

**TOWN COUNCIL MINUTES
BUDGET/MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE
Town Hall Council Chambers
February 18, Tuesday**

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
Robert Luongo, Director of Planning
James Malary, Chief Financial Officer
Rob McLean, Library Director
Steve Reilly, Parks & Recreation Director
Kenan Connell, DPW Director
Brian Smith, Asst. Supt., WPS
David Tower, Business Mgr., DPW

Recording Secretary: Mary Barker

Chair Molisse called the meeting to order at 6:00 PM. He welcomed Councilor Burga to the committee.

20 002-Reserve Fund Transfer for Copiers

Chief of Staff Langill presented the measure. With the expiration of lease contracts, the town has transitioned to purchasing machines. This \$20K request is for the final two purchased copiers and associated maintenance contract; for the Town Clerk's office and one for DPW. During discussion, Councilor Kiely arrived, at 6:03 PM. Auditor Swanson verified the account balances in MUNIS are as stated.

Vice Chair Hackett asked if Asset Mgmt. equipment line is new with the centralization of departments. Mr. Langill responded that the maintenance line items for many departments have been moved to this line in order to fund the maintenance portion of the purchase. The Vice Chair responded

that this makes sense rather than spreading smaller line items over eight different budgets.

A motion was made by Vice Chair Hackett to forward measure 20 002 to the full Town Council with a recommendation for favorable action and was seconded by Councilor Heffernan. UNANIMOUSLY VOTED.

20 003-Free Cash Transfer to the Stabilization Fund

The Chief of Staff presented the measure that also continues the effort this administration has made to increase this fund. Over the last four years, it has been increased \$5.6 million and it is almost 5% of the 2021 operating budget. The goal is to get to 10-15% of the annual operating budget (combined stabilization and free cash). The outside auditors look at this as a positive measure. Councilor Hackett recommended that the administration provide an overview of the composition of free cash during the public hearing, for the benefit of the public; the breakdown of revenues and expenditures. She asked how much the free cash was in 2019 and the breakdown of revenue vs. expenditures. Mr. Langill responded that he will provide that spreadsheet. Most of the revenue in free cash is a revenues over-budgeting. Councilor Hackett noted that without the restructure of the enabling legislation, this new growth and revenue source would not have existed and the manner in which it has been used has resulted in a fairly strong rating. The short term bond rating is at the lowest possible at approximately 1%. In the last four years, the borrowing, excluding Chapman, were bonded within the levy. There are only two years between now and 2030 that the debt service budget will increase. The next budget will have to address the first one. Fortunately, the Mayor has built in some flexibility with free cash in case of having to fill in a gap during a tough budget season. The goal is to maintain the budget at level service while still meeting the needs.

Auditor Swanson reported that his office tracks free cash and it does agree with the balances in MUNIS and the stabilization fund. Mr. Langill responded that the accounts have gained some interest in the month since these measures were submitted.

A motion was made by Vice Chair Hackett to forward measure 20 003 to the full Town Council with a recommendation for favorable action and was seconded by Councilor Heffernan. UNANIMOUSLY VOTED.

20 004-Free Cash for Field and Park Improvements

Chief of Staff Langill presented the measure with Steve Reilly. This measure seeks to transfer \$375,000 from free cash to provide more upgrades to Libbey Field- namely a field house and batting cage. They had hoped to make it part of the original project. Amount of transfer is \$5,000 below the estimated cost; the numbers still have to be firmed up. If they don't budget it all they may not spend it. He is comfortable it will be sufficient and they just may have to make up a small difference.

Chair Molisse asked when the work will be completed. Mr. Reilly responded that procurement will determine when materials will be ready for construction. Weather permitting, the batting cages will start soon. The contract should be awarded within 60 days for the building.

Auditor Swanson reported that he has asked Mr. Reilly to provide some information in addition to what was included with the measure backup, and he provided satisfactory responses.

Vice Chair Hackett noted that the administration has made a good decision to take care of the maintenance within the budget rather than putting it out to fund raising. She asked they consider continuing the investment as this allowed for Libbey to be completed a year sooner and at a lesser cost.

Mr. Reilly noted this will create many opportunities for hosting games and tournaments. They weren't able to have some type of activities without these amenities. Councilor Kiely commended the administration for the effort and bringing this to fruition. Councilor Burga responded that fields that were once an embarrassment are now a source of pride. Councilor Heffernan noted that the administration promised to make this a priority and have made it work. Weymouth's fields are now the envy of other towns.

A motion was made by Vice Chair Hackett to forward measure 20 004 to the full Town Council with a recommendation for favorable action and was seconded by Councilor Kiely. UNANIMOUSLY VOTED.

20 005-Free Cash for New Tufts Library Collection

Chief of Staff Langill presented the measure with Director McLean. This request is for \$100,000 for new collection materials. Director MacLean reported that the library is still on schedule for June opening, and on budget. It will be bigger and a draw to those who currently may not use the facilities.

This measure will allow them to fill some gaps in the collections due to the increased demand. It will purchase 6,000 volumes for the children, teens and adults. The materials will be processed, etc. so they are shelf ready. This will help with staff getting the move accomplished during opening. It will allow them to add to the collection without drawing down on staff, who will be concentrating on getting the building ready for opening.

Auditor Swanson noted the town has a 3-year contract with MA higher education which was renewed for one year to September 2020.

Councilor Heffernan asked what the spending threshold must be met in order to keep their standing in membership with the Old Colony Library Network. Mr. McLean responded that they must spend 12% of their operating budget in order to receive state aid. They are currently short by \$7,500 and The Friends of Weymouth Libraries will meet that shortfall. If this measure is approved, it will bring them over the 12% tier and they will retain certification. Councilor Heffernan responded that this is a great resource, and he fully supports.

Councilor Kiely noted this project is a joy to watch coming along every day. She will support it. She asked if they are concerned about meeting the 12% threshold in coming years. Mr. Langill responded yes, since it will increase again. They are looking at it already and determining how to meet the needs required to meet the threshold.

A motion was made by Vice Chair Hackett to forward measure 20 005 to the full Town Council with a recommendation for favorable action and was seconded by Councilor Heffernan. UNANIMOUSLY VOTED.

20 006-Free Cash for New Tufts Library Playground

Chief of Staff Langill presented the measure with Director Reilly. This measure totaling \$410,656 is for the purchase and installation of a new accessible play structures at the new library. This is ineligible for reimbursement from the library grant, so they chose to do this outside the budget. It will be much more used than it has in the past and by more than simply library patrons. It will replace structures there before the library demolition was started. Mr. Reilly reviewed the features of the structures; they tried to meet as many requests as they could in designing the features. It has some challenging features and a rubberized surface. Mr. Langill reported

that some of the site work costs are under the library project, such as the grading and drainage issues.

Vice Chair Hackett asked if they will host a summer camp here with the library's June opening? Mr. Reilly responded they are holding off until next year, although the goal is to get this up and running by the library opening.

Councilor Burga asked if company Child Scapes has been used in the past? Mr. Reilly responded that they have at other parks, and they are great to work with. Mr. Reilly will forward the warranty elements Councilor Burga requested.

Councilor Kiely noted that the shade issue was a great inclusion.

Chair Molisse asked if the plantings, walkways and the like are included as part of this. Mr. Langill responded that they are included in the site work contract.

A motion was made by Vice Chair Hackett to forward measure 20 006 to the full Town Council with a recommendation for favorable action and was seconded by Councilor Heffernan. UNANIMOUSLY VOTED.

20 007-Free Cash for Matching Funds for Columbian Square Grant

Chief of Staff Langill presented the measure with Director Luongo. The town received a competitive grant that allows the town to do a preliminary survey for traffic improvements. This measure is the match by the town. Mr. Luongo added that the end product will be a fully signalized square and streetscape. The design accommodated pedestrian traffic and benefited merchants. The cost to full plans is \$400,000. The full cost of build-out is \$4 million. It was supposed to be completed by the developer at Union Point, but the square is getting unbearable and needs to be addressed immediately.

A motion was made by Vice Chair Hackett to forward measure 20 007 to the full Town Council with a recommendation for favorable action and was seconded by Councilor Heffernan. Councilor Hackett thanked the administration. This has been a difficult subject and there is no easy solution. She thanked Mr. Luongo and the Mayor for their perseverance. UNANIMOUSLY VOTED.

20 008-Free Cash Transfer for Electric Vehicles

Chief of Staff Langill presented the measure. This program is for 5 electric vehicles (schools have 2 and town 3) and this is the second round. The prior leases expired. This funding is for 3 of the vehicles- 2019 Chevy Volts. They will use some of the funding to obtain more charging stations (to be located at town hall, Adams, WHS, and part of the Chapman School). They have to make available to all during the lease period; after the lease period they can then make a decision whether to charge.

A motion was made by Vice Chair Hackett to forward measure 20 008 to the full Town Council with a recommendation for favorable action and was seconded by Councilor Heffernan. UNANIMOUSLY VOTED.

20 009-Free Cash for Road and Sidewalk Improvements

Chief of Staff Langill presented the measure with the DPW Director. He combined the explanation of this and the next measure;(one is for free cash and the next for borrowing.) He noted the need for road repairs is well beyond their means but they are making steady progress. The conditions are rated between 40-100. For Weymouth, 420 public road segments have less than a 75 rating and some less than 60. It would cost over \$44 million to fix all of them. It doesn't include 120 segments considered private.

In 2016 Town Council approved \$3 million and then there were 4 years of chapter 90 funding for a total of \$7.5 million spent. This request is \$5 million between borrowing and free cash. They will look to spend \$7.5 million over the next 2 years. There are more sidewalks involved this time around, and the new plan going forward. The factors that determine which are included: rating, public or private or state owned, ongoing state projects for timing and coordination, need for utility work, impact to traffic, or low-rated roads in neighborhood. These are coordination decisions. A lot goes into it including feedback from the public to come up with a list of recommendations. The total cost is higher than the funding, to show flexibility in the process. The list includes the streets rated 75 or lower.

Director Connell noted that it is worth mentioning that administration has been good getting the utilities to fund some of the restorations. They noted the work of Councilors Smart and Mathews in their perseverance with holding the utilities to the fire on road restorations.

Councilor Hackett noted that utilization of free cash for all of these measures does not impact the funding of two school projects (Abigail Adams and transportation). Mr. Langill responded that what remains after all of these measures were passed, will leave about \$2.6 million in free cash available to department capital request, and also has to consider any snow deficit, or OPEB contribution. It's all about prioritizing the needs.

A motion was made by Vice Chair Hackett to forward measure 20 009 to the full Town Council with a recommendation for favorable action and was seconded by Councilor Kiely. UNANIMOUSLY VOTED.

20 010-Borrowing Authorization for Road and Sidewalk Repairs and Reconstruction

Chief of Staff Langill covered this under the review of measure 20 009.

A motion was made by Vice Chair Hackett to forward measure 20 010 to the full Town Council with a recommendation for favorable action and was seconded by Councilor Kiely. UNANIMOUSLY VOTED.

20 011-Borrowing for Cost Associated with Replacing the Ralph Talbot Primary School's Boiler System

Asst. Supt. Smith presented the measure with Chief of Staff Langill. Mr. Langill noted this is the third such project before the Council in recent years (Hamilton and Wessagusset are in the audit stage). This is done with a shared cost with the MSBA accelerated grant program and reimbursement. The timing- if passed, will be done by September 2021. Councilor Heffernan asked what is the lifespan of the new boiler? Mr. Smith responded that the boilers are 25-30 years. Auditor Swanson asked what the other two projects cost? Mr. Smith responded they were about a million dollars.

A motion was made by Vice Chair Hackett to forward measure 20 011 to the full Town Council with a recommendation for favorable action and was seconded by Councilor Kiely. UNANIMOUSLY VOTED.

20 012-Reserve Fund Transfer-Funding Measure 18 126

Chief of Staff Langill presented the measure. This is to fund the cost of the amended annual salaries when measure 18 126 was approved. This is for the remainder of 2020; 2021 will be reflected in the 2021 budget.

Auditor Swanson reported he was asked to verify the numbers and he agrees with those.

A motion was made by Vice Chair Hackett to forward measure 20 012 to the full Town Council with a recommendation for favorable action and was seconded by Councilor Kiely. UNANIMOUSLY VOTED.

20 016-Memorandum of Understanding-Every Student Succeeds Act Transportation Claiming Under Title IV-E of the Social Security Act

Asst. Supt. Smith reported this was referred at the February 18, 2020 Council meeting. This allows the town to collect reimbursement through the ACT. It is up for final vote by School Committee on 2/27. Chair Molisse asked for an explanation of the program. Mr. Smith reported that this is for the schools to apply for reimbursement of transportation costs for students in foster care (DCF). Vice Chair Hackett provided some information. Weymouth is the second town (Rockland is the only other). Chair MolisseA asked how many foster children are in town? Mr. Smith responded he was unsure, but the cost is \$20,000 of eligible funds.

A motion was made by Vice Chair Hackett to forward measure 20 016 to the full Town Council with a recommendation for favorable action and was seconded by Councilor Heffernan. UNANIMOUSLY VOTED.

ADJOURNMENT

At 7:05 PM, there being no further business, a motion was made by Vice Chair Hackett to adjourn and was seconded by Councilor Heffernan. UNANIMOUSLY VOTED.

Respectfully Submitted by Mary Barker as Recording Secretary

Approved by Michael Molisse as Budget/Management Committee Chairman
Voted unanimously on 9 March 2020