# BOARD OF SELECTMEN APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE FINANCIAL PLANNING COMMITTEE NORTHBOROUGH SCHOOL COMMITTEE

## **JOINT MEETING MINUTES – June 4, 2020**

# 7:00 p.m. - Chairman's Introduction to Remote Meeting

Chairman Perreault stated that this Joint Open Meeting of the Board of Selectmen, Appropriations Committee, Financial Planning Committee and the Northborough School 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.

He indicated the various ways that the public may view or participate in this meeting as listed on the posted agenda.

Chairman Perreault added that in order to mitigate the transmission of the COVID-19 Virus, the Town has been advised and directed by the Commonwealth to suspend public gatherings, and as such, the Governor's Order suspended the requirement of the Open Meeting Law to have all meetings in a publicly accessible *physical* location. Further, all members of public bodies are allowed and encouraged to participate remotely.

Chairman Perreault noted that the Order allows public bodies to meet entirely remotely so long as reasonable public access is afforded so that the public can follow along with the deliberations of the meeting. He added that ensuring public access does not ensure public participation unless such participation is required by law. Chairman Perreault noted that this meeting is to simply provide a presentation and therefore will not feature public comment.

Chairman Perreault indicated to the audience that the presentation being made this evening can be found on the Town Administration page on the Town website.

## Meeting Business Ground Rules

Chairman Perreault covered the ground rules for effective and clear conduct of the business. Each speaker on the agenda will be invited by name to provide comments, questions or motions. He asked that participants hold until their name is called.

Chairman Perreault reminded all participants and attendees that this meeting is being recorded and others will be able to see you.

Chairman Perreault asked members of the Board to mute their phone or computer when not speaking and to speak clearly and in a way that helps generate accurate meeting minutes. Those responding were asked to wait until the floor was yielded to them. Members were asked if they wish to respond to the comments of others, to do so through the Chair, taking care to identify themselves.

Chairman Perreault indicated that tonight's meeting is informational only with no deliberation or votes being taken. Tonight's presentation is expected to be the most detailed and comprehensive update on the revised FY2021 Budget. Following tonight's meeting, a public hearing on the revised FY2021 Budget will be held on June 8<sup>th</sup>.

Chairman Perreault confirmed that the following members and persons anticipated on the agenda were remotely present and could be heard.

#### Board of Selectmen

Jason Perreault, Chair Dawn Rand, Vice Chair Timothy Kaelin, Clerk Leslie Rutan Julianne Hirsh

#### **Appropriations Committee**

Richard Nieber George Brenckle Janice Hight Anthony Poteete

Note: Anthony Poteete was remotely present, but was not able to be heard at the time Chairman Perreault called his name.

#### Financial Planning Committee

David DeVries
Tom Spataro
John Rapa
Scott Rogers
Michael Hodge
William Peterson

#### Schools

Greg Martineau, School Superintendent
Rebecca Pellegrino, Director of Finance & Operations
Joan Frank – Northborough School Committee
Kelly Guenette – Northborough School Committee
Keith Lebel – Northborough School Committee
Lauren Bailey-Jones, Northborough School Committee
Kathleen Howland, Regional School Committee

# Town Staff

John Coderre, Town Administrator Jason Little, Finance Director David Parenti, Fire Chief William Lyver, Police Chief Scott Charpentier, DPW Director

#### PRESENTATION REGARDING THE REVISED FY2021 BUDGET

Mr. Coderre presented a revised FY2021 General Government Budget that takes into consideration a worst-case scenario for the upcoming fiscal year. The amendments being proposed are in contrast to the level service budget previously presented to the Board on March 23<sup>rd</sup>.

Mr. Coderre noted that his presentation will focus primarily on amendments to the General Fund, which includes the budgets funded through taxation. The Superintendent presented the School Committee with a revised FY2021 K-8 Budget on May 14<sup>th</sup> that reduces the original 3.15% budget increase down to 1%. He also presented a revised FY2021 ARHS Budget on May 20<sup>th</sup>, and the overall budget increase of 3.31% was reduced to 1.5%, resulting in a reduction of Northborough's Operating Assessment from 4.36% to 2.31%. Lastly in terms of school budgets, the Assabet Valley School Committee met on June 2<sup>nd</sup> to discuss their revised budget and reduced state aid assumptions. Although the overall budget will be lower, Northborough's assessment is not likely to change due to increasing enrollments.

Mr. Coderre's presentation included the following:

#### A brief summary of events leading up to today

As a result of COVID-19, Mr. Coderre summarized some of the key Town and Statewide events leading up to today, as follows:

- 03/04/20 Town forms COVID-19 Task Force
- 03/10/20 Governor Declares State of Emergency
- 03/13/20 Northborough Public Schools close
- 03/17/20 Town buildings close to the public
- 03/23/20 Town Meeting Warrant posted and FY2021 Budget Hearing held per Town Charter via Zoom
- 03/23/20 Town Declares State of Emergency
- 03/24/20 Governor closes non-essential businesses
- 03/24/20 Town enacts modified/remote work schedules
- 04/01/20 Town redesigns comprehensive COVID-19 webpage to update residents and provide resources, along with social media and NCAT
- 04/03/20 Chapter 53 of the Acts of 2020 signed into law giving towns emergency authority to postpone Town Meeting and Election
- 04/13/20 Moderator and Selectmen temporarily postpone 4/27/20 Annual Town Meeting to 5/27/20
- 05/18/20 Moderator and Selectmen postpone Annual Town Meeting to 6/22/20

#### Recap of Original FY2021 Budget Process & FY2020 Year-end

Mr. Coderre indicated that the original FY2021 Budget Process began back in the Fall of 2019 leading up to the following meetings:

- December 2019 Financial Trend Monitoring System (FTMS) presentation
- January through April the Finance Committees reviewed departmental budgets
- March 23, 2020 Level Service Budget Hearing held by Board of Selectmen and Appropriations Committee
- April 13, 2020 Presentation update on FY2020 and revised outlook for FY2021

- Review process and communication for revising key budgets
  - o May 14, 2020 K-8 Revised Budget Presented to School Committee
  - May 18, 2020 General Government Revised Budget Presented to Board of Selectmen
  - May 20, 2020 ARHS Revised Budget & Assessment Presented to Regional School Committee
  - May 27, 2020 Revised Capital Budget presented to Financial Planning Committee

# Review of Revised Revenue Assumptions for FY2021

# Original Budget included:

- Tax Receipts increase 4.75%, or \$2.52 million
  - New growth at \$45 million value, \$776,250 revenue
  - Includes Debt Exclusions for Colburn Street, ARHS, Library, Senior Center, Lincoln Street School, and Fire Station projects
  - Includes use of \$124,000 in excess levy capacity
- <u>Local Receipts</u> level funded at \$4.47 million
  - Includes sixth of eight \$220,000 ARHS settlement payments
- State Aid funded at \$5.50 million
  - Governor's Budget released 1/22/20 0.89% increase in net aid after accounting for increased assessments
  - Other Available Funds include \$500,000 in Free Cash to be used in the operating budget per policy target

# Revised Budget includes:

- <u>Tax Receipts increase 3.58%</u>, or \$1.89 million
  - New growth at \$45 million value, \$776,250 revenue
  - Eliminates use of any additional excess levy capacity
  - Remains under basic Prop 2½ increase and unused levy capacity increases by \$218K
- Local Receipts reduced 14%, to \$3.84 million
  - MVE budget reduced by 11%, or \$282K
  - Meals/Rooms Tax reduced by 80%, or \$349K
- State Aid funded at \$4.49 million
  - Massachusetts Taxpayers Foundation 5/14/20 forecast of up to 19% drop in state revenues
  - Revised Town budget assumes 17% reduction, or \$1M based in part on historic trends
- Other Available Funds include \$878,000 in Free Cash to be used in the operating budget
  - Includes original \$500K plus \$378K in additional Free Cash from postponed Capital Projects

#### Review of Capital Budget

Mr. Coderre reviewed the original Capital Budget versus the Revised version as follows:

# ORIGINAL 2/18/20

PROJECTS BY DEPARTMENT	EXPENDITURE	FUNDING SO	URCES			
Police		Free Cash	Community Preservation	Grants	Enterprise Funds	Enterprise Fund Bonds
Police Cruiser Replacements (2)	98,000	98,000				
Police Subtotal	\$98,000					
Town Offices						
Feasibility Study	100,000	100,000				
Town Offices Subtotal	\$100,000					
DPW: Highway Division						
Wing Mower Replacement	75,000	75,000				
Loader Replacement	240,000	240,000				
Highway Gararge Emergency Generator	130,000	35,000		95,000		
Assabet Park	555,000	102,775	452,225			
Culvert & Drainage Replacements	250,000	250,000				
One-Ton Dump Truck w/Plow	110,000	110,000				
One-Ton Pickup Truck w/Plow	65,000	65,000				
Roadway Improvements/Maintenance	300,000	300,000				
Highway Subtotal	\$1,725,000					
DPW: Sewer Enterprise Fund						
Water/Sewer Garage Construction (split 60% w/Water)	380,000				60,000	320,000
Sewer Enterprise Fund Subtotal	\$380,000					
DPW: Water Enterprise Fund						
Water/Sewer Garage Construction (split 40% w/Sewer)	520,000				40,000	480,00
Assabet Hill Water Storage Tank Rehabilitation	725,000					725,000
Water Enterprise Fund Subtotal	\$1,245,000					
Northborough K-8 Public Schools						
Melican Middle School Parking Lot & Walkway Impro-	v 100,000	100,000				
Northborough K-8 Schools Subtotal	\$100,000					
TOTAL FY2021 CAPITAL BUDGET	\$3,648,000	\$1,475,775	\$452,225	\$95,000	\$100,000	\$1,525,000

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# **REVISED 5/27/20**

<b>EXPENDITURE</b> 50,000	Free Cash	Community Preservation	Grants	Enterprise	Enterprise
			Cronts	Enterprise	Entomo'
		rreservation	Grants	Funds	Fund Bonds
	50,000				
\$50,000					
100,000	100,000				
\$100,000					
75,000	75,000				
0	0				
130,000	35,000		95,000		
555,000	102,775	452,225	,		
0	0	, i			
0	0				
0	0				
300,000	300,000				
\$1,060,000					
380,000				60,000	320,0
\$380,000					
520,000				40,000	480,0
725,000					725,0
\$1,245,000					
50,000	50,000				
\$50,000					
\$2 885 000	\$712 775	\$452 225	\$95,000	\$100,000	\$1,525,00
	\$50,000  100,000  \$100,000  75,000  0  130,000  555,000  0  300,000  \$1,060,000  \$380,000  \$20,000  725,000  \$1,245,000  50,000	\$50,000  100,000  \$100,000  75,000 0 0 0 130,000  555,000 102,775 0 0 0 0 0 300,000  \$1,060,000  \$20,000 \$22,000 725,000 \$1,245,000 \$50,000 \$50,000	\$50,000  100,000  100,000  75,000  75,000  0  0  130,000  35,000  555,000  102,775  0  0  0  0  300,000  \$1,060,000  \$380,000  \$380,000  \$20,000  \$20,000  \$1,245,000  \$50,000  \$50,000  \$50,000	\$50,000  100,000  \$100,000  75,000  75,000  0  0  130,000  35,000  555,000  102,775  452,225  0  0  0  0  300,000  \$1,060,000  \$380,000  \$380,000  \$1,245,000  \$50,000  \$50,000  \$50,000	\$50,000  100,000  \$100,000  75,000  75,000  0  0  130,000  35,000  555,000  102,775  452,225  0  0  0  0  0  300,000  \$1,060,000  \$380,000  \$20,000  \$1,245,000  \$50,000  \$50,000  \$50,000

Mr. Coderre reviewed changes to the revised key budgets as follows:

- Northborough K-8 Schools increases \$249,286 or 1% to \$25,177,844
- General Government (Town) increases \$144,426 or 1% to \$14,641,062
- Health Insurance increases \$149,958 or 2.6% to \$5,997,041
- Worcester Regional Retirement System increases \$228,042 or 11.1% to \$2,275,596
- <u>Assabet Valley Vocational High School</u> combined Operating Assessment and debt service is an overall increase of \$166,536, or 19.91% to \$1,002,846
  - Operating Assessment increases by \$170,364, or 24.52% to \$865,186 as enrollment increases from 45 to 53 students
  - Debt service associated with the completed renovation project decreases by \$3,828, or -2.71% to \$137,660
- <u>ARHS</u> combined Operating Assessment and Debt Service increases \$294,358 or 2.29% to \$13,168,314\* see footnote below
  - Operating Assessment increases by \$283,571, or 2.31% to \$12,536,085 due to shifting enrollment and MGL c.70 formula
  - ARHS Debt Assessment increases by \$10,787, or 1.74% to \$632,229 and will remain relatively constant until final payment in FY2027

Mr. Coderre reviewed the revised General Fund highlights as follows:

- Capital Budget use of Free Cash reduced by \$763K
- Free Cash used in the operating budget increased from \$500K to \$878K to support Health Insurance and Pension increases
- OPEB Trust Fund Contribution of \$550K eliminated
- Stabilization Fund Contribution of \$200K eliminated
- Appropriations Committee Reserve increased from \$175K to \$375K to fund potential unemployment and unforeseen expenses
- Financial Reserves maintained at 8-9%

Mr. Coderre reviewed the FY2021 Original Proposed Budget as indicated on Page 7 of these minutes and the FY2021 Revised Proposed Budget on Page 8 \*see footnote below.

\*Final ARHS assessment was subsequently revised due to reduced transportation reimbursement and State Aid, which increased the final operating assessment from 2.29% to 2.73%. The result is that the overall General Fund increase will go from 0% to 0.07%.

	FY2020	FY2021		%
EXPENDITURES	Budget	Proposed	Variance	Change
General Government (Town)	\$22,391,273	\$23,174,967	\$783,694	3.50%
Schools				
Northborough K-8	\$24,928,558	\$25,714,417	\$785,859	3.15%
Algonquin Reg. HS 9-12	\$12,252,514	\$12,786,493	\$533,979	4.36%
Algonquin Debt Exclusion	\$621,442	\$632,229	\$10,787	1.74%
Assabet Valley	\$694,822	\$865,186	\$170,364	24.52%
Assabet Valley Debt	\$141,488	\$137,660	-\$3,828	-2.71%
Warrant Articles				
Reserve Fund	\$175,000	\$175,000	\$0	0.00%
Transfer to Stabilization	\$200,000	\$200,000	\$0	0.00%
Free Cash Capital Projects	\$861,167	\$1,475,775	\$614,608	71.37%
Transfer to OPEB Trust	\$550,000	\$550,000	\$0	0.00%
Zeh School Debt Service	\$350,578	\$0	-\$350,578	-100.00%
Colburn St. Debt Service	\$62,315	\$59,923	-\$2,393	-3.84%
Library Debt Service	\$364,928	\$354,248	-\$10,681	-2.93%
Senior Center Debt Service	\$394,645	\$380,145	-\$14,500	-3.67%
Lincoln Street Debt Service	\$1,075,875	\$1,051,475	-\$24,400	-2.27%
Fire Station Debt Service	\$0	\$296,317	\$296,317	
Other Funds	\$952,083	\$921,903	-\$30,180	-3.17%
Adjustments	-\$45,821		\$45,821	-100.00%
Subtotal General Fund	\$65,970,867	\$68,775,737	\$2,804,870	4.25%
Water Enterprise Funds	\$2,548,680	\$2,619,543	\$70,863	2.78%
Sewer Enterprise Fund	\$2,244,114	\$2,305,872	\$61,758	2.75%
Solid Waste Enterprise Fund	\$933,959	\$873,550	-\$60,409	-6.47%
Subtotal Enterprise Funds	\$5,726,753	\$5,798,965	\$72,212	1.26%
TOTAL ALL FUNDS	\$71,697,620	\$74,574,702	\$2,877,082	4.01%

	FY2020	FY2021		%
EXPENDITURES	Budget	Proposed	Variance	Change
General Government (Town)	\$14,496,636	\$14,641,062	\$144,426	1.00%
Health Insurance	\$5,847,083	\$5,997,041	\$149,958	2.56%
Retirement Assessment	\$2,047,554	\$2,275,596	\$228,042	11.14%
Schools				
Northborough K-8	\$24,928,558	\$25,177,844	\$249,286	1.00%
Algonquin Reg. HS 9-12	\$12,252,514	\$12,536,085	\$283,571	2.31%
Algonquin Debt Exclusion	\$621,442	\$632,229	\$10,787	1.74%
Assabet Valley	\$694,822	\$865,186	\$170,364	24.52%
Assabet Valley Debt	\$141,488	\$137,660	-\$3,828	-2.71%
Warrant Articles				
Reserve Fund	\$175,000	\$375,000	\$200,000	114.29%
Transfer to Stabilization	\$200,000	\$0	-\$200,000	-100.00%
Free Cash Capital Projects	\$861,167	\$712,775	-\$148,392	-17.23%
Transfer to OPEB Trust	\$550,000	\$0	-\$550,000	-100.00%
Zeh School Debt Service	\$350,578	\$0	-\$350,578	-100.00%
Colburn St. Debt Service	\$62,315	\$59,923	-\$2,393	-3.84%
Library Debt Service	\$364,928	\$354,248	-\$10,681	-2.93%
Senior Center Debt Service	\$394,645	\$380,145	-\$14,500	-3.67%
Lincoln Street Debt Service	\$1,075,875	\$1,051,475	-\$24,400	-2.27%
Fire Station Debt Service	\$0	\$17,098	\$17,098	100.00%
Other Funds	\$952,083	\$755,886	-\$196,197	-20.61%
Adjustments	-\$45,821		\$45,821	-100.00%
Subtotal General Fund	\$65,970,867	\$65,969,252	-\$1,615	0.00%
Water Enterprise Funds	\$2,548,680	\$2,600,970	\$52,290	2.05%
Sewer Enterprise Fund	\$2,244,114	\$2,296,295	\$52,181	2.33%
Solid Waste Enterprise Fund	\$933,959	\$873,550	-\$60,409	-6.47%
Subtotal Enterprise Funds	\$5,726,753	\$5,770,815	\$44,062	0.77%
TOTAL ALL FUNDS	\$71,697,620	\$71,740,067	\$42,447	0.06%

# **Process Moving Forward**

On May 18<sup>th</sup> the Moderator, in consultation with the Board of Selectmen, postponed Annual Town Meeting to June 22, 2020. The following schedule would be followed to finalize the proposed budget changes in preparation for Town Meeting action.

- <u>June 8, 2020</u> Board of Selectmen hold a public hearing with the Appropriations Committee on the revised FY2021 General Fund Budget
- <u>June 11, 2020</u> the Appropriations Committee meets to review and vote recommendations on the revised K-8 School Budget, ARHS Budget, Assabet Valley Budget, and General Government Budget
- <u>June 15, 2020</u> the Board of Selectmen meets to review and vote recommendations on the warrant articles
- June 22, 2020 Town Meeting

In response to a question by Selectman Hirsh, Mr. Coderre explained the reduced budget for the Fire Station Debt Service, stating that the original budget anticipated that that the owner's project manager and architect for the project would be hired in FY2020 resulting in debt service expense in FY2021. Due to the pandemic, this did not happen and therefore that expense will appear in the FY2022 budget, thereby reducing the budget in FY2021. Mr. Coderre also explained that the Personnel Budget includes personnel expenses, including wage and merit increases. These expenses are budgeted centrally and are then transferred to departmental budgets upon approval.

Selectman Rutan asked if the revised budget could be overlaid to the original budget in a way that makes it easier for the public to compare the two. Mr. Coderre responded that both budgets are included side by side in his PowerPoint presentation that will be available on the Town website and additional Town Meeting handouts can be created to show the proposed changes.

In answer to a question from Joan Frank, Mr. Coderre explained that although the Capital Improvement Budget for the walkway improvements at the Melican Middle School was reduced from \$100,000 to \$50,000, nothing has been eliminated from the project scope. In the spirit of continued cooperation and collaboration between the Town and Schools, the DPW Director will perform the construction administration for the project in-house and the scaling of the parking lot will be absorbed by the DPW paving budget.

In answer to a question from Kelly Guenette, Mr. Coderre explained the Capital Improvement Budget for the Town Hall feasibility, stating that this funding is needed in order to determine the best option for the future of Town Hall. Options include investing in the current location, moving to 4 West Main Street once that reverts back to the Town, or to build new. He also explained the Capital Improvement Budget for the Assabet Park improvements, indicating that the project must proceed as part of the Town's ADA compliance requirements.

In answer to a question from Lauren Bailey-Jones, Mr. Coderre responded that the Board of Selectmen will consider the approval to obtain deficit spending authority for continued governmental operations under a 1/12 budget in the event that Town Meeting is not able to reach a quorum.

Chairman Perreault reminded the public that the tonight's PowerPoint presentation and a video of tonight's meeting will be available on the Town website. He encouraged residents to submit questions for the June 8<sup>th</sup> public hearing on the Revised FY2021 Budget via email to <a href="mailto:TownAdmin@town.northborough.ma.us">TownAdmin@town.northborough.ma.us</a>.

#### **ADJOURNMENT**

Selectman Rand moved the Board vote to adjourn; Selectman Rutan seconded the motion. The roll call vote was taken as follows:

Hirsh	"aye"	Rand	"aye"
Rutan	"aye"	Perreault	"aye"
Kaelin	"aye"		

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Meeting adjourned at 9:40 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Diane M. Wackell Executive Assistant to the Board of Selectmen

# Documents used during meeting:

- 1. June 4, 2020 Meeting Agenda
- 2. Memorandum FY2021 Revised Budget Update
- 3. FY2021 Revised Budget PowerPoint Presentation
- 4. Massachusetts Taxpayers Foundation News Release