

Board of Selectmen members present: Diana Szynal, Chair, Brian Moriarty and Edmund Jaworski; Finance Committee Sean Barry, Darryl Williams, Diane Brzozowski and Betsy Rider; Jennifer Polverari, Assistant Assessor and Marlene Michonski, Town Administrator; Sharon Strzegowski, Treasurer/Collector; Eliza Langhans, Director, Hatfield Public Library.

The Board met in Executive Session according to MGL. Ch. 30A, 21a., #2 Conduct contract negotiations with non-union personnel.

Open session resumed at 6:25pm

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The Finance Committee approved the Minutes of November 5, 2020 and February 10, 2021.

POSTED BUSINESS

2. FY2022 Department Budget Reviews with Finance Committee: Betsy Rider asked the Town Administrator Marlene Michonski if she is going to be using her new software to keep track of the budgeting as we go. Ms. Michonski replied yes.

Kim Baker thought it would be a good idea to have the financial advisor present at a meeting prior to Town Meeting to give her opinion as to where things stand. Sharon Strzegowski, Treasurer/Collector stated that the financial adviser has never been present for any meeting but that she would ask the financial planner to attend a finance committee meeting. Kim Baker mentioned that it would be good to know where things stand. Darryl Williams stated that he agreed with Kim Baker because it would be beneficial to the finance committee to have the financial adviser there. It's important to have the discussion now because we would like to be able to talk with her not only this year but going forward. Darryl Williams stated that the financial advisor may have some insight on how other towns deal with certain situations. Sharon Strzegowski mentioned that she will ask the financial planner again but it is her understanding that the financial advisor advises Sharon who then advises the Finance Committee.

Brian Moriarty suggested Sharon Strzegowski tell the financial planner that she is being asked to see where the Town stands right now with the possibility of refinancing the debt and what the next steps are. Chair Szynal said that she thought the best way was to be proactive and how to get there as quickly as possible. Sharon Strzegowski told the Board that she has already asked the financial planner that question but will do whatever the Board asks her to do. Sharon Strzegowski also told the Board that she had a conversation with the financial planner asking her specifically if it can be done this year. The financial planner told her no. The financial planner told Sharon Strzegowski that the Town needs to get a good audit and get the steps in place so that this time next year the Town can be going through the process.

Chair Szynal requested to move on to the Hatfield Public Library. Eliza Langhans said this year's budget is the same as last year. There are no significant changes just minor adjustments in terms of meeting State requirements. Darryl Williams asked Eliza Langhans about adjustments to payroll. Eliza Langhans advised him that there was a pay increase during the middle of the year. If she needs to she can supplement her payroll out of State grants she receives. Darryl Williams asked Ms. Langhans if there were capital improvements within her budget, for example windows. She said she put it under capital request plan as she said a lot of her windows do not open and close and she is concerned with circulation and would like to get air flow within the Library. Darryl Williams asked if that was on this year's plan. Chair Szynal stated it was.

Eliza Langhans said the other capital budget is the flooring. She is looking to get new tiles as the existing tiles are pulling up and she is concerned it may become a tripping hazard. Chair Szynal mentioned that is not on the current plan for this year. Chair Szynal said that the figure for the new flooring (\$20,000.00 to \$30,000.00) would have to go on the capital plan.

Darryl Williams asked Eliza Langhans, how COVID affected the Library. Was there more traffic, less traffic, how did it work last year? Eliza Langhans said that they are doing mostly curbside pickup which is available 5 days a week. One day a week they are open to browse in person. They are doing a lot of online things. She also advised the Board and Committee that they are doing less but seems like they are doing way more work! Foot traffic is about 20% down but the amount of work for the staff to get things ready for people involves more work. Chair Szynal asked if town buildings are open now. Chair Szynal also mentioned that a conversation with the COVID coordinator may help in getting the Library open soon.

When asked about the sink, Eliza Langhans mentioned that she was having a hard time trying to find a plumber. She has a couple of quotes and it is her goal in the future to replace the sink. The sink is very small and you have to hold the faucet to run it. The hot water doesn't work. Selectmen Moriarty said that that is a maintenance issue and Phillip Genovese from the DPW should be made away of that situation.

Jennifer Polverari, Assistant Assessor and Stanley Pitchko, Member, stated that the budget for FY2022 is the same except for 2 changes. Ms. Polverari stated that there was a cost increase in the Mass St. Dis which went up to \$3,400.00 and software went down from \$31,000.00 to \$25,500.00 but that changes every year. Darryl Williams asked if there were any growth numbers for 2022. Ms. Polverari stated that she did not expect things to change. Mr. Pitchko stated that they play it somewhat conservative because sometimes if we overestimate and if the budget is based upon that, then someone's going to get a haircut.

The Board of Selectmen and Finance Committee agreed to another meeting on March 1, 2021 at 6:30 p.m. Town Administrator agreed that she would line up other departments to present their budget proposals for FY2022.

Respectfully,

Karen Brodeur
Executive Assistant