

**Town of West Boylston
Finance/CIB Committee
Meeting of March 27, 2023**

A meeting of Fincom and CIB was convened at Town Hall at 6:01 pm . Attending Fincom and CIB members were Chris Berglund, Paul Bohanson, Ray Bricault, Bill Fay, and Pete Murphy. Mary Foley was absent.

Ray Bricault moved, seconded by Bill Fay, to approve the minutes of March 20 for Fincom and CIB. All voted in favor, 5-0 for Fincom and 6-0 for CIB.

Kevin Duffy , DPW Director, attended the meeting to discuss the budgets:

- The DPW operating budget is level funded with the exception of the trash collection contract which increased 7%. There are no new staff positions.
- The DPW and cemetery unions have combined into one.
- A 10 year capital plan was presented. This plan included all current DPW and cemetery equipment, the building, and infrastructure needs for roads and bridges. The Director was commended for the quality and completeness of the plan.
- FY23 approved capital expenditure for a replacement dump truck (M73234), the dump truck is on order but not yet delivered. It is expected in time for the coming winter plowing.
- The FY24 capital request includes:
 - Trackless flail mower attachment for \$36,000. The current attachment is leaking fluid and beyond repair. Use of the front end loader for this mowing, that was a proposed alternative, is no longer being considered because the Light Department has contracted their mowing needs separately. Therefore, the Trackless will be adequate for the DPW mowing needs.
 - Ford F350 dump truck, a 2007 with 133,000 miles, is severely corroded and hard to maintain in a safe condition. Replacement is requested in FY24 for \$110,000, but might be delayed depending on total town capital expenses.
 - Building replacement feasibility study is proposed at \$200,000. This is unlikely to move forward without the a larger review of all town building needs. Any plan for DPW would have to include Fire since they share the property.
 - Cemetery development at Paul Tivnan drive is expected to begin with State funding of \$120,000 for a master plan. This work needs to proceed because existing cemetery space is limited and State law requires towns to provide cemetery services.
 - Road infrastructure needs beyond Chapter 90 funding include:

- Prescott Street bridge in FY25 for \$1,300,000.
- Woodland Street repairs and resurface plans are a study in FY26 for \$180,000 by the town, and resurfacing in FY29 for \$1,150,000 under an anticipated State grant.
- Lee Street resurface in FY25 for \$550,000 after water main replacement.
- Temple Street repair in FY27 for \$1,100,000. This is Rt140 and the State DOT is reviewing this work and possible State funding.
- MVP (vulnerabilities) planning grant is being requested from the State for \$120,000 with \$30,000 coming from town funds.
- The Pride Park renovation options will be presented at a special meeting on April 6. Costs are expected to be significant regardless of the option chosen. The remaining unspent State funding expires in June and some of the funds may be lost without an extension.

The School staff and committee joined the meeting: Jim Pedone, Committee Chair; Rich Meaghers, Superintendent; Jason Ponticelli, Committee Vice Chair; Roger Pontbriand, Financial Director; Christie Morrison, Financial Assistant.

- The Schools FY24 operating budget was presented. The budget has increased 9.22% over FY23.
- The staff have received a 2% COLA. There is one new staff teacher. A curriculum coordinator is needed, but the position has not been filled yet.
- The town portion of the budget is \$14.5 million, the budget total is \$15.9 million, the difference being funded by School Choice and Circuit Breaker funds. There is a deficit of \$300,000 that is being covered by School Choice reserves. This deficit is expected to grow in FY25 and School Choice reserves will be depleted. This is a coming fiscal challenge.
- Enrollment has been level. The number of School Choice students is expected to decline to allow for expected increases in local students.
- Special Education costs were discussed, including cost control difficulties. There are currently 12 “out of district” students at a cost of \$1.4 million. The numbers are down from last year. There are 120 special needs students that are 20% of the budget.
- The immediate School capital need from the town is the boiler replacement at Major Edwards school. This work is estimated at \$255,000 for the equipment plus an unknown cost of installation. This work must be done before the next heating season. Leadtime should not be a problem, assuming approval at Town Meeting.

- The Schools were asked if they will make a presentation to Town Meeting on the coming fiscal challenges. They agreed to participate in a comprehensive presentation of the overall fiscal challenges for the town, both operating and capital. Fincom will plan this presentation.

No assessment of the FY24 capital budget will be made until after the April 6 meeting on the Pride Park renovation.

The Assessors office will not need funding from the Fincom Emergency Fund.

The next meeting of Fincom and CIB is April 3 for review and approval of FY24 capital requests.

Bill Fay moved, Paul Bohnson seconded, to adjourn the meeting. All voted in favor 5-0.

Meeting adjourned at 7:42 pm.

Pete Murphy
Secretary, Fincom and CIB