

FINANCE COMMITTEE

March 28, 2023

Members: Chair: My Linh Truong Vice Chair: John Miller
Hafiz Adamjee, Megan Blackwell, Jeff Calabrese, Stefan Carp, Yannis Evrigenis, Lauren Herrmann, Kathryn Hughes, Patrick Matteson, Nicole Soto, Enzo Rascionato, Brian Vernaglia

Missing: Stefan Carp, Enzo Rascionato

Late Arrivals: John Miller (8:01 pm)

General Business Chair Truong called the meeting to order at 7:30 p.m.

Roll Call:

Megan Blackwell
Yannis Evrigenis
Brian Vernaglia
My Linh Truong
Hafiz Adamjee
Jeff Calabrese
Ruthie Gagne
Patrick Matteson
Enzo Rascionato
Nicole Soto
Jeff Calabrese

Guests

Sheila Tracey, Town Treasurer
Mike Wise, DPW
Pete Lawson, DPW
Jimmy Gibbons, DPW
Bob LeBoeuf, DPW
LeeAnn McGahan, DPW

Public Comments-No speakers present.

Budget Presentations

Sheila Tracey reviewed answers to the questions that former chair Soto had provided. Treasurer Tracey described past efforts to outsource or to consolidate online payments. eChecks are tricky and take time to reconcile. She has met with two companies previously that purportedly had a faster way, but at the end, some information still had to be done manually. They are short staffed in the Treasurer's Office (someone is out on a 12 week leave, someone else is out with illness) and it can take 30 min to process four checks. The main problem is with user's banks that don't include all the pertinent info.

It was asked if those problematic checks could be returned instead. The Treasurer said that yes, they could be returned, but taxpayers might be unhappy because of fees. Also, they have ~600 checks that are waiting to be processed. It was also suggested that a fee could be added to these types of payments to discourage them or to make up for the added cost of faulty e-checks. It was also asked if this reconciliation would be the person's only job. Treasurer answered that the position would also cover vendors and online bill payment.

The Treasurer mentioned there was no way for online payments for permitting. The transfer station permits all use separate systems, separate reconciliations, and downloads. Also, the Town has to retrieve payments from Cumming Foundation. Furthermore, some providers won't use unipay. It was asked if there could be a translation of output of e-permitting to MUNIS. The Treasurer said that this was a conversation between the Town Manager, IT, building, and Treasurer's Office. It was suggested that a solution is to hire a consultant to make recommendations instead of hiring someone permanently.

The conversation was wrapped up in order to allow DPW time to present.

The new DPW director was introduced. Ms. McGahan reviewed increases and cuts to the various DPW budgets. Some highlights are below.

- PT-12 for Parkhurst, Lynch; MR. Lawson explains that they want someone on the ground from the beginning (prof/tech level)
- Ms. McGahan mentioned that time and a half is given to some employees who do snow and ice (she had previously said that there is no overtime for work done during regular hours)
- They didn't get right price for heating modulars for high school, so DPW is suspicious
- Unclear what electricity costs will be for the new Lynch
- Water and sewer
 - 3% est for MWRA, but there is a new assessment (Ms. McGahan will provide estimate tomorrow)
 - 26% higher than last year...North reservoir dam project ... had to use MWRA more (67%)
 - Deficit for water & sewer (might need \$50K at STM to get thru June)
 - Met budget for year in third quarter, but still have debt
 - Net of 500,000 deficit to be funded by retained earnings (total)
 - Capital line item for MS4 permit -- \$125K
 - Total retained earnings is \$1.3M (like to keep 8-10%)
 - Certified retained earnings in September
 - Looking at 6-8% increases in rates
 - How is it invested? Conservative investments will lead to 4%

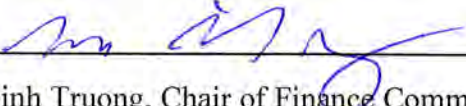
Nicole Soto left at 9:32 pm.

The following budgets were discussed.

- DPW budget moved by Jeff; seconded by Megan
 - Can't negotiate multi-year contracts
 - Unanimously passed
 - Energy moved by Lauren, seconded by Megan
 - Reduced by \$137,963
 - Unanimously passed
 - Workers' comp moved by Brian, seconded by Yannis
 - Unanimously passed
 - Jeff is asking to reopen planning board, seconded by Megan
 - Unanimously passed
 - Asking to reduce the prof services
 - John reviewed education working group efforts
 - Motion to adjourn by Megan, seconded by Patrick
 - Unanimously passed
 - Adjourned at 9:35 pm
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Respectfully submitted,
Megan Blackwell, ad hoc recording secretary,

Approved by: _____


My Linh Truong, Chair of Finance Committee