Finance Committee has not yet given us a recommendation. April added that we would get 60% of this money back if the town decides to approve this Article.

Finance Committee Questions: Eric Brose – Are we getting reimbursed on the \$150,000 or \$160,000. April responded that she believes we are getting 60% refunded of the total cost of procurement. She will verify with the Town Planner. No other questions were asked.

Matt stated that Parks and Rec is holding another meeting to update their vision on the land at the Boylston Town House on the 29th.

The second Article was read. Prior Fiscal year bills. Three bills did not get sent in time to get paid out of fiscal 2021. No questions were asked.

Article three was read. To see if the town will vote to transfer money from the Assessor's salary line to the Assessor's Expense line for the purpose of funding a contract for professional services

for the Board of Assessors. This salary line would cover the cost of the assistant assessor. Currently Margo and Paul have retired so there is no one in that office right now. Looked to outsource that service and are looking for a clerk for that office. No questions were asked.

Article four was read. Special Fund. April stated that last year we put forward a special act to request that we could take insurance proceeds for injured on duty officers and fire fighters and put it back into the salary line. The Senate council is now reviewing it as it was delayed due to the pandemic. It has gotten to the last stages, but they have put forward some concerns. If money was to be received say after July 15th and it was for June of the following fiscal year, we wouldn't be able to put it back into that Fiscal to pay those salary lines. We would have money that would be going to into the general fund and if we adopted the local option that was afforded to us through 111F indemnity fund then we wouldn't have to worry about a loss of revenue and worry about it going into free cash. They have not pulled that article from the Legislature yet as they are waiting to see if we adopt the local option at Town Meeting. If they do, then they will pull the article from the legislature.

Eric asked if there was any advantage to the article that was sent to the legislature. April stated she thought the advantage was that it was going to be cleaner, but this provision was afforded in the acts of 2016 and those other communities had those special acts approved by the legislature before 2016 so now that this option is in place, Senate Council is highly suggesting that we take advantage of the local option. They have raised so many concerns that it has made Attorney Madaus and herself more hesitant and realize that this may be a better option for the town. David Butler stated that he believes its fine and it isn't a big deal to do it and if we get it done quicker, all the better; If Town meeting goes for it, we drop the other one. April agreed. No other comments.

Article five was read. \$60,000 for Police cruiser. Interim Chief Barbato and newly appointed Chief John Annunziata joined the meeting to answer any questions that the Board of Selectmen or Finance Committee may have. Eric Brose stated that speaking for Finance Committee – we do not like finance articles since there are fewer people voting. Why right now and not in May? John Annunziata responded that they are looking to contain the problem. Car 6 has a lot of issues, and it is an expensive fix. By not replacing that vehicle now, we are going to end up putting two officers into a separate cruiser, so those cruisers are going to be ran for an extra eight hours. Chief Barbato added that they also have a car with radio issues and if that car goes down, we are going to have even more officers sharing other cars. These cars would be on the road for days at a time and wouldn't be able to rest them as much, which could cause more issues in the long run. Jim at the Highway has been doing a great job at keeping the cars going, but they are afraid that car 4 is going to be a big problem. More discussion continued how the Police department are seeing the effects of being down a vehicle. Eric asked if they were going to be looking for another vehicle purchase soon. John responded that the old Chiefs Car: 2013 Rear-wheel drive, is not an appropriate vehicle for a response vehicle and they will be looking to replace that vehicle in July as well. Matt Mecum added that we may not be able to count on this, but our State Rep Meghan Kilcoyne has requested money through ARPA, hopefully that can cover the cost of this in the spring. Dave added that we do budget for one car per year. Howard Drobner asked as this rate, are we looking now at two cars a year to replace since we are running into these issues. April responded that she believes a few years ago, the Police Department bypassed getting a car and we have just been pushing this down the road and that's what got us into this position. Chief Barbato stated that as of right now, they

are playing catch up and believes they could continue doing it with one a year, but if anything happens to another car, they will be put in a difficult situation. Seth asked if the driver's seat in car 4 has been corrected. Chief Barbato responded that it is car 6 and that the position that the seat is in currently is where it will stay since it will not move. Seth added that when the board discussed this last week, they were not totally comfortable moving forward with this if Finance Committee doesn't support this as well. After speaking with Chief Barbato and Chief Annunziata and asking if this creates an issue in regard to public safety and their answer was yes – this is a balancing act, and we need to weigh all these issues very carefully and make a decision. Howard Drobner asked what is the lead time for availability for this car? Chief Barbato stated that the dealer said they have cars coming in February and would be looking at three weeks out from then.

Jamie Underwood made a motion to authorize the Town Administrator to execute the Special Town Meeting Warrant for December 6th 2021, Seth seconded. Voted all in favor.

Vote to reduce the quorum for Special Town Meeting:

If we felt that we needed to reduce the quorum for Special Town Meeting, we could do that. Matt doesn't believe that we should make a change since our quorum is 25 and doesn't believe we will have a problem hitting that. He also doesn't feel comfortable putting articles on the warrant where money is being spent and then reducing the quorum. Jamie and Seth agreed.

At 6:02 PM Jamie Underwood made a motion to adjourn, Seth Ridinger seconded. Voted all in favor.

Respectfully submitted,

Alison Mack, Assistant to the Board of Selectmen

Meeting Materials

Agenda

Draft Warrant

On File in The Board of Selectmen's Office

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