



TOWN OF HOPEDALE

78 Hopedale Street - P.O. Box 7
Hopedale, Massachusetts 01747

Tel: 508-634-2203 Fax: 508-634-2200

Finance Committee

March 10th, 2021 Meeting Minutes 6:00 pm, via Zoom

Attendees:

Finance Committee

Present:

E. Callahan, D. Comastra, C. Hodgens, D. Madigan, P. Maloney

Absent:

D. Piatt, C. Strapponi

The Finance Committee meeting was opened at 6:08pm by Chris Hodgens.

Votes:

Meeting minutes were not available for February 24th. They will be reviewed at a subsequent meeting and voted at that time.

Events:

1. Ken Wilson was welcomed as a new member of the Finance Committee.
2. A general discussion was held on thoughts of an override proposal, educating the public on our financial situation, ways to disseminate information, and conditions that cause overrides to pass or fail. Diana Schindler raised the idea of using a debt exclusion override for capital items.
3. Chief Daige and Firefighter Kelley presented a proposal for the SAFER grant. This would allow expansion of firefighters in the Fire Department at minimal cost to the town for a period of four years. They also reviewed a proposal for a partnership with Milford Hospital to provide medical transport for a variety of situations. It would generate revenue for the department and note decrease services to the residents of Hopedale.
4. The Parks Department shared their proposed FY22 budget. A donation from an anonymous donor was acknowledged and the intention for the use of the funds was shared with the Finance Committee and audience. Activities to control weeds, salary adjustments, tree management, tennis courts and baseball field restoration at Draper Field were highlighted as matters of importance.
5. The Board of Health has submitted a proposed FY22 budget, as well. Don Howes reviewed the expenses and gave an overview of the current contract with the provider

- of the service. He commented on the level of service being vastly different than the previously contracted service provider. The potential for the establishment of a revolving fund to collect inspection fees and offset associated costs was discussed.
6. The proposed FY22 budget for Blackstone Valley Regional Vocational Technical High School was briefly discussed. An increase of 3.5% was mentioned as well as a potential decrease of \$20,000 due to enrollment.
 7. Diana Schindler raised the need for a Special Town Meeting to request a transfer from Free Cash to cover legal expenses. She cited mediation, attorney fees, collective bargaining sessions services to review bid documents as the reasons for the overage. Legal fees in relation to the citizen's lawsuit and potential coverage of fees by the anonymous donor were referenced; Diana Schindler indicated the need to have the donor submit a letter indicating they will cover those costs.
 8. The Finance Committee will continue meeting with departments to review and discuss proposed budgets. The next meeting, scheduled for March 17, 2021.

The Finance Committee Chair called the meeting to Adjournment at 8:42 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Elizabeth S. Callahan

Recording Secretary
Hopedale Finance Committee