



SELECT BOARD BUDGET WORKSHOP

Meeting Minutes
Tuesday, April 6, 2021
6:00 PM
Virtual Meeting

Select Board Members Present: Jon Benson, Dean Charter, David Martin, Joan Gardner, Jim Snyder-Grant, Town Manager John S. Mangiaratti

Finance Committee Members Present: Christi Andersen, Christine Russell, Adam Nolde, Michael Majors, Stephen Noone, Dave Wellinghoff, Sahana Purohit, Jason Cole, Roland Bourdon, Esha Gangolli

Absent: None

Mr. Benson called the Select Board meeting to order at 6:00 PM. Ms. Andersen called the Finance Committee meeting to order at 6:02 PM. This was a joint virtual meeting with no Board or Committee members in physical attendance. It was broadcast via Zoom.us virtual meeting platform.

I. Consent Agenda

Mr. Cole moved to approve the meeting minutes as amended, seconded by Ms. Russell and voted unanimously by roll: (Ayes: Mr. Noone, Mr. Majors, Ms. Purohit, Ms. Gangolli, Ms. Russell, Mr. Wellinghoff, Mr. Nolde, Mr. Cole, Mr. Bourdon, Ms. Andersen)

II. Budget Workshop

Mr. Mangiaratti informed both the Select Board and Finance Committee that budget presentations will follow the current FY22 Budget Book.

West Acton Citizen Library

Jennifer Friedman presented her budget requesting \$66,746 with a 4% increase from FY 21 due to the one-time cost of joining the Minuteman Library Network. There were no further questions.

Memorial Library

Danielle Savin presented the activity of the Library during 2020 and adapting to serve members during the pandemic. Ms. Savin is requesting a 1.83% increase due to step increases, as salaries are 80% of the overall budget. During the pandemic there was an increase in electronic resources and electronic licenses, which are more costly than print. Mr. Snyder-Grant questioned if Amazon has been affected with the electronic book availability. Libraries cannot purchase from Amazon, but members have checked with the Library if a book is available electronically before purchasing. The library has to purchase individual licenses for every book, so if there are only four licenses available for each book, only four people can check them out. No further questions.



Council on Aging

Sharon Mercurio presented the total number of employees within the COA with the Director as the only full-time position and six part-time positions. Ms. Mercurio updated both Boards on the operation of the COA during the pandemic. There are over 5,000 residents over 60 years of age with approximately 2,000 being served at the Senior Center. No further questions.

Finance

Steve Barrett, Finance Director introduced the four divisions in the Finance Department: Accounting, Town Clerk, Treasurer/Collector and Assessor. Mr. Barrett explained the responsibilities of each division, and the only change in the budget is a reduction of \$30,000 in the Other Post-Employment Benefits (OPEB) budget and transferred it into the Ambulance Enterprise fund due to their utilization of labor. No further questions.

Brian McMullen, Principal Assessor/Assistant Finance Director presented an overview of the Assessor budget. The Assessors completed just under \$5 billion in total town evaluation, which is approximately nine thousand personal property accounts.

Fire

Chief Robert Hart introduced his proposed budget comprised of Salaries, General Fund, Fire Alarm Network Revolving Fund, Ambulance Enterprise Fund, and the Emergency Management Fund. Finance Committee members asked what the ideal number of personnel added for a full roster. Chief Hart replied that eight new full-time positions would be ideal. No further questions.

Human Resources

Marianne Fleckner, Human Resources Director, highlighted new policies in response to the COVID pandemic including: providing the Federal Families First Coronavirus Response Act, allowing employees to receive paid time off if they were affected by COVID-19; a temporary telecommuting policy; established an online open enrollment process for approximately 200 employees and 500 retirees; establishing online personnel records. The FY22 Senior Work Program budget contains an increase from 105 to 115 hours, for a total of \$56,925. No increase in insurance benefits. No further questions.

Information Technology

Mark Hald, Assistant Town Manager introduced the IT Budget. Large amounts of technology was deployed to employees for home use during the pandemic and updated technology in town buildings, for example, touchless door openers and updated meeting rooms for virtual meeting capabilities. Funding was largely from the CARES Act. The IT and GIS budget increased by 1.1%. A Finance Committee



member asked what the cost of insurance would be to protect against a ransomware attack; Mr. Hald will research the number with the Finance Department. No further questions.

Land Use

Matthew Selby, Land Use and Economic Director introduced the Land Use Division Budget, which consists of the Land Use Director, and three clerical staff. Land Use Staff continued to provide customer service both in Town Hall and home office support. FY22 budget shows a decrease by 2.5%. No further questions.

Frank Ramsbottom, Building Commissioner introduced his budget without significant change, code books carry over annually until codes are updated. The Building Revolving fund is behind in paying the plumbing and gas inspectors, but should exceed \$156,000 by the end of the year due to new town facilities under construction. Finance Committee members inquired about the inspections with the new twin school, and if the Schools were being billed for the services of the Town. Mr. Martin asked where fee revenue appears in the budget book; Mr. Ramsbottom explained that a vast majority of fees are deposited in the general fund. No further questions.

Sheryl Ball, Health Director discussed how the department adapted during the pandemic, including operating a vaccine clinic and collaborated with eight other communities to set up a mass-vaccination site at the KMart property – we are still waiting for a response from the state. She oversees a general fund budget, one enterprise fund, and three revolving funds. All general fund and enterprise funds are level-funded except for wages. No further questions.

Tom Tidman, Natural Resources Director: The Natural Resources Division is composed of Cemetery Division, Conservation Division, and Recreation Division. The budget for FY22 has been level-funded. No further questions.

Melissa Rier, Recreation Director: The department is self-supported through a Chapter 53D Revolving Fund, and discussed the programs adapted virtually to the public. There was a 20% decrease; increase in camp counselor wages due to the increase in minimum wage, recently hired a Recreation Assistant whose salary falls under the revolving fund, not the general fund. No further questions.

Kristen Guichard, Planning Director: The proposed budget is level with the primary budget consisting of salaries. The only reduction in the budget is travel, due to COVID restrictions. No further questions.

Nursing Services

Heather York, Nursing Director: Acton Nursing Services offers Home Care nursing services, and public health nursing operating as two distinct budgets. The Acton Nursing Services were part of the contact tracing during the pandemic. The only



change is the increase of 0.47% which is due to a scheduled salary increase; the budget remains the same as the previous fiscal year with an overall 0.33% change. The public health budget increased by 2.74% related to total salaries. The overall budget has increased by 1.73%. No further questions.

Police

Rich Burrows, Police Chief introduced his FY22 budget, with an overall increase of 2.78% related to contractual obligations, Animal Control is level-funded, and Dispatch has decreased due to personnel changes with newer dispatchers starting at lower step pay.

Public Works

Corey York, DPW Director introduced his FY22 budget, which includes the DPW Main Office, Highway Division, Public Facilities Division, Trees/Grounds Division and Engineering Division. The Engineering Division increased by 1.75% due to salary and purchased services, no changes in road maintenance budget, the Highway budget increased by 3.85% due to salary changes and purchased services, Roads budget increased by 2.2%, Snow and Ice budget increased by 0.48% due to salaries, Gas and Diesel budget had a change of -4.25% as a result of the Police Department introducing hybrid vehicles to the fleet, the Machinery budget increased by 8.60% due to the transfer of funds towards capital outlay for the purchase of a bucket truck, the Special Projects budget for large equipment rentals, sidewalk installation remain the same with no changes. The Wastewater Treatment Plant is over 20 years old, and there are plans for upgrades, and have money in the Enterprise Fund this fiscal year to complete some upgrade plans and design. The Sewer Enterprise Fund shows a change of -1.31%. The Recycle/Transfer Station shows an increase in recycling due to increasing costs with a total of 4.32% increase in purchased services, and a decrease of 5.26% in Capital/Property.

Andrea Ristine, Public Facilities Superintendent provided an update on the upgrades to public buildings during the pandemic, including automatic door openers, purchasing air purifiers and electrostatic sprayers, as well as overseeing the construction of the North Acton Fire Station. Services increased by 2.21% due to electricity and planning to transition over to 100% with Acton Power Choice; 34% of the budget is salary.

Town Manager

John S. Mangiaratti, Town Manager discussed the budget changes for FY22: the increase in salary is the new addition of the Sustainability Director and unsettled collective bargaining by 32.95%.

Mark Hald, Assistant Town Manager noted the Town Meeting budget is drastically different this fiscal year as the cost of setup for FY21 during the pandemic was largely covered by the CARES Act funding. The changes from past two town meetings per year is the decrease in the costs of rentals.



Andrea Becerra, Sustainability Director discussed the proposed budget for Sustainability, with an increase of 177.42% due to salary, a decrease of 88.20% in purchased services, resulting in an overall increase of 56.07%. A summary of recent grant applications submitted to help cover the cost of various projects and purchases in town.

Austin Cyganiewicz, Director of Intergovernmental Affairs presented the Transportation budget, with a total decrease of 10.73%. Services were heavily impacted by the pandemic in FY21 and suspended for some time, but have resumed service since 2021. Services provided include the Cross-Acton Transit and rail shuttle services.

Veteran's Services

James MacRae, Veterans Service Officer introduced the Veterans Service budget with an increase of 1.94% due to salary with an overall increase of 0.96%

Ms. Gongolli moved to adjourn the Finance Committee, Ms. Russell seconds, and voted unanimously by roll: (Ayes: Mr. Noone, Mr. Majors, Ms. Purohit, Ms. Gangolli, Ms. Russell, Mr. Wellinghoff, Mr. Nolde, Mr. Cole, Mr. Bourdon, Ms. Andersen)

Ms. Gardner moved to adjourn the Select Board, seconded by Mr. Charter and voted unanimously by roll: (Ayes: Mr. Snyder-Grant, Ms. Gardner, Mr. Charter, Mr. Benson, Mr. Martin)

Meeting adjourned at 9:54 PM.

Documents and Exhibits Used During this Meeting

- Agenda, April 6, 2021
- Town Manager's Budget Report