

**TOWN COUNCIL MINUTES
BUDGET/MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE
May 12, 2021, Monday**

Present: Michael Molisse, Chairman
Jane Hackett, Vice Chairman
Pascale Burga, Councilor
Christopher Heffernan, Councilor
Maureen Kiely, Councilor

Also Present: Ted Langill, Chief of Staff
Joseph Callanan, Town Solicitor
Richard Swanson, Town Auditor
Kenan Connell, DPW Director
David Tower, DPW Business Manager
Dan McCormack, Health Director
Rob MacLean, Library Director
George Pontes, Veterans' Services Director
Steve Reilly, Parks & Recreation Director
Karen Johnston, Elder Services Director
John Mulveyhill, Civil Defense Director
Cathy Collins, Youth & Family Services Director

Recording Secretary: Mary Barker

Chair Molisse called the meeting to order at 6:02 PM. Roll call was taken-all committee members were present.

Review/Discussion of DPW, Snow Removal Measures and Water/Sewer Budgets, Health, Library, Veterans' Services, Parks & Recreation, Elder Services, Civil Defense, Commission on Disabilities, Youth and Family Services

Deliberate the following measures:

21 062 0-Department of Public Works

Kenan Connell, DPW Director, reviewed the Auditor's questions. He provided explanations about any changes in programs, overtime, bids, quotes, and consortium purchasing in accordance with MGL, the restoration of funding, and specific contracts for rubbish and recycling pick up.

Councilor Kiely asked if there are drop-off hours on Saturday? Mr. Tower responded that there is most weekends; there are rare occasions when it is not staffed.

Councilor Burga asked if the prices regarding recycling have increased from last year? Mr. Connell responded that the town used to make money on recycling. It's now a challenge to budget, but he encouraged people to continue to recycle. It's a monopoly business. Councilor Burga asked if there are grants available? Chief of Staff Langill responded that they have used grant money to send out notifications to residents on what can and cannot be recycled. Director Connell reviewed staffing numbers, including part-time seasonal workers. There are some open positions; staffing numbers are flexible because of retirements, but the goal is to keep positions filled. They bring in 3-4 seasonal employees each year.

Vice Chair Hackett thanked Director Connell for work accomplished over the last year. The department has shown creativity in the way it has gotten a lot of things done. Councilor Burga added that the DPW staff has been extremely responsive to the requests in North Weymouth-the turnaround time is phenomenal.

21 073-Free Cash for FY21 Snow Removal Deficit

The current year ends with a \$1.445M deficit in the snow removal line. Under MGL, this is the only budget where the chief officer may make an expenditure in excess of available appropriations. Auditor Swanson asked who would be considered the "chief officer" and Mr. Langill responded that it refers to the Mayor.

21 065-Sewer Enterprise Fund Annual Appropriation

21 066-Sewer Department-Pump Station Improvements-Borrowing Authorization

21 067-Sewer Retained Earnings-Pump Station Improvements

21 068-Sewer Retained Earnings-Capital Equipment

21 069-Water Enterprise Fund Annual Appropriation

David Tower, Business Manager, reviewed the Enterprise funds, both maintaining level service funding with no rate hikes to the residents. There is no change in number of employees. MWRA has held their assessment, and hopefully will do the same for another year. The bonding refers to sewer pump stations. The department used to have a regular program overhauling stations, and this will bring an annual program back into a regular schedule. The overtime budget covers the water treatment plant that must be manned 24/7, and the water main flushing, which is conducted during overnight hours. Many of the repairs are done in-house.

21 070-Water Retained Earnings-Capital Equipment

This is to replace two vehicles; a sampling van and an emergency services van.

21 071-Water Retained Earnings-Water Treatment Plant Upgrades and Improvements

This is to make needed upgrades to the Great Pond Water Treatment Plant (repairs and security upgrades) and Winter Street Well #2.

21 062 P-Health

Dan McCormack, Director of the Health Department, noted the increase to his budget is because they have received less grant funding and lost one grant. A small portion of the increase is for cola and step changes. Councilor Burga recognized the department with this difficult last year, amid staffing issues. Director McCormack reported that one public health nurse retired, the Assistant Director accepted another position, and two new hires were made. They were planning to expand clinics and then learned that they wouldn't get them. Contract tracing was conducted as part of a collaborative state program. Chair Molisse echoed Councilor Burga's comments and acknowledged the lead role of the town in a testing partnership with South Shore Health. It was outstanding work. Mr. McCormack responded that they received a lot of feedback. It was a very effective mechanism. Chief of Staff Langill added that demand for the testing site has waned over the last month and the administration decided May would be the last month that employees have that accessibility. Now, with a lot of people vaccinated, demand is not as

high. They will come to some agreement; if it appears there is still a need for employee testing, they can go to one of the South Shore Health sites. Director McCormack noted he appreciated the words. The amount of work done by employees in the Health Department and the nurses in the School Department are shining examples for the South Shore.

21 062 Q-Library

Director McLean reviewed the budget and the Auditor's questions. He noted the hours of operation in each facility. Fogg has been closed because of COVID restrictions, North and Pratt have not reopened as branches.

There is an increase in salaries and are a result of step and cola adjustments. There were 2 retirements in circulation. There have been staff coverage issues. Utilities- this is a new building that's 50% larger, more efficient and has a greater number of lights. 1-5 months were covered in the project, and rebates were received to break even. They will be taking on a solar array project for FY22- no savings were realized yet and he is unsure when it will be done.

Councilor Burga noted the new library is the total envy of the South Shore. She asked if electric rates have gone up? The director responded that he has seen an increase; the majority because FY21 was impacted by COVID. Councilor Burga asked when the library would be operating at full capacity? Does it depend on the pandemic? Director MacLean responded that they have loosened some restrictions. It will reopen in incremental steps. They are introducing outdoor programming this month. Early fall it will be open for the "new normal."

Councilor Heffernan added this is not the opening anyone envisioned when the project started but they have done a fantastic job redefining. He asked if the town hit the spending target this year as far as OCLN membership? The director responded that the annual assessment is included within the budget request. Spending requirements are short with this budget, but they will work with Friends of the Library to meet the gap and they will submit a waiver for certification. Mr. Langill added he's confident they will hit that mark with federal funds coming in (impact to local services). Councilor Heffernan added that Weymouth probably won't be the only town struggling to meet it.

21 062 R-Veterans' Services

There were no questions.

21 062 S-Parks & Recreation

Director Reilly reviewed the budget. The department has reallocated responsibilities.

There is a new position for recreation coordinator, which is partially funded with a grant.

Summer programs are on while conforming to COVID protocols. It should look close to normal for summer offerings. The Health department has been working with them.

Councilor Burga recognized Director Reilly for flexibility and continuing to offer programming. She asked if ticks have been a major issue, and do they chemically treat any of Esker? Mr. Reilly will research and get back to her. Norfolk County sprays, but he isn't sure if it eradicates ticks along with mosquitos.

Health Director McCormack responded that Norfolk County spraying for mosquitoes is not effective, and frankly, nothing works very well on ticks. He recommended outreach education- wear proper clothing, apply products with DEET, and conduct frequent tick checks.

21 077-Establishment Facilities and Fields Enterprise Fund

21 078-Transfer to Facilities and Fields Enterprise Fund

This has been in discussions for a while. They wanted to get a better sense of revenues and expenses. It's not ideal this year with COVID but they have put together revenue and expense projections. The purpose of setting aside money will be to protect the funds for ongoing and future maintenance of the fields. Weston was included in the original overhaul plan, but it didn't happen along the same schedule, so it got a late start. Revenue was not coming in, but it looks to be more vibrant in the current season. It won't be a huge driver. The main drivers will be Libbey, Legion, Lovell, and the High School fields.

Councilor Kiely noted the offerings are a full complement of services for young citizens.

The chair agreed and noted that Weymouth's recreation program is a poster child.

Vice Chair Hackett added that it is a revenue source earmarked to make sure funds are used for what they are intended. She thanked the department and administration for coordinating it.

21 062 T-Elder Services

Director Johnston reviewed her budget. She currently has 6 full-time and 2 vacant positions. The budget includes cola and step increases. Grant funding was allocated from the state for seniors-\$12 per senior. Once the new census number come out in December, numbers will see an increase that will translate to increased funding.

Councilor Burga acknowledged how much her department did during the pandemic. There was a phenomenal outreach program with drive-throughs. Chief of Staff Langill, Chair Molisse, Directors McCormack and Mulveyhill likewise commended her.

21 062 U-Civil Defense

John Mulveyhill, Civil Defense Director, presented and stated that the Emergency Planning grant will be the same next year, with enhancements due to the Biden administration. He will use it to buy a repeater to enhance communications. The town upgraded the communications infrastructure. Expenditure of grants is with oversight from the Mayor, Asset Management and public safety departments. All grants are reimbursable and require a contract with the state to obligate the funds. They are a subgrantee of federal funding through the state. This was a busy year, with impacts from COVID and the compressor station.

21 062 V-Commission on Disabilities

There were no questions on this budget.

21 062 W-Youth & Family Services

Director Collins reviewed her budget. The programs in the Teen Center were under COVID protocol. They fielded calls from families to help others, and the rotary donated Stop & Shop gift cards. When the Food Pantry closed, the department received calls for emergency food. She stayed in touch with teens and they let her know, they need the center back. They were able to open late summer with restricted numbers and there were daily visitors when they were open. It is a much-needed program. There were a lot of calls for donations, and calls seeking help. She also worked with Housing specialist Jane Kudcey on potential homelessness at the beginning of the pandemic. Her department delivered food with Elder Services, Meals on Wheels, and the Food Pantry. An eagle scout candidate painted murals at the Teen Center. Last year they were able to build a vegetable garden on the side of the building and donated fresh goods to the Food Pantry,

and hope to do the same for seniors this year, through the Mass in Motion grant with the Health Department. She hopes to be back to regular hours in September. They also assisted with the holiday help in October- January and with care packs with Elder Services. She is looking to do a similar program for kids and teens in town. The pool team is back on and one of their kids is one moving up to nationals. Chair Molisse thanked her for the good work. Councilor Burga thanked her for the overview of offerings. She believes they haven't seen the full impact of the pandemic yet and it will be even busier once things are fully open. Director Collins agreed.

ADJOURNMENT

At 7:22 PM, there being no further business, a motion was made by Councilor Kiely to adjourn and was seconded by Councilor Burga. A roll call vote was taken: Councilor Burga-Yes, Councilor Heffernan-Yes, Councilor Kiely-Yes, Vice Chair Hackett-Yes, Chair Molisse-Yes. UNANIMOUSLY VOTED.

Attachment: T. Langill PPP- Response to Auditor Questions on proposed FY22 Budget

Respectfully Submitted by Mary Barker as Recording Secretary

Approved by Michael Molisse as Budget/Management Committee Chairman
Voted unanimously on 30 August 2021