



APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE

MEETING MINUTES

Thursday, February 20, 2020

Selectmen's Meeting Room

7:00 p.m.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Bob D'Amico
George Brenckle
Rick Nieber
Tony Poteete
Janice Hight

MEMBERS ABSENT: Elaine Kelly, Chairman

ALSO PRESENT: John Coderre, Town Administrator

APPROVAL OF MINUTES – APRIL 22, 2019 MEETING

Mr. D'Amico moved the committee vote to approve the meeting minutes of the April 22, 2019 meeting as submitted; Ms. Hight seconded the motion; all members voted in favor.

REVIEW OF FY2021 BUDGET INSTRUCTION MANUAL

Mr. Coderre reported that all departments were provided with the Budget Instruction Manual for FY2021. Departments were instructed to submit a budget request sufficient to maintain the current level of services, with no additional personnel or significant service expansions. If departments feel that they have an overriding need, they were asked to provide a supplemental budget request detailing such needs.

Mr. Coderre reviewed the target General Fund increase of 3.5% from the December 12, 2019 Financial Trend Monitoring and Fiscal Year Forecasting meeting. All departmental budget increases must fit within that growth target.

WHITE CLIFFS PROJECT UPDATE

Mr. Coderre reviewed the February 5, 2020 update from the White Cliffs Committee (WCC). The summary contains information from the WCC meetings regarding progress to date, including the complete roof replacement on the historic portion of the structure. Progress continues to be made with regard to securing the building envelop, despite complications encountered pertaining to the problematic additions off the back.

The WCC is now moving ahead with its reuse assessment and is making progress with the consultants to develop a short list of viable options. Mr. Coderre reviewed the chart attached to the update that summarizes all the potential reuse options, along with the pros and cons of each.

WHITE CLIFFS PROJECT UPDATE CONT. . .

The WCC is working with the consultants and has narrowed down its reuse focus to three main categories: 1) Residential (including condominiums, apartments, affordable housing and senior housing); 2) Municipal (including a community center or municipal offices; and 3) Hospitality/Event (including restaurants, hotels, conference center and event space).

The next meeting of the WCC is March 25, 2020 at 3pm, at which time it is anticipated the consultants will provide some financial information to begin assessing the most viable options. Mr. Coderre reminded the Financial Planning Committee members that the WCC page on the Town website contains their meeting minutes and ongoing updates.

DISCUSSION OF PRELIMINARY FREE CASH PLAN

Mr. Coderre presented the preliminary FY2021 Free Cash Plan for consideration and use during the upcoming budget process. The FY2019 year-end Free Cash was certified at approximately \$2.85 million. Of the total Free Cash, \$1,475,775 will be used to finance the FY2021 pay-as-you-go capital investments with no additional tax impact. The plan also calls for \$175,000 to be used for the Appropriations Committee's Reserve Fund, \$200,000 into the Stabilization Fund, and \$500,000 into the FY2021 operating budget in accordance with the Free Cash Policy. The memo dated October 17, 2019 contains all the background information regarding the Town's FY2021 Free Cash Plan.

OVERVIEW OF PRELIMINARY FY2021 CAPITAL BUDGET

Mr. Coderre reviewed the draft FY2021 Capital Budget. The following requests and projects, which total \$3,648,000, are included in the draft FY2021 Capital Budget, which has been reviewed and recommended by the Financial Planning Committee:

Project	Priority	Cost	Funding Source
Police: Cruiser Replacements	2	\$98,000	Free Cash
Town Offices: Feasibility Study	2	\$100,000	Free Cash
DPW: Wing Mower Replacement	2	\$75,000	Free Cash
DPW: Loader Replacement	2	\$240,000	Free Cash
DPW: Highway Garage Emergency Generator	1	\$35,000	Free Cash
DPW: Assabet Park ADA Compliance	1	\$102,775	Free Cash
DPW: Culvert & Drainage Replacements	2	\$250,000	Free Cash
DPW: One-Ton Dump Truck w/Plow	2	\$110,000	Free Cash
DPW: One-Ton Pickup Truck w/Plow	2	\$65,000	Free Cash
DPW: Roadway Improvements & Maintenance	2	\$300,000	Free Cash
DPW: Water & Sewer Garage Construction (60/40% split)	2	\$520,000	Water Enterprise Fund
		\$380,000	Sewer Enterprise Fund
DPW: Assabet Hill Water Storage Tank Rehabilitation	1	\$725,000	Water Enterprise Fund
K-8 Public Schools: Melican Middle School Parking Lot & Walkway Improvements	1	\$100,000	Free Cash

Mr. Coderre indicated that the various departments will discuss their capital requests as part of their budget presentations to the Committee.

UPDATE ON FY2021 STATE AID

Mr. Coderre provided an update on the preliminary estimates for State Aid. Governor Baker released his House 2 Budget, which is the Town's first look at potential FY2021 State Aid. As in past years, the FY2021 budget model assumes a 1% increase in State Aid. As anticipated, the impact to Northborough will be minimal, as the Governor's budget as presented would increase Northborough's aid by just 0.89%, the net of increased State Aid and Assessments.

Mr. Coderre added that additional information will be forthcoming as the House and Senate complete their respective processes.

MEETING SCHEDULE AND TOWN MEETING CALENDAR

The Committee agreed to meet on the following dates:

Meeting Date	Meeting Topics
2/27/2020	DPW Ongoing Projects Update and Budget Presentation; Water Enterprise Fund and Sewer Enterprise Fund Budget Presentations
3/7/2020	(Sat 9AM-1PM – Lunch Provided) K-8 Schools and ARHS Budget Presentations; Draft Town Meeting Warrant Summary
3/12/2020	Assabet Valley Regional Technical HS; Police Budget Presentation; Fire Budget Presentation
3/19/2020	Senior Center & Library Presentations & other departments, if needed
3/23/2020	Joint Meeting with Board of Selectmen – Budget Hearing (Charter 6-5)
3/26/2020	Finance Office, Debt Budget; Health Insurance; Economic Development Update; Community Preservation Committee Project Requests; Review of ATM Warrant Articles and Vote on Committee Recommendations
4/27/2020	6:15 PM Pre-Town Meeting @ ARHS
4/27/2020	7:00 PM Annual Town Meeting @ ARHS
June 2020	Wrap-Up; Year-end Transfers as needed

ADJOURNMENT

Ms. Hight moved the Committee vote to adjourn; Mr. Brenckle seconded the motion; all members in favor.

Meeting adjourned at 8:15 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

John W. Coderre
Town Administrator

Documents used during meeting:

1. February 20, 2020 Meeting Agenda
2. April 22, 2019 Joint Meeting Minutes