

**Town of West Boylston
Finance/CIB Committee
Meeting of March 29, 2021**

A Zoom meeting of Fincom and CIB was convened at 6:30 pm online. Chair Ray Bricault read the Emergency Waiver and public access statement. Attending Fincom and CIB members were Chris Berglund, Ray Bricault, Paul Bohnson, Mary Foley, Pete Murphy, and Paul Redmond. Austin Cyganiewicz, Bill Fay, and Jim Marinelli were absent.

The minutes for the meeting on March 17, 2021 were approved 5-0 as moved by Chris Berglund and Mary Foley.

Jonathon Fitch, Manager of the Municipal Light was in attendance and discussed the electrical energy supply to the town. Results for the year were good and the financials are strong. Jon went on to discuss the impact of the new State 2050 Energy Roadmap on the Municipal Light. The 2050 Roadmap will convert home heating and transportation to all electric. This will mean a substantial increase in demand. The existing substation has adequate capacity to meet this demand increase and the six primary electrical distribution circuits should also be adequate with some routine upgrading. The Municipal Light energy supply is 50% green house gas free, a combination of solar, wind, and nuclear.

The 2050 Roadmap will require the conversion of home and commercial heating systems to electric heat pumps. The State is expected to provide financial incentives and support to facilitate these conversions. Implementing legislation is in the process of being structured with incentives beginning later this year. Jonathan Fitch said the Municipal Light Board will consider whether they can also offer financing of the conversions with recovery through the electric rates charged.

The Library capital request of \$98,000 for replacement natural gas boilers was discussed considering the State mandate to convert to all electric heating. Since the boilers are expected to have a service life of 20 years, conversion of the Library to electric will be required before the end of this service life. Jonathan Fitch contacted Rise Engineering and confirmed that conversion to a heat pump system was feasible and could be supported by Rise Engineering. He also said the Municipal Light would consider providing some of the financing. To change the Library to a heat pump would delay the installation for another year in order to write specifications and solicit bids. No one at the meeting knew the condition of these boilers and whether they would be reliable for another year given their age. The Fincom Library team was asked to investigate. The Library boilers are proposed as a project under Green Communities and it is unknown how and when the 2050 Roadmap will impact the Green Communities program. The Town Administrator will be asked to investigate.

The Fincom Public Safety team reported:

- Police - There are no capital near term needs, the building is in good condition. The operating budget will decline slightly since there is no new cruiser this coming fiscal year.
- Fire - There are three capital requests for FY22; a forestry truck, turnout gear, and a generator. These all have been pending.
 - The forestry truck was delayed last year to search for and request grant funding, especially from the DCR. No funding has been found and the DCR denied any support. The Chief believes the truck is essential for the several grass and field fire callouts.
 - Turnout gear is an annual need because of personnel turnover and expiration. Fincom has discussed making this a budget item, but so far that has not happened. The Chief expects that the gear for FY22 will be covered by a grant.
 - The Fire house emergency generator was supposed to be replaced under a grant last year. That grant was not approved. The current generator is judged unreliable and needs to be replaced. Fincom asked the Public Safety team to visually check the generator.
 - The Ladder truck is on the capital schedule for replacement. This 1998 truck is deteriorating and considered unreliable. The Chief said the truck could be rehabbed instead of replaced and he will bring an estimate to the meeting with Fincom.

The DPW team has not yet met with the Director. There are many questions about the \$220,000 request for a large truck.

Meetings are scheduled with the Fire Chief on April 6, with the Library and the Schools on April 8, and the DPW and Police on April 13.

The operating budget review sheet provided by the Town Administrator was reviewed.

- The Audit increase for an OPEB study was questioned.
- The Schools agreed to a 1.99% operating budget increase.
- DPW finally included fertilizer in the budget instead of making it a warrant article.
- The Senior Center advertising line item was questioned.
- The Library salary increases seemed large but are listed as step increases.
- The ESCO energy management system payment shares still seemed to be unresolved.

The next meeting will be the April 6 with the Fire Chief.

The Zoom meeting adjourned at 7:46 pm.

Pete Murphy
Secretary, Fincom and CIB