

FINANCE COMMITTEE
Minutes
Zoom Number 871 4448 6667

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2022 JUN 21 AM 8:30
MILLBURY, MASS.

Date: April 11, 2022

Time: 6:30 p.m.

Present: Cooper, Kuphal, Pratt, Cooney, Wells

Absent: O'Connell

Meeting called to order at 6:34 p.m.

Motioned by Cooney, seconded by Wells to accept the minutes of April 4, 2022 as written.
Cooney, yes; Wells, yes; Pratt, yes; Cooper, yes; Kuphal, yes

Jennifer Barrett, Finance Director, Sean Hendricks, Town Manager and Scott Despres, Board of Selectmen were present at the meeting.

Sean Hendricks: We had a quarterly meeting with the School Department and explained that we would like their percentage decreased. If I were to propose a decrease in this budget, I would be looking at \$160,000. The Health Services were funded by COVID Relief, not the Town in the past 2 years. Now they have it in their budget for the Town to pay for. They seemed to be unaware that we were looking for a reduction. We could cut their budget by \$160,000 or another figure, which would cut positions or we can leave their budget as is and see what happens on Town Meeting floor. We are already using \$500,000 of our Free Cash to keep the tax rate as low as possible. We plan to use \$500,000 next year also.

Russell Wells: There are contractual increases here. How many new positions are in their figure versus contract amounts?

Jennifer Barrett: I don't think they added positions. These are positions that were previously paid for by a grant.

Russell Wells: What is the dollar amount for those COVID Relief positions?

Jennifer Barrett: I would say about a couple of hundred thousand.

Russell Wells: BVT came in last week and explained their entire budget. Why didn't we hear from the School Committee about coming in?

Nicole Cooney: I believe that Jen was waiting to hear back from them. I think she said she tried to set up a meeting with them and there were some conflicts with the dates.

Sean Hendricks: I need to take a more active role in this process.

Russell Wells: When we talked about a new school, they said they would not add staff.

Sean Hendricks: They didn't add any staff. I am asking to add people to the Town side of the budget, which are much needed additions.

William Pratt: I am okay with working with the numbers that we have at this time. There isn't time to go back and forth with them. Next year will be different. We will need to work more with the numbers.

Kevin Kuphal: Next year we should meet with them and we should give them a targeted percentage. I did explain that they should look into some type of fee schedule.

Sean Hendricks: My plan is to be done with the budget much earlier than it has been in the past. All of this should be resolved in the month of March and not rushing in April to get it done.

Charles Cooper: The School Committee has a meeting in a couple of days and one of the items on their agenda is the budget. Could we wait and schedule another meeting to vote on this after they have talked about it at their meeting?

Kevin Kuphal: I was under the impression that we needed to vote on all of this tonight.

Jennifer Barrett: There is also a significant increase of \$223,000 in Technology. This was not in the prior year.

William Pratt: Asking the School Committee to reduce their budget for this amount does not seem like it should pose a problem.

Russell Wells: They knew the grant money was running out. They should have made adjustments.

Nicole Cooney: We just need to remember that we vote a total number on their budget. They decide how to divide it out.

Kevin Kuphal: If we don't make any cuts to their budget, we lose things on the Town side.

Sean Hendricks: They weren't told that they had to sharpen their pencils prior to this point.

Nicole Cooney: I do remember Jen saying that she did reach out to them but they never came up with a date to come in.

William Pratt: We are supposed to work collaboratively. They could have contacted us.

Nicole Cooney: All of our meetings are televised and I am sure that they have been watching us.

Sean Hendricks: I need and want another DPW worker, Police Officer, Dispatcher etc.

William Pratt: I, personally, do not want to take anything away from the Town. I would leave everything as is.

Sean Hendricks: If we leave it, I can cut the cruiser and make some adjustments to the budget.

Chief Lewos is on board with the reduction of cruisers.

Nicole Cooney: If we drop the cruiser and reduce their budget by \$100,000, what would that change the tax rate to?

Jennifer Barrett: It would put the tax rate at \$15.28.

Nicole Cooney: I think we can cut \$120,000.

William Pratt: I think they should be able to get along with that number.

Charles Cooper: I would agree with that.

Jennifer Barrett: The Shaw project will be going on the tax rolls next year. Taking too much of a chunk this year will cause a larger increase next year.

William Pratt: I think we should take the \$160,000.

Sean Hendricks: I can live with you taking \$87,000 from the school. I will decrease the cruisers by one. I can work with those numbers.

Total Public Schools:

Motioned by Kuphal, seconded by Wells to recommend that \$24,164,382 be raised and appropriated for Total Public Schools. Cooney, yes; Wells, yes; Pratt, yes; Cooper, yes; Kuphal, yes.

Motioned by Kuphal, seconded by Cooney to recommend a total of \$25,958,041 for Total Education. Cooney, yes; Wells, yes; Pratt, yes; Cooper, yes; Kuphal, yes

Town Manager:

Motioned by Kuphal, seconded by Wells to recommend a total of \$366,605 be raised and appropriated for the purpose of funding this budget. Cooney, yes; Wells, yes; Pratt, yes; Cooper, yes; Kuphal, yes

Municipal Office Building:

Motioned by Kuphal, seconded by Cooney to recommend a total of \$221,859 be raised and appropriated for the purpose of funding this budget. Cooney, yes; Wells, yes; Pratt, yes; Cooper, yes; Kuphal, yes

Motioned by Kuphal, seconded by Pratt to recommend a total for Town Government of \$2,341,281. Cooney, yes; Wells, yes; Pratt, yes; Cooper, yes; Kuphal, yes

Police Department:

Motioned by Kuphal, seconded by Cooney to recommend a total of \$2,987,671 be raised and appropriated for the purpose of funding this budget. Cooney, yes; Wells, yes; Pratt, yes; Cooper, yes; Kuphal, yes

Tree Warden:

Motioned by Kuphal, seconded by Cooney to recommend a total of \$79,170 be raised and appropriated for the purpose of funding this budget. Cooney, yes; Wells, yes; Pratt, yes; Cooper, yes; Kuphal, yes

Motioned by Kuphal, seconded by Cooney to recommend a total for Protection of \$4,075,901. Cooney, yes; Wells, yes; Pratt, yes; Cooper, yes; Kuphal, yes

Council on Aging:

Motioned by Kuphal, seconded by Cooney to recommend that a total of \$231,200 be raised and appropriated for the purpose of funding this budget. Cooney, yes; Wells, yes; Pratt, yes; Cooper, yes; Kuphal, yes

Motioned by Kuphal, seconded by Cooney to recommend a total for Health Services of \$560,155. Cooney, yes; Wells, yes; Pratt, yes; Cooper, yes; Kuphal, yes

Motioned by Kuphal, seconded by Cooney to recommend a total for Culture and Recreation of \$643,125. Cooney, yes; Wells, yes; Pratt, yes; Cooper, yes; Kuphal, yes

Motioned by Kuphal, seconded by Cooney to recommend a total for Administration of \$12,589,999. Cooney, yes; Wells, yes; Pratt, yes; Cooper, yes; Kuphal, yes

Motioned by Kuphal, seconded by Cooney to recommend a total for the General Fund of \$48,942,802. Cooney, yes; Wells, yes; Pratt, yes; Cooper, yes; Kuphal, yes

Motioned by Kuphal, seconded by Wells to use \$500,000 from the Overlay Surplus to offset the budget. Cooney, yes; Wells, yes; Pratt, yes; Cooper, yes; Kuphal, yes

Motioned by Kuphal, seconded by Pratt recommend a total appropriation for the Sewer Department of \$3,619,083. Cooney, yes; Wells, yes; Pratt, yes; Cooper, yes; Kuphal, yes

Motioned by Cooney, seconded by Pratt to adjourn at 8:22 p.m. Cooney, yes; Wells, yes; Pratt, yes; Cooper, yes; Kuphal, yes

Jeff O'Connell
Pratt
Chad Cez
W. Pratt
Paul Wells
Nicol L. Cooney