

Finance Committee

Meeting Minutes

May 28, 2020

7:00 PM

Virtual Meeting

Present: Christi Andersen, Roland Bourdon, Jason Cole, Mike Majors, Alan Nolde (Associate), Steve Noone, Sahana Purohit, Christine Russell, Dave Wellinghoff

Absent: Al Vlajinac (Associate)

1. Opening

Chair Roland Bourdon called the meeting to order at 7:00 pm. The Finance Committee Members and audience attended the meeting remotely through Zoom.us virtual meeting platform. The meeting was recorded through Zoom and also by ActonTV.

2. Public Participation

Audience members were given the opportunity to participate remotely, but there was no public participation.

Terra from west Acton – Has concerns about on-sight town meeting. Also Massachusetts Municipal Association (MMA) is working on a bill that would make it easier for towns to wait. The House is also working on a measure to assist cities and Towns. Mike M. - introduces Dave Didriksen . formerly from Willow Books. Dave D. - Addressed a letter from the Economic Development Committee (EDC) to Lt.Gov Polito regarding small business owners in the common wealth. I believe that the devastating effect on small businesses has been seriously underestimated and that small businesses are being unfairly victimized by the excessive restrictions of the state’s most recent directives. We are putting more money in the big box stores pockets and putting the little guys out of business. Jason C. Is the small Business grant money coming from the Cares Act and not taxation. Jon B. - Yes..correct. Adam N.- Whats the viability of any tax relief or small business grants help going to keep these businesses around? Dave D. – I think that this will help them get over the hump. Not looking for anything from the FinCom right now. The FinCom shared many different opinions on who should regulate and monitor local business and how and who enforces the rules and regulations.

3. FY2021 Revisions & Finance Department Update

Steve B. updated the FinCom with the latest ALG spreadsheet. Here are the changes:

- Reduce FY21 State Aid growth to FY20 levels
- Reduce FY21 Local Receipts growth to FY20 levels
- Reduce FY21 New Growth to FY20 levels
- Increase FY21 Overlay Account

- Municipal Budget Change
- Reduce Free Cash Use by Amount of Municipal Budget reduction \$215K
- Reduce ABRSD FY21 assessment to \$65,584,049, from \$66,012,542

That's the plan as it stands for now. With more time comes more information.

The Municipal budget was \$36,915,202 now \$36,700,202. We reduced sustainability policy implementation by \$15,000, the Town Hall ADA compliant bathroom by \$150k and Borrowing for sidewalks and Kelley's Corner by \$50k. The total municipal spending package is up 2.34%. ABRSD was at 3.06% spending package and now it's 2.36%. Jason C. - Let's reduce the ADA compliant bathroom completely as no one will be in the meeting room any time soon. Steve B. - Jason I had them switched we reduced complete streets and not the ADA bathroom. Jason C. - Let's put it off indefinitely. John M. - I think it's really important and the BoS fully support it. Steve N. - The reductions are probably not going to be enough but we have no new information to go on. My experience says there will be more cuts to be made in FY21. We need to establish triggers such as here's Plan A if this happens and here's Plan B if this happens and so on. The FinCom continued discussions on what cuts or measures should we have put in place with the uncertainty of future revenues. Would like to see deeper cuts or tiers of cuts if things turn really bad. It was suggested having multiple budgets or triggers based on revenue numbers. The bottom line budget helps the Town to get things done because of flexibility. It was suggested to have a back-up plan for Town Meeting as it will probably come up. We've had A & B budgets in the past which generally had a list of cuts that would be put in place. We need a Plan B as a credible looking number.

4. Town Manager and Board of Selectmen COVID-19 Pandemic Updates

Jon B. - Under the Cares Act grant we are asking for \$150K. \$50k for rent relief and \$100k for small business relief. The hope is that the State will loosen the restrictions and allow cities and towns to use it for revenue shortfalls. We're going to manage the funds very carefully. There's a huge calling on the schools side for help to assist with their operations. Steve N. - Can we give businesses some sort of tax forbearance working with the property owners where the renters could benefit. Stay collections for some time? The complication is whether town meeting needs to approve it or the state needs to approve it.

5. Pandemic Outlook

Covered above

6. Finance Committee Business

Do we need a deeper discussion on the Town operating budget before we vote it? The general consensus was the Town needs to have additional budget cuts or a Plan B budget in place before the FinCom will vote it. Additional comments surrounded the need to see

specific line items being cut like the schools. We're not asking for cuts that would impact public safety issues. What does the next cuts look like. Jon B. – If we come back with specific steps or triggers with cuts that we would implement ...does that work? This was mentioned two meetings ago. The cuts should reflect potential cuts in State Aid, local receipts or general tax collections. John M. – With a bottom line budget any reductions in any revenue category can be handle in a bottom line budget by hitting the total reduction amount. Steve N. - Make a short list and keep it simple. John M. I'm confident that I can make this work with the Selectmen and the bottom line budget. Steve N. – Make it simple with the various levers/trigger by putting numbers to them so we have a clear picture of the intent. We know things can change. Peter L. – We took budget cuts of \$1.0m and put back \$500k as a contingency for COVID-19 related expenses. If we don't need that money it will return to reserves to be used the following year. The sense of the FinCom was for the Town to have a second budget in place before they approve the current revised budget number. Jason C. - Motion to approve the Acton-Boxborough Regional School assement to the sum of \$65,584,049 to cover the necessary expenses of the Acton-Boxborough Regional School District. Seconded by Christine R. Roll call: Christi Andersen - Aye, Roland Bourdon - Aye, Jason Cole - Aye, Mike Majors - Aye, Steve Noone - Aye, Sahana Purohit - Aye, Christine Russell - Aye, Dave Wellinghoff – Abstain.

Meeting Minutes of April 1, 2020 Steve N. Moved to approve and second by Sahana P. Roll call: Christi Andersen - Aye, Roland Bourdon - Aye, Jason Cole - Aye, Mike Majors - Aye, Steve Noone - Aye, Sahana Purohit - Aye, Christine Russell - Aye, Dave Wellinghoff – Abstain.

Liaison Reports

Steve N. – Provided an update on the Health Insurance Trust. Jason C. gave an update on the School sub-building committee. Mike M. provide a brief update on the EDC ideas on small businesses.

Next meeting scheduled for June 3, 2020 at 7:00pm.

7. Adjournment

At 9:10pm, a motion was made by Member Dave Wellinghoff and seconded by Adam Nolde Cole Roll Call: Christi Andersen - Aye, Roland Bourdon - Aye, Jason Cole - Aye, Mike Majors - Aye, Steve Noone - Aye, Sahana Purohit - Aye, Christine Russell - Aye, Dave Wellinghoff – Aye. Adam Nolde -Aye

The meeting was adjourned by majority vote.

Documents and Exhibits Used During this Meeting

Letter from EDC to Lt. Gov Polito
ALG Plan
Meeting minutes from April 1, 2020

Respectfully submitted,

Finance Committee