

Town of West Boylston
Finance/CIB Committee
Meeting of April 6, 2020

An online meeting of Fincom and CIB was convened at 7 pm using Zoom software, as permitted by the State under the Emergency Waiver of the public meeting rules. A statement regarding the Emergency Waiver and public access to the meeting was read at the opening by Chair Ray Bricault. Attending Fincom and CIB members were Chris Berglund, Ray Bricault, Paul Bohnson, May Foley, and Pete Murphy. Jaime Desanti, Bill Fay, and Jim Marinelli were absent. Select Board member Chris Rucho also participated.

The minutes for the meeting on March 9 and March 23 were approved 4-0, as moved by Chris Berglund and seconded by Paul Bohnson.

The scheduled meeting planned for April 8 will be postponed to Monday, April 13. The town Zoom software can only be used for one online meeting at a time, and the School Board will meet online on April 8.

No decision has been made regarding a postponement of the May Town Meeting.

Pete Murphy reported that an article in the municipal magazine The Beacon on problems with PFAS (Per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances) contamination in municipal water systems, prompted a telephone call to Mike Coveney, the Water Department director. He advised that they have not yet done PFAS testing and have no idea whether it will be a problem at these very low PPT (20 parts per trillion) values. The DEP requires that testing be completed in 2021. Accordingly, the Water Department is planning to test all wells before the end of the year. If the testing shows the PFAS levels above the 20 PPT limit, the DEP could shut the well down and require a treatment system be installed. Alternatively, they could allow the well to be used if the treatment plant installation takes place quickly. The cost of a treatment plant would be in the \$100s of thousands.

The Director was asked to keep the Fincom informed about the PFAS testing and results. He commented that any cost of PFAS removal would have to be put in the water rates and would not affect the town budgets.

After some discussion, Fincom decided to plan a meeting with the Director in the fall before the October town meeting.

Anna Shaw, Library Director, joined the meeting. Three concerns with the level funded library budget were discussed:

- Salaries - An expected retirement will cause an extra payout (up to \$3000) of accrued vacation time, limiting money available for overtime and possibly causing an overrun.
- Services - Expected maintenance may exceed the level budget due to air duct cleaning, extra building sanitizing, and plumbing replacements.

- Supplies - This budget must be maintained at 16% of the total library budget to comply with the state mandate on spending on books and materials. The 16% is the reduced minimum under a waiver from the state that will be renewed.

These potential budget problems will be revisited at the October town meeting to determine if additional funding is required.

The Library capital budget was discussed:

- Rubber Roof Replacement - This project request has been delayed to the fall town meeting due to no personnel available to organize the bidding documents. By the fall, the hope is that a town facilities manager will be available for the project. The roof repairs are currently keeping water out.
- Guardian Green Energy proposal - This HVAC proposal cannot include either boiler or chiller upgrades because these costs exceed the cost limit for these grants and include no payback. The Town Administrator reported that the proposed energy management system may have to be modified based on this other needed work of the system, so proceeding makes no sense at this time. Instead an engineering study of the HVAC system will be investigated. A comprehensive upgrade to all three parts, heating, cooling (chiller), and ventilation, is needed because of obsolescence and performance deterioration.

The Library Director left the meeting.

Dennis Minnich, the Police Chief joined the meeting. The Police Department operating budget has no concerns or issues:

- Salary - Two officer replacements at lower step levels allowed the budget to stay the same.
- Regional Dispatch - The town share of the dispatch budget went down \$30,000 due to grants received by the center. The town of Paxton is expected to join the dispatch, which is expected to further reduce the town share up to \$20,000.
- Cruiser - A new cruiser will be purchased this year because the model year will allow the transfer of most equipment for the retired cruiser, saving \$13,000. This transfer is only possible when the new models have similar features to the retiring model.

The Police Chief left the meeting.

No Fincom meeting with the Schools on budget is scheduled. This is because there is no agreement on the School budget with the Town Administrator. The School request for increased funding exceeded the expected available revenue and the difference is being negotiated.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:20 pm. The next meeting is April 13 with the Fire Department and the DPW.

Pete Murphy
Secretary Fincom and CIB