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TOWN CLERK

FINANCE COMMITTEE
Minutes
Zoom Meeting 892 7571 1008
2023 JAN 19 PM 2:52
MILFORD, MASS.

Date: December 5, 2022

Time: 6:30 p.m.

Present: Wells, Kuphal, Cooney, O'Connell, Cooper, Pratt

Absent: None

Meeting called to order at 6:33 p.m.

Sean Hendricks, Town Manager and Jennifer Barrett, Finance Director were present at the meeting.

Motioned by Cooney, seconded by Wells to accept the minutes of November 15, 2022 as written. Cooney, yes; Wells, yes; Kuphal, yes; Cooper, yes; O'Connell, yes

Jen O'Connell: We are here to talk about the Budget Timeline for the FY2024 Budget.

Sean Hendricks: Our goal is to have the budget to you before Christmas, so that you will have time to look at it before the Budget Kickoff on January 14, 2023. I have noticed, in my short time here, that you only meet once a week during the budget season. I am proposing that you meet more often. We should be getting the Health Insurance numbers by the middle of January and the rest of the Insurance numbers by the end of January. If you have your Public Hearing on the Budget at the end of January and your Public Hearing on the Warrant in March, it would give you time to vote on the budgets and articles much earlier. This would enable us to wrap everything up and get the information out to the residents, in time for them to look everything over before the Town Meeting. We don't prepare the budget based on what we can raise on the levy. We work on what is needed in each department. Salaries are the only constant that we can anticipate, due to contracts. All of the departments have received their budget packets and meetings have already been scheduled between them and us. They know that we expect the budgets to be returned to us by the end of next week. We can put the department proposals in Sharepoint and give you the link.

Russell Wells: At some point, when the Deputy Town Manager gains experience, would this be included as one of her responsibilities?

Sean Hendricks: No. This is the responsibility of the Town Manager. I am responsible for the budget. I wouldn't just hand it off.

Jen O'Connell: Are there any departments that you foresee having large increases?

Nicole Cooney: DPW?

Sean Hendricks: There are no new personnel positions. The Police Department is adding three this year, so they should be all set. At this point, I think we are all set with personnel.

Russell Wells: How about new equipment?

Jennifer Barrett: Not that I know of. I know that they are having difficulty getting the vehicles that have already been approved.

Jen O'Connell: How is the Fire Station going?

Sean Hendricks: The blasting is all done. The rebar has been installed. I am not sure if they have poured any concrete.

Jen O'Connell: When do you anticipate the project being complete?

Sean Hendricks: January of 2024.

Charles Cooper: I know that it was voted down for the increased hours at the Mansion. Do you plan to hire next year to take care of this problem?

Sean Hendricks: All of the custodians are grouped into the Town Hall. We will be more prepared with the information that you requested.

Jen O'Connell: Is there any way to see where the ARPA funds are being distributed?

Sean Hendricks: That is what we will be discussing tonight. I also want to let you know that Town emails for your Committee have been established. Jennifer will give them to you. You will need to go in to change the passwords.

Jen O'Connell: We had emails set up before and I know that I couldn't access my email.

Jennifer Barrett: These are very easy to access.

Sean Hendricks: I was able to access Kevin's. I only accessed it to make sure that it worked.

Jen O'Connell: The Moderator called me last week to let me know that Judy O'Connor would be joining the Finance Committee. She will be filling Bert's term. She just needs to be sworn in by the Town Clerk.

Sean Hendricks: We will be setting up her email. Since she is no longer employed by the Town, her previous email was deleted.

Sean Hendricks: We will continue to use Zoom for as long as we are allowed.

Jennifer Barrett and Sean Hendricks went over the ARPA projects

Sean Hendricks: We paid for feasibility studies for several projects. In order to get sewer and water to the property off of Rt 146, near the Sutton line, the cost is between \$14-15 million.

Jen O'Connell: What is the offset on this cost?

Sean Hendricks: I don't know at this time.

Russell Wells: How much acreage is there?

Jen O'Connell: The developer would have to be putting in another Mall, or we would never recoup the cost.

Jennifer Barrett: We are trying to get potential developers to pay for this. We are letting them know, up front, what the cost will be and if they were to agree to pay for it, we would make it worth their while.

Sean Hendricks: This property abuts the Sutton Industrial Park.

Sean Hendricks: We used some of the funds to pay for feasibility studies on the bridges. The Wheelock Ave bridge will definitely be done.

William Pratt joined the meeting

Jen O'Connell: How much over budget was Phase I of the Downtown Project?

Sean Hendricks: I am not sure. I know that Phase II is projected higher because the bids came in higher.

William Pratt: Is there any accountability on these projects?

Sean Hendricks: I am accountable to make sure the project is completed on budget. Two years ago the project was estimated at \$2.3 Million. The bids came in at \$2.7 Million. We had to reduce the project to what money we have.

Jennifer Barrett: Laurie Connors was responsible for these projects. She secured many grants to get this project off the ground.

William Pratt: Is there anything in the contract which holds the contractor responsible for overruns?

Sean Hendricks: They have to have our approval on all changeovers. We did put a little more in the contingency amount for this project. Originally it was at 5% and we bumped it up to 10%.

Jen O'Connell: How much more money are we going to pump into the High School before we are told that we need a new one?

Sean Hendricks: That has not been a part of my conversations with the School. I wouldn't anticipate anything for at least 10 years.

Scott Despres joined our meeting via Zoom.

Sean Hendricks: We are using the Community Development Block Grant for the Pearl Street paving.

COVID Hazard pay for certain Town Employees was discussed

William Pratt: At the Town Meeting the amount of \$100,000 was discussed concerning the Rice Road project. Some people want the \$100,000 to go to Windle Field and others want it to go towards the Rice Road roadway.

Sean Hendricks: I am not sure where we could use the money on Rice Road. This is not Town property. The Townspeople will have a say on how it is spent. The money will go to the General Fund and then turn into Free Cash.

Next meeting is scheduled for Saturday, January 14, 2023 at 8:00 a.m.

Meet with Department Heads on their budget

Motioned by Cooney, seconded by Wells to adjourn at 7:55 p.m. Gooney, yes; Wells, yes; Pratt, yes; Kuphal, yes; Cooper, yes; O'Connell, yes

[Handwritten signatures: William Pratt, Jennifer Barrett, and another signature]

[Handwritten signature: Jen O'Connell]