



Finance Committee **Meeting Minutes** **February 2, 2022**

The regular meeting was called to order at approximately 6:00PM by Acting Chair Stefanie Coxe. Roll call of Finance Committee members present: Stefanie Coxe-Y, George Perkins-Y, Nathan Ladley-Y and Jack Moylan-Y. Absent were Robert Ciavarra and Brian Gardiner. Also attending: Town Administrator Robert Whritenour and Assistant Town Administrator William Scott.

William Scott, Assistant Town Administrator, read the advisory as required by Massachusetts General Laws, Chapter 30, Section 18-25, and pursuant to Chapter 20 of the Acts of 2021, an Act relative to extending certain COVID-19 measures adopted during the State of Emergency, consistent with Governor Baker's March 12, 2021 executive order and as amended and signed into law on June 16, 2021 extending Open Meeting Law provisions to April 1, 2022, and the public was welcome to attend the meeting either in person or via the alternative public access. The notice was posted and the Zoom link was provided as well.

1. Information Technology Budget Review

Phil Cioffi, Director of Information Technology, reviewed the PowerPoint presentation on the FY2023 IT budget including the following highlights:

- Mission statement
- Objectives and key focus points
- IT this year delivered
- Technology budget overview
 - FY21 actuals
 - FY22 on track
 - FY23 proposed
- Changes in budget
 - Salaries
 - Expenses
- Technology challenges
- Recommendations to consider for addressing future challenges

Mr. Cioffi stated that equipment is no longer purchased but rented at a cost savings. Comcast Inet provides connectivity to municipal buildings, and there is need to replace the aging fiber iNet backbone. Discussion ensued on the option of municipal broadband, and Mr. Cioffi is looking at all options. He stressed the need to start looking into resolution now and consider all leveraging options. Chair Coxe noted that after seven years setting up a municipal utility pays for itself after seven years, and then provides an opportunity for revenue generation. Mr. Cioffi noted that there are pros and cons between the municipality owning the service and having to maintain it inhouse and an outside company owning it and/or maintaining it.

Discussion ensued on the challenges of attracting qualified personnel. Mr. Cioffi confirmed that it was a combination of the salary and benefits package not being competitive. Additionally, applicants tend to be from the Cape possibly in second careers, and not those younger employees relocating because of a job offer.

Chair Coxe requested, as she has with all departments, that Mr. Cioffi consider positioning the IT department in the future to offer services to other neighboring towns for additional revenue generation.

Town Administrator Whritenour stated that Mr. Cioffi has been a tremendous asset to the Town.

2. Elected and General Government Budget Review

Town Administrator Whritenour reviewed the PowerPoint presentation on the FY2023 Elected and General Government budget including the following highlights:

- Mission statement
- Town administration
- Budget summary
 - FY21 actuals
 - FY22 budget
 - FY23 proposed
 - Change

Discussion ensued on interfund and inter-department transfers as needed during the fiscal year. The reserve fund may not be adequate to cover the transfers needed. As budgets get tighter, there is little room to transfer funds. Discussion also ensued on budgeting retirement payouts for accumulated sick/vacation time. Both the police and fire departments have a line item in their budgets for anticipated retirements, but other payouts for other departments have a line item in the general budget.

Chair Coxe questioned ways to restrict total amounts of buyback eligibility. Town Manager Whritenour stated that the Town's attempts to limit accrual of leave have been met with pushback from the labor unions due to general dissatisfaction with the annual 2% COLA increases as well as the benefit package. With a 50/50 split, the Town offers the lowest benefit package of towns on the Cape.

Town Administrator Whritenour added that the Town has attempted to be creative in handling the cost of health insurance to ensure a win/win for the Town and employee. Keeping health insurance costs down in the face of rapid inflation has resulted in the Town adopting a high-deductible plan with a 20% less premium from the traditional plans. The Town pays half of the high deductible and the employee pays the other half. The first year of the plan the Town pays the full deductible and the employee receives \$4K to be placed in the employee's health insurance savings account. Any unused amount carries over to the following year. The Town has realized substantial savings with this new health insurance plan. He stated that the Town is looking to limit buyback time, while offering innovative solutions in the contract to save money without changing the basic percentages.

Assistant Town Administrator Scott stated that eight years ago the Town negotiated the reduction in the vacation maximum to be carried over from six weeks to five weeks and sick leave accrual was reduced as well. There were some employees who were grandfathered in.

Chair Coxe offered her opinion that offering good wages and a good health plan is key to hiring and retention of qualified employees and reducing the costs of attrition and retraining. She stated that innovative efforts to reduce costs while addressing compensation issues is necessary for a vital workforce. She thanked the Town Administrator for being proactive in this challenging arena.

3. Finance Department Budget Review

Ed Senteio reviewed the PowerPoint presentation on the Finance Department FY2023 budget with the following highlights. He introduced and recognized the members of his department. Andy Michado, Assessor; Mary Maslowski, Clerk; Sue Ripley, Collector/Treasurer; and Mariya Ruseva, Town Accountant. He reported that the finance team had recorded a best practices video at the request of the Department of Revenue and the Town received the highest recognition for the municipality in the state for complicated reporting on the state as a result of advanced automation.

- Mission statement
- Finance department key points
 - Team state wide accolades/ other achievements
 - Local government workforce skills gap report four years ago
 - Present workforce and shifting of staff and succession planning

Collector/Treasurer Department

Sue Ripley, Collector/Treasurer, reviewed the PowerPoint presentation on the Collector/Treasurer FY2023 budget with the following highlights:

- Mission statement
- Metrics/scope of activities
- Budget overview
 - FY21 actuals
 - FY22 on track
 - FY23 proposed
- Challenges facing the department

Chair Coxe asked if the police and fire departments could be consolidated into the general payroll system. Mr. Senteio noted that those departments have outdated time and attendance programs, and the payroll department would be interested in working with them to update that program to the one used by most departments. In this way the time and attendance program would interface more efficiently with payroll module of the Munis financial payroll software.

Accounting Department

Mariya Ruseva, Town Accountant, reviewed the PowerPoint presentation on the Accounting Department FY2023 budget with the following highlights:

- Mission statement
- Accounting division key points
- Additional accomplishments/workload sampling
- Budget overview
 - FY21 actuals
 - FY22 on track
 - FY23 proposed
- Changes in the budget
- Challenges facing the department

Town Clerk Department

Mary Maslowski, Town Clerk, reviewed the PowerPoint presentation on the Town Clerk FY2023 budget with the following highlights:

- Mission statement
- Budget overview
 - FY21 actuals
 - FY22 on track with Free cash for booths and election fund
 - FY23 proposed

Discussion ensued on the number of deaths outweighing the number of births. Ms. Maslowski noted that this was not an unusual number locally or statewide considering the aging demographic of the Town. She stated, however, that the federal census number indicated a growth in general population of the Town from 22K to 25K.

Assessors Department

Andy Michado, Town Assessor, reviewed the PowerPoint presentation on the Town Clerk FY2023 budget with the following highlights:

- Mission statement
- Metrics/scope of activities
- Budget overview
 - FY21 actuals
 - FY22 on track
 - FY23 proposed

Discussion ensued on the topic of regionalization of assessing services. Chair Coxe stated that the time may be appropriate to resume discussions with neighboring towns.

MOTION: To accept the preliminary budgets of the above departments as presented.

Motion by: Nathan Ladley Seconded by: George Perkins

**Roll Call Vote: Stefanie Coxe-Y, George Perkins-Y, Jack Moylan-Y and Nathan Ladley-Y.
4 ayes; 0 nays. The motion passed unanimously.**

4. Old Business

Assistant Town Administrator Scott stated that the Tech School would make its budget presentation on February 9th, the school department on February 16th and the week after that the report will be submitted for review. The draft warrant articles would be presented next week. Chair Coxe asked members who have additional questions on departmental budgets as well as capital to let her know so that those departments may be rescheduled on the agenda to address questions. Once she obtained details on the police shooting trailer, she will forward to members.

5. New Business

Chair Coxe asked for any new business items for discussion. She asked that a mechanism be developed to allow Zoom participants in the chat room to be able to interface with the meeting.

6. Adjournment

MOTION: To adjourn.

Motion by: Nathan Ladley **Seconded by:** George Perkins

Roll Call Vote: Stefanie Coxe-Y, George Perkins-Y and Nathan Ladley-Y.

4 ayes; 0 nays. The motion passed unanimously.

Meeting adjourned at 8:05PM.

Respectfully Submitted,

Christine Martin Barraford

Attachments:

Finance Department Preliminary Budgets