

Town of Longmeadow
Minutes of the Finance Committee
June 18, 2020 - Teleconference

Finance Committee Members present: Maury Garrett Jr.-Chair, Andrew Lam-Vice-Chair, Eileen Morin-Clerk, Donald E. Griffith, William Welch, Chaya Kosofsky and Tom Dignazio

Finance Committee Members absent:

Visitors: Paul Pasterczyk-Finance Director

The meeting was called to order at 7:05 pm.

A motion was made and seconded to accept the minutes of May 28, 2020 as presented (4-0-2 in favor, C. Kosofsky and T. Dignazio abstained)

Discussions:

A number of articles for the June 23, 2020 Annual Town Meeting remained without the stated position of the Finance Committee:

Article #14 - Tax Ceiling Referendum - The Committee agreed that this was a tough decision and discussed the pros and cons of the article. In general, they liked that a cap was in place to deter potential out-of-control spending and force overall frugality in Town spending. Removing the cap could send the wrong message to the voters. However, they felt the cap was a bit outdated and arbitrary, they emphasized that the annual 2.50% growth in the tax levy was still in place and that was very important. The Committee voted (5-1) to recommend the article (E. Morin not in favor).

Article #13 – FY 2021 Operating Budget – The Committee discussed the \$71,899,165 revised operating budget, noting the reductions from the original March, 2020 Select Board budget in revenues / expenses resulting from the economic impact of the Covid 19 pandemic. The Committee voted 6-0 to recommend the article.

Article #16 – Capital Budget – The Committee noted the changes from the original March, 2020 capital budget. The Committee voted to 6-0 to recommend the article.

Article #28 – CPA Russell Field Remediation Phase II – The Committee discussed the overall project and what it actually entailed. Noting that the Community Preservation Committee had completely vetted the project, the Finance Committee voted 5-1 to recommend the article (T. Dignazio not in favor).

Article # 30 – Feasibility Design Study for a Skate Park - The Committee discussed the merits of such a study but felt that this was more of a “want” as opposed to a “need”. They noted that the study would lead to additional costs for the construction of such along with the maintenance thereafter. The Committee voted 6-0 not to recommend.

It was noted that the Town’s real estate valuations were holding steady. It had been feared that the valuations may drop as a result of the pandemic’s impact on the economy thus pushing the Town quicker to the \$25 tax ceiling.

Maury Garrett will write a summary of the Committee’s stances on the articles to be read at the annual town meeting.

The Committee voted 6-0 to allow the Chairman to sign FY 20 Reserve Fund Requests until its next meeting on August 12th

The Committee voted to adjourn at 8:15 pm (6-0 in favor)

Respectfully submitted,

Eileen Morin, Clerk