

Select Board Special Meeting (Draft)
FY22 Budget Forum and Special Joint Select Board Meeting with Finance Committee
Wednesday, March 10, 2021 - 7:00 p.m
Remote

Arrangements for remote participation by Select Board members and members of the public were made in accordance with Governor Baker's Emergency Order Modifying the State's Open Meeting Law. Participation in this meeting was done remotely via Zoom in Webinar format.

Select Board Members Present via Zoom: Chair Thomas Lachiusa, Steven Marantz, Mark Gold, and Richard Foster (Absent: Marc Strange)
Also Present via Zoom: Town Manager Lyn Simmons, CFO Paul Pasterczyk, Andrew Lam, Maury Garrett, William Welch, Armand Way, Donald Griffith, Eileen Morin, Tom Dignazio, Tom Mazza, and Fire Chief John Dearborn.

This meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m. by Chair Lachiusa. Due to COVID-19 concerns, and the Governor's executive order, and changes to Open Meeting Law remote participation, this meeting was held remotely with residents having the option of calling in or sending in their comments. All votes were taken by roll call. LCTV was also utilized to broadcast and record the meeting.

Chair Lachiusa confirmed that all members and persons anticipated on the agenda were present and could hear and be heard throughout the meeting. Richard Foster experienced audio difficulties at the start and could be heard at 7:45 pm. Finance Committee Chair Andrew called the Finance Committee meeting to order at 7:05 pm. Mr. Lam confirmed that all members and persons anticipated on the agenda were present and could hear and be heard throughout the meeting. Ensuring public access does not ensure public participation unless such participation is required by law. This meeting allowed for public comment.

Joint Meeting with Finance Committee and Public Forum on the FY22 Budget

Mr. Andrew Lam opened up the meeting by stating that the Finance Committee was very pleased with the proposed budget. Based on the fiscal projections, this budget is aligned with the finance committee's goals. The goal is to maintain level services. Town Manager Lyn Simmons explained how the position of Assistant Town Manager and Community Development Coordinator would be necessary in leading to success in terms of grant writing. She also discussed how town departments and residents will benefit from this position.

Mr. Andrew Lam asked if the grant money could potentially cover the cost of the employee's salary. The town manager responded by saying most of the grants allow you to submit administrative fees. MVP typically funds somewhere between \$250,000 to \$750,000 for project specific grants. She referenced a planning grant from 2019 and that an action grant was submitted. The expectation for the role would be applying for grants and closing them out frequently. Mr. Armand Wray Stated that he is on board with the addition of the Assistant town manager and community and development planning coordinator to the FY22 budget.

Mr. Marantz and Mr. Lachiusa both reiterated that this new position would be an extremely important asset regarding grant writing specifically, and that they both are in favor of this position.

School Budget

Mr. Maury Garrett asked if the ending budget for the school would be impacted by the COVID-19 relief funds. Mr. Tom Mazza stated that the budget the school committee submitted is based on a pre pandemic approach. There are no additional sections or safety protocols that are currently in place in terms of budgeting. The budget submitted is based on a pre pandemic structure where the schools would rely on federal funds to implement safety measures come the fall. Both in FY22 and beyond the schools will plan on presenting the budget on a pre pandemic standpoint. Mr. Maury Garrett asked if those expenditures are going to be included in the future budgets. Mr. Paul Pasterczyk stated that from the town's perspective this topic will not be in the baseline budget. Covid relief funds are not voted on in town meetings nor would they be built into the base going forward. Mr. Tom Mazza stated that those funds on the school side are imposed as grants, and do not show up in the baseline budget.

Capital Planning Budget

Mr. Tom Dignazio spoke of increasing the capital planning budget. He asked if it is the Select Boards position to use the 25 basis point increase until we reach a level of maintaining infrastructure. Mr. Paul Pasterczyk stated that the policy in place addresses that if affordable, this point increase would be applicable. Mr. William Welch asked about the proposal for the new radio system. Fire Chief John Dearborn was present to answer questions pertaining to the proposal of the radio system. He stated that both the schools and DPW would benefit from this service.

Mr. Don Griffith had questions pertaining to the operational stabilization fund. Mr. Paul Pasterczyk stated that there is a policy in place for budget assumptions. Any projected excess free cash at the end of fiscal year gets transferred over to the operational stabilization fund at the annual town meeting.

Mr. William Welch spoke of what the Finance Committee learned during the midst of the pandemic. For example examining functions, and what we could do differently in the future in terms of setting the budget.

Mr. Marantz stated that he was in favor of increasing the sidewalk budget.

Resident Comments

None

Maury Garrett moved to adjourn the Finance Committee Meeting at 8:10 pm. Armand Wray Seconded the motion.

Roll Call Vote: Maury Garrett- YES, William Welch- YES, Armand Wray- YES, Donald Griffith- YES, Eileen Morin- YES, Tom Dignazio- YES, Andrew Lam- YES.

Mr. Marantz moved to adjourn the meeting at 8:13 pm. Mark Gold seconded the motion.

Roll Call Vote: Tom Lachiusa- YES, Steven Marantz- YES, Richard Foster- YES, Mark Gold- YES.

Documents

3/10/21 Select Board Special Meeting
Approved- Pending

Agenda- https://www.longmeadow.org/AgendaCenter/ViewFile/Agenda/_03102021-3336

Respectfully submitted,
Michael Barbieri