



TOWN OF HOPEDALE

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Finance Committee

April 21, 2021 Meeting Minutes 6:00 pm, via Zoom

Attendees:

Finance Committee

Present:

E. Callahan, D. Comastra, C. Hodgens, D. Madigan, P. Maloney, C. Strapponi, K. Wilson

Absent:

D. Piatt

The Finance Committee meeting was opened at 6:03pm by Chris Hodgens.

Votes:

- Minutes of the April 7, 2021 meeting were presented for review and discussion. All voted in favor with Dennis Madigan and Colleen Strapponi abstaining due to absence.
- Minutes of the April 14, 2021 meeting were presented for review and discussion. All voted in favor with Dennis Madigan abstaining due to absence.

Events:

1. The Committee reviewed a first draft of a proposed advisory for salary administration for Town Employees. Questions were raised regarding job descriptions existing and available for comparison as required by the advisory as well clarifying how aspects of the advisory would dovetail with collective bargaining unit agreements. As the advisory recommends increases in salary should not exceed growth in revenue, contract wording will need to be considered (i.e. a three-year contract may indicate a percentage increase in year two and may be worded in the future to indicate "not to exceed"). The document will be reviewed by legal counsel prior to acceptance.
2. Superintendent of Schools Karen Crebase shared an updated budget request for the School Department. Due to clarifications on the use of ESSER funds in subsequent years and updated Circuit Breaker receipts as a result of the implementation of the Student Opportunity Act, the request has decreased significantly. The Finance Committee's proposed FY22 Operating Budget will be updated for a future meeting to reflect this change.
3. The Committee discussed removing capital requests from the current proposed FY22 budget and adding in updated budget requests from other departments that have not submitted/very recently submitted revised documents (Assessors, Library, Fire). A brief discussion of ensuring Library amounts are held at a level to ensure state contributions/certification as the

delta is extremely small. Suggestions of debt exclusion were raised; further information is necessary to frame the discussion.

4. Town Administrator Diana Schindler provided the Committee with information regarding the use of Free Cash (currently \$404,943) for the current year budget for items such as legal counsel, Town Hall repairs, street lights, short-term interest, increases to worker's compensation, health insurance and liability premiums. At Annual Town Meeting many amounts are estimated based on quotes; actual expenses can exceed those expectations.
5. Information regarding grants is still pending; solid information on amounts may not be available in time for Annual Town Meeting.
6. The date for Annual Town Meeting is May 22, 2021 as is the date for the Junior Prom. Diana Schindler will review the timing of the Town Meeting with the Board of Selectmen and suggest holding the meeting as early in the day as possible so as not to conflict and ensure voters are available to attend.
7. The Committee's next meeting date is set for April 29, 2021 at 6:00pm.

The Finance Committee Chair called the meeting to Adjournment at 7:51 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Elizabeth S. Callahan

Recording Secretary
Hopedale Finance Committee