

**Town of West Boylston
Finance/CIB Committee
Meeting of February 13, 2023**

A meeting of Fincom and CIB was convened at 6:03 pm by Zoom. Chris Berglund read the required State Zoom meeting enabling statement. Attending Fincom and CIB members were Chris Berglund, Ray Bricault, Mary Foley, and Pete Murphy. Paul Bohanson and Bill Fay were absent. Town Administrator Jennifer Warren-Dyment was in attendance.

Mary Foley moved, seconded by Ray Bricault, to approve the minutes of January 23 for Fincom and CIB. All voted in favor in a roll call vote, 4-0 for Fincom and 4-0 for CIB.

The Select Board received a letter from the Worcester County Retirement Board stating they approved a 2% pension COLA increase for town retirees. This pension increase is an additional increase above the 3% COLA already approved for FY23 and was enabled by the action of the State legislature. The 2% will be retroactive to the beginning of FY23 (1 July 2022). This additional pension increase must be approved by 2/3 of the Worcester County communities to become effective. The Select Board has not voted on the approval and has asked for an opinion from Fincom. A decision must be made by June 2023.

The cost impact to the town of the proposed additional pension increase is \$22,900 in the first year FY23, and \$308,838 over 10 years. Fincom discussed the long term financial impact on the town, including possible impact on union and salary negotiations with current town employees. Fincom decided that this topic needs further consideration and participation by all Fincom members. Pete Murphy moved to table this discussion and keep it on the meeting agenda, with a decision before May town meeting. Ray Bricault seconded and the motion was approved 4-0 for Fincom in a roll call vote.

Fincom/CIB reviewed the subcommittee reports on expected capital requests:

- Library - A report on the capital needs discussion with the Library Director was posted to the Google document drive.
 - There has been no change on the HVAC system replacement project. Rise Engineering has requested \$36,000 to complete the AWHP system bid documents. The \$100,000 of State funding for this work is still not available, and the Town Administrator is working to get it released. It is specifically directed to pay for the completion of engineering and bid evaluation. Other State subsidies for this project have not been defined as expected in 2022. Green Communities financing has been suspended for efficiency projects and the program is being redefined, with new information expected in March.
 - The existing HVAC system continues to operate adequately and there is no urgency to replacement. Given this situation and the delays in State funding, the AWHP

project is not expected to move forward for the coming heating season. Boiler replacement is still an option if unexpected problems develop.

- The rubber roof at the Library needs replacement at a cost of \$95,000 in FY25/26. Replacement has been recommended over attempts at repair.
- The hydraulic elevator requires rehab due to oil leakage and obsolete electronics at a cost of \$103,600 in FY25.
- Fully compliant ADA access is not available at the Library. The existing ramp is too steep and there is a snow hazard. The rear door and elevator need up grades to be an alternative. A solution has not been defined.
- VOIP phone system - Phone system upgrades are needed for all town buildings. The Town Administrator is working on this need,.
- Fire - The new Fire Chief is moving ahead with his belief that a new fire station is needed. He would like to contract a feasibility study in FY24 for \$150,000. Moving into a design specification would cost another \$100,000, with the construction estimated at \$16 million. He is looking for grants to offset some of the study cost.
 - 8 sets of turnout gear and 6 fire helmets are needed in FY24 at a cost of \$75,000. Grants are possible for some of the cost.
 - New bottles for the fire air packs are needed in FY24 at a cost of \$97,500, to ensure the bottles are compliant and work correctly.
 - New breathing apparatus is needed in FY28 at a cost of \$320,600. The old apparatus will be at the end of the defined life.
 - Fire regionalization was discussed with the Chief. He said we already have regional dispatch, but it is hard to get past that to get agreement on equipment types and locations.
 - Ambulance billings at the County Jail were being sent to inmates homes and not being paid. The Chief has agreement with the Jail to handle these billings directly, which will mean better payment.
 - Fire has operating budget personnel needs due to fewer call out staff and mandatory EMT overtime. These needs are being defined.
- Schools - The Schools have not submitted a capital plan. The plan will be presented at the March School Board meeting. CIB is invited to attend. The CIB Schools subcommittee will meet to review actions.

- Major Edwards Heating Boilers - These replacement boilers are expected to cost \$300,000 and they are needed for the next heating season. The Schools have submitted grant requests, but none have been received. Green Communities is no longer a potential source of funds.
- DPW - No new report is available.

There are no major operating budget issues at this time, but Fincom did discuss with the Town Administrator increasing costs due to higher salary and union COLA demands, and the increasing problem of finding willing part time employees. These costs are very likely to create some significant operating budget problems.

Next meeting date was set for February 27 at 6:00 p.m on Zoom.

The meeting adjourned at 7:25 pm as moved by Pete Murphy and seconded by Ray Bricault., with a roll call vote.

Pete Murphy
Secretary, Fincom and CIB