



Town of West Boylston
140 Worcester Street, West Boylston, Massachusetts 01583

Select Board/Sewer Commission Meeting Minutes

Date / Time / Location of Meeting
March 17, 2021; 6:00 p.m.
Via Zoom

Members Present
John W. Hadley, Chairman
Christopher A. Rucho, Vice Chair
Patrick J. Crowley, Clerk
Barur R. Rajeshkumar, Selectman
Michael J. Kittredge III, Selectman

Members NOT Present

Invited Guests:
Nancy Lucier, Town Administrator
Faye Zukowski, Municipal Assistant
Ana Shaw, Library Director
Lisa Clark Viklund, Snr Center Director

Others Present: (names taken from the Zoom login list): Maryellen Cocks, Kate Halpin, Lauren Espe, Becky, Irene Woods, Janet Bricault, Jenny Ferreira, Katie Denis, Patrick, Patrick Novia, Rachel Brown, Ray Bricault, Sharon Hennessy, Karen Hennessey and Judith iPhone.

Mr. Hadley convened the meeting at 6:26 p.m. roll call taken.

Chairman's statement:

Pursuant to Governor Baker's March 12, 2020 Order Suspending Certain Provisions of the Open Meeting Law, G.L. c. 31A, §20, and the Governor's March 15, 2020 Order imposing strict limitations on the number of people that may gather in one place, this meeting of the Town of West Boylston Select Board is being conducted via remote participation. No in person attendance of members of the public will be permitted, but every effort will be made to ensure that the public can adequately access the proceedings as provided for in the Order. A reminder that persons who would like to view this meeting while in progress may do so by:

- Join Zoom Meeting

If despite our best efforts, we are not able to provide for real-time access, and we will post a record of this meeting on the town's website as soon as we are able.

Mr. Crowley advised that due to Zoom license the Board was not able hold open session, leave zoom and then return to open session without interruption. He stated they held executive session prior but will open and close the executive session in open meeting to comply with open meeting laws.

EXECUTIVE SESSION: Consider entering into executive session under the provisions of Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 30a, Section 21(A), Part 3 to discuss strategy with respect to contract negotiations with union personnel and the Chair declares that an open meeting discussion may have a detrimental effect on the bargaining position of the public body.

***Motion:** Mr. Crowley moved to enter into executive session under the provisions of Massachusetts General Laws, Chapter 30a, Section 21(A), Part 3 to discuss contract negotiations with Police Union and the Chair declares that an open meeting discussion may have a detrimental effect on the bargaining position of the public body at 6:04 p.m. and will come back to open session following; Mr. Rucho second.*

Roll call vote:

Mr. Kittredge, yes

Mr. Rajeshkumar, yes

Mr. Hadley, yes

Mr. Rucho, yes

Mr. Crowley, yes

All in favor

***Motion** Mr. Crowley moved to exit executive session and return to open session at 6:24 p.m., Mr. Kittredge second.*

Roll Call Vote

Mr. Kittredge, yes

Mr. Rajeshkumar, yes

Mr. Hadley, yes

Mr. Rucho, yes

Mr. Crowley, yes

All in favor.

PUBLIC COMMENT (Immediately after executive session concludes): This fifteen-minute period is an opportunity for the public to address their concerns and questions regarding town operations and programs to the Board. Except in urgent circumstances, any matter presented for consideration by the Board shall not be discussed in detail nor acted upon by the Board at this meeting. A scheduled time on a future agenda may be set at the Board's discretion. Complaints or criticism directed at staff, volunteers, or other town officials shall not be permitted. If we do not have Open Session items to discuss, other agenda items may be brought forward earlier.

- Katie Denis of 104 Goodale Street works as an Accessibility Consultant and has concerns with the Pride Park plans and has been in communication with town officials. She stated the plans are not compliant and do not meet the law ADA standards or CMR 521 as planned with 25% ground level components 50% of elevated play components will be accessible. She asked to attend the next meeting and offered her assistance and requested it be held with Zoom so she may attend.
- Rachel Brown stated Pride Park is very important to her and her family and has been trying to work with the town, she has been in contact with her attorney and states this is a classic case of discrimination of people with disabilities. She stated the lack of the town to work with them and pushing them between committees. She stated efforts made for disabled people are non-negotiable. She is disappointed that this was not an agenda item tonight and stated she has been working on this for 16 months and was told at the last meeting that they may not have enough time to get this ready for town meeting. She stated she has been attending many meetings providing a fully inclusive revised plan with line-item budget and

feels that they are getting run around, she stated she does not have confidence that the town is taking this seriously.

Mr. Rucho requested the meetings be held in Zoom.

APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES:

- **March 3, 2021 Regular Session:** passed over
- **March 3, 2021 Executive Session:** passed over

REVIEW AND VOTE TO APPROVE WARRANTS FOR THE PERIOD COVERING MARCH 4, 2021 to MARCH 17, 2021 : Town Payable Warrants FY2021-38; Town Payroll Warrant FY2021-18; Sewer FY2021-SE20; and School S16.

Motion Mr. Crowley moved to approve; Mr. Rucho second.

Roll Call Vote:

Mr. Crowley, yes
Mr. Rajeshkumar, yes
Mr. Hadley, yes
Mr. Rucho, yes
Mr. Kittredge, yes

TRUSTEES OF THE BEAMAN MEMORIAL PUBLIC LIBRARY

- **Update on Reopening Plan:**

Kate Halpin, Trustee, she recognized other Trustees on the meeting Maryellen Cocks, Janet Bricault, Karen Hennessey, Sharon Hennessey and Patrick Novia. She announced on behalf of the Trustees they have been able to accelerate the plan to restore in person Library services; on March 9th they opened for appointments for browsing in select areas and computer and copying in the meeting room including walk ins. She stated this week they plan to open in more person browsing in select areas and computer and copying with no appointment. She explained on April 1st they plan to open in person browsing with expanded areas including the children's room along with computer and copying use in meeting room. She explained they will review and revise plan as they see fit and expand services as possible using best practices, State and Board of Health recommendations. She thanked the Library Director Ana Shaw and staff for their work on making the opening plan work, also the Board of Health for their recommendations.

Mr. Rucho thanked them for the update and requested the hours. Ana Shaw responded printing copying and computer use is available 10:30-5 on Tuesdays and Thursdays, 10:30-7 on Wednesdays, 10:30-4 on Friday and 10:30-4 on Saturdays. She stated browsing will be available 10-4:30 Tuesday and Thursdays, 10-5:30 on Wednesdays, 2-4:30 Fridays, and 10-4:30 Saturdays. She explained at this time they are closing for lunch to allow for safe socially distancing for staff. She stated and all information can be found on website, Library board and they will also take phone calls.

Mr. Crowley stated he is happy to hear that they were able to develop a plan so residents are able to use this resource again. Mr. Hadley thanked them on behalf of the Board for attending the meetings and providing updates.

LISA CLARK VIKLUND, SENIOR CENTER DIRECTOR

- **Update on Reopening Plan:**

Lisa Clark Viklund stated they are working on their second resumption of programs and activities. She explained the last two months they focused on assisting seniors with COVID Vaccine appointments and have secured 300 plus appointments. She stated they met with the Board of Health last week and they endorsed their safety protocols and registration procedures. She provided an overview of their plan for activities; the library is cleaned out and organized thanks to volunteers and is not open for browsing, the pool lounge will open next week and she requests people call ahead to be sure someone is there to let them in as she does not have her volunteer staff back. She explained on April 1st the front desk staff will return and hopes to be fully covered by April 20th. She announced there will be five weekly classes to begin on April 20th and five more May 3rd. She stated they will all follow the safety and protocols established last summer, all information has been included in the monthly newsletter. She explained they have continued to offer the tax aid, podiatry clinics, wellness clinics, and legal aid. She stated they resumed last month the drive through events and the next one will be on March 25th and plan to have one in April and May, she explained they service 150 people with these events.

Mr. Rucho asked what the hours are; Ms. Clark Viklund responded 8:30-3 Monday to Friday with the exception of the days she is out of the office. Mr. Crowley asked if she is out of the office and no one is at the front desk people cannot get in the building, Ms. Clark Viklund correct but once her staffing returns this will not be an issue. Mr. Rucho asked if she plans to hold breakfast event again, Ms. Clark Viklund stated no large groups yet and has not planned for this. Mr. Rajeshkumar asked how many hours the front desk person works, Ms. Clark Viklund stated the Administrative Assistant is there Tuesdays and Thursdays 8:30-3 and the volunteers hours vary. Mr. Crowley appreciates them moving forward and opening the center up. Mr. Crowley clarified that is the public shows up without calling ahead they may not get access to the building if a staff member is not there to let them in.

NEW BUSINESS:

- **Request from Big T's Jerky House BBQ for a Common Victualler & Transient Vendor License at 26 West Boylston Street:**

John Hadley recused himself.

Ms. Lucier stated they are in compliance and all the departments have been contacted with no issues and the property owner has given written permission.

***Motion** Mr. Crowley moved to approve; Mr. Rajeshkumar second.*

Mr. Rajeshkumar stated the parking lot seems smaller than other truck locations; Mr. Rucho stated the truck will be located on the grass area. Mr. Crowley stated the requested hours are Monday through Sunday 11-7p.m.

Roll Call Vote:

Mr. Crowley, yes
Mr. Rajeshkumar, yes
Mr. Rucho, yes
Mr. Kittredge, yes

- **Concurrence on 3-Year renewal of contract with Mass Coalition of Police AFL-CIO, Local NO.172: Passed over**

- **Discuss and possible vote on official posting site for Town Meetings:**

- **Currently Town Clerk's bulletin board with back up at Fire Station, Town Clerk Binder and Website**

Mr. Rucho stated he believes only one location is the official location for posting and that is the town clerk's bulletin board, Ms. Lucier stated that is correct with the other location as a backup. He would like official posting location the town website or a 3rd party program. He stated the town hall is closed and not always available. Mr. Hadley thinks this is a good idea so that it would be available at all times 24/7. Mr. Crowley asked if an electronic posting can be the legal posting location, Mr. Rucho stated he has looking into this and many towns do and he has spoken to the AG's office. Mr. Crowley concur that the posting should be electronic. Mr. Rucho stated the Administrative Assistant had used a 3rd party program in her past community and maybe they can look into that. He stated the program connects from the towns website and has all agendas and minutes organized. Mr. Rajeshkumar asked what happens if the town website is down, Mr. Rucho stated it would be the same issue of the building being closed. Mr. Rajeshkumar would like all of these locations covered. Mr. Rucho stated only one location can be the official posting location and agrees there should be backups. Mr. Hadley would like to

***Motion** Mr. Crowley moved to look into making what needs to be done to make official town meeting postings electronic*

Mr. Crowley asked if they want to make a motion to look into this or make it electronic and leave up to the Town Clerk to make determination which way is best.

***Motion** Mr. Crowley moved to direct the Town Administrator with team of Municipal Assistant and Town Clerk to make the official posting location electronic for town meetings and to advise of plan at next meeting; Mr. Rucho second.*

Roll Call Vote:

Mr. Crowley, yes
Mr. Rajeshkumar, yes
Mr. Hadley, yes
Mr. Rucho, yes
Mr. Kittredge, yes

- **General Update on Town Hall Water Damage Project:**

Ms. Lucier stated the building will be treated on Saturday, she met with RebuildX and they will be giving the first-floor priority and they anticipate the construction to be completed in 10 weeks, they are waiting on the lighting plan for the electrician to begin and hopes to be ahead of schedule. Mr. Hadley explained they requested from all the offices where they wanted plug and lights located. Mr. Rucho asked if the construction on the second floor will begin after the 10 weeks for the first floor, Ms. Lucier stated she is not sure but is hopeful when one job is completed down stairs that they move upstairs and will save time.

- **Consider voting to sign letter of support for an expedited release of capital funds authorized in the 2018 Environmental Bond Bill authorized in line item 2840-7024 which states "provided further, than not less than \$1,000,000 shall be expended for the purpose of making improvements to Goodale Park in the Town of West Boylston":**

Mr. Crowley stated he reached out to the Chair of the Parks Facilities to ask them to schedule a meeting and with the feedback from the Representatives the more specifics on the use of the funds the better. He is in support of this but is not sure if they have the verbiage ready as of yet. Mr. Rucho asked if they will just send a letter in support and then everyone else can send a more specific letter. Mr. Crowley stated he just wanted everyone to know this is in the works. Mr. Rucho stated he thinks they need to start at square one since the amount has changed and will affect the plan. Mr. Crowley stated one thing he would like to see is to maybe update the park to be ADA compliant.

***Motion** Mr. Rucho moved to send a letter of support to release the \$1 million dollars from the Environmental Bond Bill; Mr. Crowley second.*

Roll Call Vote:

Mr. Crowley, yes
Mr. Rajeshkumar, yes
Mr. Hadley, yes
Mr. Rucho, yes
Mr. Kittredge, yes

• **Update on Reservoir Island Project (JH):**

Mr. Hadley stated he along with Nancy Lucier, Gary Kellaher, and Chris Rucho visited the site and reviewed and discussed the plan to remove some curbing and placement of material where the trucks will be parking. Mr. Hadley stated the Municipal Light Department will be placing a pole so that the trucks will have power. He stated they may go out to bid to chose vendors to park there. Mr. Rucho stated Gary will be providing a better drawing and would like Nancy to reach out to Town Counsel to find out about putting out to bid. Mr. Crowley asked if they have a projected start date, Mr. Hadley responded they were hoping to be running by May 1st. Ms. Lucier stated she spoke with John Fitch and May 1st will be close but with the assistance of the DPW it may be able to happen.

TOWN ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT

Preliminary FY22 Budget Presentation:

FY22 Operational Expenditure Budget – Overview

The Town's operational expenditures are divided into functional categories that become the legal budget appropriated at Town Meeting. These functional categories include General Government, Public Safety, Education, Public Works, Human Service, Culture and Recreation, Debt Service, Intergovernmental, Employee Benefits, and General Insurance. . The final budgeting category, though not part of the actual budget vote, is the remaining Town Meeting Warrant articles that have a financial impact.

Below, I shall detail the proposed expenditures for all line items for the Town budget.

Analysis of General Government

Moderator: I am proposing level funding this line item and covers the expenses to attend the annual Massachusetts Moderator Association training conference and meeting and covers his elected salary of \$1. **0% increase**

Board of Selectmen: I propose reducing this line item from \$6,055 to \$5,885. This line item will cover the elected salary for the Selectmen at \$1, legal postings and mailings throughout the

year, as well as the membership fee for MMA. It also covers the registration cost of Selectmen attending the MMA conference in January. It reduces the public info expense line, which covers the cost of town meeting mailers. Because we include updates on the Regional Recycling Center, whether it be their hours or a pamphlet on the Center, we are able to charge off a portion of that mailer to our DEP Grant. **3.30% decrease**

Town Administrator: I propose increasing funding for this line item from \$179,800 to \$193,300. It includes a cola and step for the Municipal Assistant and the contractual increase for the Town Administrator. It also includes additional funds for the new Town Administrator and vacation buy back. **7.51% increase**

Reserve fund: This fund is necessary to cover any unforeseen expenses incurred by the Town and the Finance Committee must approve any expense paid through this fund. I am proposing to level fund this line item at \$32,000. At town meeting we always include a budget fix article on the warrant, which has reduced the number of Reserve Fund requests. **0% increase**

Town Accountant: I am proposing to increase this line item from \$158,979 to \$166,352. This includes a contractual increase for the Town Accountant, cola and step increase for the Administrative Assistant to the Town Accountant, and vacation buyback. It also includes additional funds to pay for benefits administration fees provided by NFP which allows us to have on site services each Friday of Sarah Gruhin. **4.64% increase**

Town Audit: I am proposing increasing this line item from \$27,900 to \$44,900. This covers our auditing services for next year. The reason for such a large increase is due to the fact that this is the 2nd year of the OPEB Actuarial Study that must be performed in FY22. At this point we do not know if our current vendor Dan Sherman will continue to perform these services. **60.93% increase**

Assessors Department: I am decreasing this line item from \$101,150 to \$91,598. This budget reflects the reduction in hours for the office assistant and the Assessors salaries have been eliminated. It includes our new service contract with our Principal Assessor which includes the cost of periodic inspections. **9.44% decrease**

Treasurer/Tax Collector: I am proposing increasing this line item from \$210,696 to \$213,969. This maintains the current level of services for the Treasurer/Tax Collector department. **1.55% increase**

Town Counsel: I am proposing level funding this line item at \$85,000. We continue to be conservative with the Town Counsel budget. I will continue to work with all departments and the Board of Selectmen on keeping within this budget, if possible. **0% increase**

Computer Services: I am proposing decreasing this line item from \$122,280 to \$108,915. This year the Capital line item has decreased because we are only replacing 8 laptops/desk tops per our Computer Replacement Schedule.

10.93% decrease

Town Clerk: I am proposing to increase this line item from \$83,992 to \$91,768. This budget maintains the services provided in the Town Clerk's office for the Town Clerk and the Assistant Town Clerk and includes a step increases, colas, and funds for cross training of new Town Clerk. **9.26% increase**

Elections: I am proposing decreasing this line item from \$26,810 to \$18,160. **32.26% decrease**

Conservation Commission: I am proposing level funding this budget at \$1,800. **0% increase**

Planning Board: I am proposing level funding this budget at \$4,080 – **0 % increase**

Zoning Board of Appeals: I am proposing level funding this budget at \$3,000. **0% increase**

Public Safety Building: I am proposing increasing this line item from \$44,720 to \$47,620. . It does set aside once again \$9900 for Municipal Building Maintenance improvements for the building. **6.48% increase**

Town Hall: I am proposing a slight decrease from \$73,275 to \$73,566. It covers the operational costs of our Town Hall and we also appropriate \$9,900 for building maintenance, similar to other municipal buildings. **.40% increase**

Town Report: I am proposing to level fund this line item. **0% increase**

WBPA-TV: This budget is level funded and funded by Charter fees. **0% increase**

Facilities Management: This budget will be level funded. **0% increase**

Total General Government expenditures: I am proposing funding this section of government at \$1,270,284, an **increase of 1.63%**.

Analysis of Public Safety

Police Department: I am proposing decreasing this line item from \$1,708,813 to \$1,643,117. It also includes the new contract for the officers. There is no cruiser being purchased this year. **3.84% decrease**

Fire Department: I am proposing increasing this line item from \$941,431 to \$968,269. We are currently in contract negotiations and this budget may need to be amended. All other items have been level funded. **2.85% increase**

Public Safety Communications: I am proposing increasing this line item from \$150,953 to \$160,254. There are other expenses that are included in this budget in addition to our membership fee for the Regional Communications Center. However, that fee alone increased by \$11,286. I would like to thank the Holden Town Manager for reviewing the number initially put forth, which was an increase of \$36,000. **6.16% increase.**

Building Department: I am proposing increasing this line item from \$93,344 to \$96,440. This budget funds the building commissioner at 19.5 hours a week and a part-time secretary as well as all the inspectors. **3.32 % increase**

Sealer of Weights: I am proposing level funding this line item at \$1,775 to maintain the current contract with the Commonwealth to do the measure tests. The Town does recoup inspection fees for these tests that pay for the contract. **0% increase**

Emergency Management: I am proposing level funding this budget at \$8,000. **0% increase**

Animal Control: I am proposing level funding this budget at \$14,500. **0% increase**

Total Public Safety expenditures: I am proposing funding this section of government at \$2,892,330; a **decrease of .91%**.

Analysis of Education

Education: The School Department budget covers the expenses relating to the educational needs of the community. Using the funding formula agreed to almost 15 years ago by the Board of Selectmen and the School Committee, I am proposing increasing funds to the School Department from \$12,645,537, to \$12,897,774. This is an increase of 1.99%. I would like to thank Superintendent Meagher for working with me on this. His original request was an **increase of 2.99%**.

Analysis of Public Works

Public Works: I am proposing to increase this line item from \$797,081 to \$830,538. It includes the Parks Fertilizer line \$14,600 and \$2,000 for Pride Park. I am seeking a small increase in highway supplies. Due to the prices at the gas pumps, we will return this line item back to \$100,000 from \$75,000. It also sets aside \$9900 for Municipal Building Fund for building repairs. The tree warden request was reduced by \$25,000. I plan to include an article on the warrant in the amount of \$25,000, which can be used when we have a year such as this with high winds and a large number of trees we need to remove. **4.20% increase**

Snow and Ice Removal: I am proposing level funding this line item at \$166,000. This budget cannot be reduced from level funding in order to allow for overspending in the event of drastic emergency situations. **0% increase**

Street Lighting: I am proposing reducing this line item from \$34,820 to \$32,151. This savings reflects the savings from the MLP conversion to new LED fixtures. **7.67% decrease**

Mr. Rucho commented that many years ago the electricity was up over \$100,000 and because of the great work by the MLP and the Director with the LED installation it is now much lower.

Trash Removal & Disposal: I am proposing increasing this line item from \$503,700 to \$523,848. We continue to work with SWAT to increase our recycling rates and this increase reflects the increase in the rate which we negotiated last year for our curbside collection contract. **4.00% increase**

Cemeteries: I am proposing decreasing this line item from \$111,247 to \$108,855. We are also in contract negotiations and this draft number may change. **2.15% decrease**

Total Public Works expenditures: I am proposing funding this section of government at \$1,661,392 an increase of **3.01%**.

Analysis of Human Services

Board of Health: I am proposing to level fund this line item at \$9,000. **0% increase**

Council on Aging: I am proposing increasing this line item from \$126,572 to \$133,219. This proposal provides for current staffing levels, with step increases for staff. It also includes a small increase in the purchased services line item for advertising expenses, and a full year of funding under the Municipal Building Maintenance for building repairs. **5.25% increase**

Veterans Services: I am proposing decreasing this line item from \$126,350 to \$126,300. This line item provides for benefits for Town veterans. The Town will receive 75% reimbursements on expended benefits. The decrease was in the travel item. **.04% decrease**

Total Human Service expenditures: I am proposing funding this section of government at \$268,519, an **increase of 2.52%**.

Analysis of Culture & Recreation

Library: I am proposing increasing this line item from \$485,087 to \$496,973. This proposed budget will satisfy the funding requirements for accreditation by the Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners. The increase in the salary line is due to adjustments for step increases. It does set aside \$9900 for Municipal Building Maintenance. **2.45% increase**

Mr. Crowley asked if this budget will require any waivers, Ms. Lucier stated it will not.

Celebrations: I am proposing to level fund this line item at \$1,700. **0% increase.**

Total Culture & Recreation expenditures: I am proposing funding this section of government at \$498,673, an **increase of 2.44%.**

Analysis of Debt Service

Debt – Principal: I am funding this line item at \$630,301. This line item is a fixed cost to the Town and represents the amount of money the Town is required to pay for the principal on its debt. **1.56% decrease**

Debt – Interest: I am proposing to fund this line at \$340,069. This line item is a fixed cost to the Town and represents the amount of money the Town is required to pay for the interest on its debt. **6.45% decrease.**

Interest on Temporary Loans: I am proposing to level this line item from at \$1,000. **0% increase**

Total Debt Service expenditures: \$971,370 – a **decrease of 3.33%.** These are fixed costs to the Town per the debt service schedule.

Analysis of Intergovernmental

Regional Planning Assessment: This line item includes the Town's participation in the Central Massachusetts Regional Planning Commission. This assessment rate requested of the Town comes to \$1,965 and is based on the Town's population. **2.45% increase**

Wachusett Earthday: This covers the town's participation in the Regional Recycling Center. Similar to the Regional Planning Assessment, our costs are based on population and our assessment comes to \$4,739.15, however due to the fact that a portion of our membership fee can be charged off to our DEP grant line, we are able to reduce that line item. **51.47% decrease**

Wachusett Greenways: This is level funded at \$1,050 and goes towards maintenance of the rail trail. **0% increase**

Total Intergovernmental expenditures: \$5,015 – a **decrease of 29.26%.**

Analysis of Employee Benefits

Retirement and Pensions: This is a fixed cost of the Town and cannot be lowered in accordance with Chapter 32, Section 22 (7)(c)(ii). Worcester County Retirement Board requests the figure. The number includes the Municipal Light Plant and that is returned to us in full as a local receipt. Town budgets \$1,500,602 to meet this obligation. You may recall last year our assessment came in at a 9.69% increase. **6.51% increase**

Workers Compensation: This is a fixed cost to the Town and is based, in part, by our workers' compensation claim experience. Due to our recent claim history, which included payouts of

over \$110,000 in one department alone, this line needs to be increased. I am recommending that we increase funding to this line item from \$82,000 to \$90,000. **9.76% increase**

Unemployment Insurance: This is a fixed cost to the Town and is based upon historical data and will be level funded at \$35,000 for next year. This line has the trust to fall back on and we would need to replenish that at town meeting. **0% increase**

Unemployment purchased services: This is a fixed cost to the Town and is used to pay the costs of the Unemployment Consultant for the Town. It is an assessment of \$2,800. **Level funded**

Group Health Insurance: This is a fixed cost to the Town and is the Health Insurance line item for the active and retired Town and School employees. This year we put out an RFP for our health insurance coverage and received a proposal from MIIA who has the Blue Cross/Blue Shield product which we are working with the IAC on. This proposal would require a much more modest increase to this line item as opposed to the 8.5% increase proposed by Fallon. The increases to the retiree's premiums are not determined until October or November. We have a modest cushion to allow a potential of 11 additional bodies coming in on the town's health insurance plan. This line will increase from \$3,950,071 to \$4,037,590 an **increase of 2.22%**

Ms. Lucier stated the town will have to enter into a two-year agreement and the second-year price is not guaranteed. She thanked the IAC for their work. Mr. Crowley stated we are locked in for two years and the town has no control on the increase, Ms. Lucier stated correct but increases in claims are shared among all the participants with MIIA.

Group Life Insurance: This is a fixed cost to the Town and should not be lowered. Based on stable premium costs, the Town Accountant has recommended that this line item be maintained at \$13,000. **Level funded**

Medicare: This is a fixed cost to the Town and is based upon a percentage of the Town's payroll. It is requested that this line item be raised to \$218,004. **4.39% increase.**

Analysis of General Insurance

General Insurance: I am increasing this line item from \$196,228 to \$200,000. This covers all our buildings and contents, vehicles, equipment, bonds for six positions, life insurance policies for our police and fire chiefs (per employment contracts), and our police and fire injured on duty coverage. **1.92% increase.**

Self-Insurance Deductible Expense

This line item will be funded at \$30,000. This line was previously funded at a much lower level, \$3,000, however due to the loss at town hall I need to be prepared for a gap which the town will be responsible for. At this time this draft may be adjusted as we move forward.

Total Employee Benefits/Risk Management: \$6,126,996– **an increase of 3.85%.**

Analysis of ESCO

The ESCO - Principal and interest are provided for in accordance with the 15-year lease amortization schedule. I am proposing this line item be funded at \$246,198 a **\$3.19% increase**

This preliminary budget, as presented, is balanced. This budget uses \$26,838,551 in revenues, \$267,670 in free cash, \$300,000 from Ambulance Receipts Reserved for Appropriation, \$55,550 from WBPA Receipts Reserved and \$18,000 from the Wachusett Trust Fund in order to balance

the budget. I would like to thank all the department heads for their cooperation during this challenging year. I am continually grateful that I get to work with these individuals on a daily basis. I would also like to acknowledge Leslie Guertin, our Town Accountant. She has always played a key role in the development of the budget. Her feedback and guidance is exemplary. The total budget is projected to be \$26,838,551; an **increase of 1.95%**.

A 2% COLA for non-union employees has been factored in.

Ms. Lucier stated the stabilization is at \$1,414,912 and the requirement per our policy is \$1,341,928 they are 5.27% over the required amount.

Ms. Lucier stated the Unemployment Trust is at \$94,294

Ms. Lucier stated the Capital Investment is at \$496,514

Ms. Lucier stated Certified Free Cash is at \$1,610,304

She stated she met with Finance last night and they will be putting together their schedule and then report back.

Mr. Crowley asked about Free Cash and if there is a plan to use for something like lowering town debt or something, he asked if there has been a recommendation to put it in Stabilization or OPEB. Ms. Lucier stated they are reviewing everything and she has some requests. She stated the DPW Director requested an additional amount for Tree Warden and she requested it go into an article. She plans to present those at a future meeting so they can see what is being asked for and what they can move around. She reminds them the marijuana funds can be used to reduce the taxes in October.

MEETINGS, INVITATIONS & ANNOUNCEMENTS:

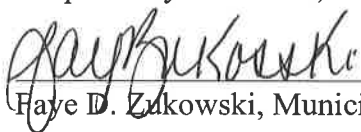
FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS/SELECTMANS REPORTS:

- Mr. Rucho would like to have on a future agenda Regionalization/Shared service for things like the Fire Department, Mr. Crowley stated that was listed on their goals.
- Mr. Rucho would like to have the Building Inspector check out all the businesses on Rt. 12 that may be adding patios and would like business to be cleaned up and be ahead of any projects and asked that we be sure they have approvals.
- Mr. Rucho would like to have meetings on Zoom going forward because people are not ok with in person meetings yet. Mr. Crowley asked if it is possible to have a hybrid meeting, Mr. Rucho responded it may create a technical difficulty but the school location may be able to do this. Mr. Kittredge stated the next meeting will be very important that people can attend. Mr. Crowley requested every agenda should have next meeting listed and a vote can be taken about how the next meeting will be held.

Motion Mr. Rajeshkumar to adjourn at 7:43 p.m. Mr. Crowley, second all in favor.

Respectfully submitted,

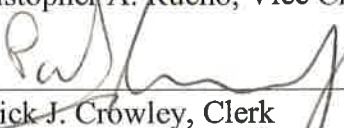
Approved: April 7, 2021




Faye D. Zukowski, Municipal Assistant

John W. Hadley, Chairman



Christopher A. Rucho, Vice Chairman

Patrick J. Crowley, Clerk

Barur R. Rajeshkumar, Selectman

Michael J. Kittredge III, Selectman

