TOWN COUNCIL MINUTES BUDGET/MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE May 5, 2020, Tuesday Via Zoom # 815 7071 0542

Present:	Michael Molisse, Chairman Jane Hackett, Vice Chairman Pascale Burga, Councilor Christopher Heffernan, Councilor Maureen Kiely, Councilor
Also Present:	Robert Hedlund, Mayor Ted Langill, Chief of Staff Joseph Callanan, Town Solicitor Richard Swanson, Town Auditor Dr. J. Curtis Whipple, School Superintendent Brian Smith, Asst. School Superintendent Lisa Belmarsh, Chair, Weymouth School Committee Carrie Palazzo, School Committee Kathleen Curran, Weymouth School Committee John Sullivan, Weymouth School Committee Rebecca Shangraw, Weymouth School Committee Alyssa Bossé, WPS Staff

Recording Secretary: Mary Barker

Chair Molisse called the meeting to order at 6:15 PM. He set ground rules for the virtual attendees. He reminded the public that it is a public meeting, but not a public hearing and he expected civil discourse. The public presentation will take place first, and questions will follow.

Overview of Town Revenues

Mayor Hedlund and Chief of Staff Langill made their presentation.

Mayor Hedlund addressed the committee with an overview. He thanked the town and Budget/Management Committee members, department heads, and school personnel as they all went through a budget process twice so far. They've made strides working with school department and the council over the last four years. Before he came into office, it was a dysfunctional process. The schools used to present a "wish list" for the annual budget that couldn't be fulfilled. They reformed the way this town has crafted its budget. Results can be seen in the way the town looks and in the bond rating and relationships between town and the school department. There has been angst this week over budget requests.

The school budget has increased 19% in four years; an additional \$11.6 to the school budget since he took office. \$5 million in free cash went to capital support for the

schools, \$3 million in additional IT support, \$1 million in curriculum materials; \$5 million for the Adams renovations and modular classrooms and \$11 million in bonding costs to support the new Chapman Middle School. There was enough confidence to support the override initiative. Cooperation and collaboration increased between town and schools over the last four years as a result of the trust.

The town is in disagreement with the school department. The budget is based on fiscal reality. The school committee needs to collaborate with the town. The mayor is cutting other departments. School department is bound by fixed costs, and contractual obligations and the same exists on the town side and still are able to make the sacrifice needed in the face of the current pandemic. 70% of the increases are going to the schools. The philosophical disagreement comes into play because he believes that the time to kick off an expensive new program is not when the town is facing these challenges. He supports the concept of all day free Kindergarten, but the funding is his reason for opposition. They gave the schools a level serviced budget, and this doesn't work at this time and is creating the disparity. He is also on the record as philosophically opposed to the closure of a school. They worked very hard to craft a budget that does not include layoffs. No one benefits from a rift between town and schools. He appreciates the rapport between him and the superintendent.

Chair Molisse thanked him for his candid comments.

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Chief of Staff Langill provided a power point presentation:

THE FISCAL IMPACT OF COVID-19

Impact of the Great Recession (2008): Impact (so far) during COVID-19:	8.8 million jobs lost in the U.S. 26 million jobs lost in the U.S. (8.8 million every 10 days)
Massachusetts Job Loss (as of 4/18):	650,000 (17% Unemployment) February MA Unemployment = 2.8%
State's April 220 Mid-Month Revenue Report:	Total Tax Collection down \$293 million (25%) versus the same period in April 2019
State's Economic Roundtable Estimates:	Up to \$1 billion less revenue in FY20 Up to \$4.4 billion less revenue in FY21
Weymouth's Year to Date Fiscal Report:	Revenues only 0.4% ahead of FY20 (as of 4/25) Town currently has \$4.8 million FY20 deficit



THE FISCAL IMPACT OF COVID-19

In Summary, The FY21 Budget is being drafted around unprecedented cr cumstances...

20% Unemployment

\$5+ <u>B</u>illion in Lost Revenue at the State Level (FY20 and FY21)

Millions in Lost Revenue at the Local Level



THE FISCAL IMPACT OF COVID-19

Hard to Plan (or Spend) with So Much Unknown

How Much Worse Does It Get?

- Cuts in Local Aid and for how many years?
- Full Impact on Local Receipts?
- Impact on Tax Levy Growth?

When Does the Recovery Begin - and How?

- In weeks, or months, or next year?
- V-shaped rebound?



A BUDGET OF FISCAL NECESSITY

The FY21 budget process was not the traditional exercise in finding ways to fund new needs.

The FY21 budget being submitted was an exercise in fiscal necessity to hopefully help put us in a position to get through this recession with as much of what we have proudly built remaining intact.

That fiscal necessity was not without pain.

There were difficult decisions made in every department.



MITIGATING THE IMPACT

Initial Mitigating Steps Taken:

- Hiring Freeze **n**. ic luding vacant ps itions
- Freeze on Discretionary Spending
- All Expenditures over \$1,000 need Mayoral Approval - this includes previously authorized expenses
- Instructed Department Heads to Preserve Resources
 - the use of town resources should reflect no more than that required by the diminished demand for town services during the COVID-19 crisis
- Analyze Personnel for when Furloughs Become Necessary



FY21 "COVID-19" BUDGET

This P a " reliminary" FY21 Budget - Expect that it will change over time.

Initial Budget Decisions:

- Cut \$2.3 million from Original FY21 Revenue Projections
- No Cost of Living Adjustments for Non-Union Personnel
- Froze Step Increases for Non-Union Personnel
- Cut \$1.77 million in Spending (from FY20 levels)
- Limited Total Department Spending to Less than ½% Growth



FY21 "COVID-19" BUDGET

This **P** a " reliminary" FY21 Budget – Expect that it will change over time.

78% of the Budget Increases are the Result of Increases to Fixed Costs:

- Debt Service 5.5% increase over FY20
- Employee Health Insurance 6.4% increase over FY20
- Retirement/Pensions 3.2% increase over FY20
- Building/Liability Insurance 50% increase over FY20
- State Assessments 16.6% increase over FY20
- \$3.8 million in Fixed Cost Increases

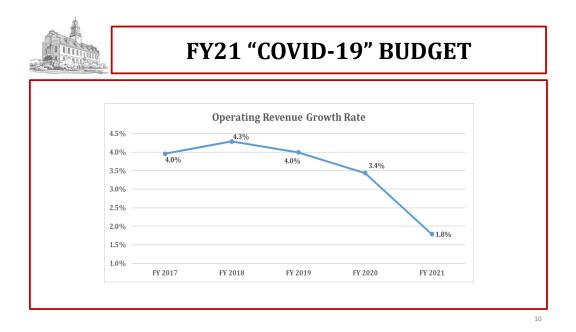


FY21 "COVID-19" BUDGET

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Operating Revenue

	Budget	Status Pre-COVID	Variance from	FY20	"COVID" Budget	(from original l	oudget
Tax Levy	\$111,469,613	\$115,919,675	\$4,450,062	4.0%	\$115,222,950	\$3,753,337	3.49
Local Receipts/Transfers	\$23,666,741	\$24,001,109	\$334,368	1.4%	\$23,041,002	-\$625,739	-2.69
Cherry Sheet (State Aid)	\$39,309,178	\$39,975,287	\$666,109	1.7%	\$39,309,178	\$0	0.09
OPERATING REVENUE	\$174,445,532	\$179,896,071	\$5,450,539	3.1%	\$177,573,130	\$3,127,598	1.89



FY21 "COVID-19" BUDGET							
FY20 Operating Budget	\$174,445,532						
FY21 Fixed Cost Increases							
Health Insurance	\$1,404,934						
State Assessments	\$1,042,260						
Debt Service	\$586,387						
Property/Liability Insurance	\$400,000						
Pension/Retirement	\$367,574						
	\$3,801,155						
FY21 Department Increases							
Schools	\$772,978						
Fire	\$131,376						
Police	\$145,027						
All Other Department Increases	\$51,476						
BUDGET INCREASES	\$4,902,012						
FY21 DEPARTMENT DECREASES	-\$1,774,414						
TOTAL INCREASE	\$3,127,598						
FY21 Operating Budget	\$177,573,130						

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FY21 "COVID-19" BUDGET

SAFETY NETS

Create a \$1.5 million Reserve Fund for COVID-19 Impacts -From Remaining Free Cash

\$8.2 million Stabilization Fund

Unknown Relief from Federal Government (Administered by State)



FY21 "COVID-19" BUDGET

USE OF STABILIZATION FUND (and Reserves)

Stabilization Funds are meant for just that - to stabilize our existing finances, <u>not</u> to spend more.

The use of any one-time reserve, stabilization or bailout measures would only serve to <u>temporarily</u> fill revenue gaps in hopes of keeping our head above water in the short-term.

These measures would only help in the long-term *IF* the economy starts to rebound sooner than later (in FY21) *AND* our recurring revenues grow back to a point of being able to permanently fill the budget shortfalls.

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FY21 "COVID-19" BUDGET

C	2019 <u>ACTUAL</u>	2020 ORIGINAL BUDGET	2020 REVISED BUDGET	2020 ACTUAL	2021 PROPOSED	PCT CHANGE
Sewer Enterprise Fund	\$17,637,338	\$17,440,396	\$17,440,396	\$14,239,435	\$17,698,305	
Water Enterprise Fund	\$ 11,112,855	\$ 9,897,586	\$ 9,897,586	\$ 6,093,244	\$ 9,897,182	0.00%

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FY21 "COV	VID	-19) " E	BUDGET
COMMUNITY PRESE	RVATION C	OMMITTEE		
Estimated Revenue	FY 20	FY 21	Change	
1% Surcharge	\$751,000	\$800,000	\$49,000	
State Match	\$135,000	\$114,000	(\$21,000)	
Investment Income	\$2,000	\$2,000	\$0	
Interest & Penalties	\$2,000	\$2,000	\$0	
Total Estimated Revenue	\$890,000	\$918,000	\$28,000	
Budgeted Expenditures				
Administrative Costs				
Recording Secretary	\$2,500	\$2,500	\$0	
Miscellaneous Expenses	\$22,000	\$23,400	\$1,400	
Salary Allocation	\$20,000	\$20,000	\$0	
Open Space & Recreation				
Mandatory Set Aside Reserve	\$89,000	\$91,800	\$2,800	
Historic Resources				
Mandatory Set Aside Reserve	\$89,000	\$91,800	\$2,800	
Community Housing				
Mandatory Set Aside Reserve	\$89,000	\$91,800	\$2,800	
Debt Service				
Principal & Interest	\$121,187	\$111,499	(\$9,688)	1
General Reserve				
Total General Reserve	,	\$485,200		
Total Appropriation Request	\$890,000	\$918,000	\$28,000	

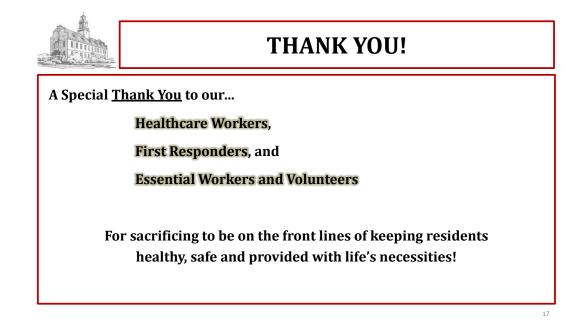
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HELP FLATTEN THE CURVE

The more we adhere to the health guidelines, the sooner we recover!

- Wash Your Hands Frequently (for at least twenty seconds)
- Cover your Mouth and Nose Avoid Touching Your Nose and Mouth
- Sanitize Frequently Used Surfaces
- Stay Home when Possible Stay Home if You are Sick or Have Symptoms
- Social Distancing Keep Six Feet Distance from Others



Chief of Staff Langill then went through the responses provided for the Auditor's questions. During it, there was a brief interruption while Mr. Langill dealt with technical difficulties.

20 055 Z-Schools

Discussion of School Budget

School Superintendent deferred to School Committee Chair to present their budget. She reviewed the school process. Ms. Belmarsh reported that timelines are set by Charter, and voted in June, after Town Meeting. This year, they continued the collaboration and cooperation with the town. They were in close communication before submitting the plan.

They were in the same position during the recession of 2008 and significant cuts were made then.

The gap isn't over. They anticipate more effects due to COVID. In the mayor's budget (pre- and COVID). The schools request was fully funded through March. There was a responsible plan in place to fund a full day Kindergarten program. Plans changed after COVID and on April 27, they presented a budget with a gap of \$2.1 million with no changes. They are pleased they may get additional funds for IT. This does not ask for any more money from the town.

Overview

- FY21 School Budget Voted 3/26/20
- FY21 Mayors Budget Filed 4/27/20
- Reduction Options



School Department FY21 Proposed School Committee Voted 3-26-20

	TOTAL PROPOSED BUDGET FY21	\$76,119,856
	Level Service*	\$1,793,039
	Compliance Requirements	\$706,922
Pre-COVID	Non-Union Additional Increases	\$57,645
	*Level Service	2.44%
	Total Increase	3.47%
	IT Obligations Capital Request	\$742,192

*does not include (4) CBA's expiring in 2020



5/5/20

FY21 Compliance Requirements

	POSITION	FTE	Cost	
	Special Education Teacher Johnson ECC			
	1	\$63,469		
	Special Education Teacher Primary	2	\$126,938	
Pre-COVID	Paraprofessionals	3	\$73,126	
	Instructional Coach – SEL	1	\$63,469	
	Primary & Pre-K Specialists – STEAM & Art	2	\$103,706	
	ELL Teacher – Primary & Middle	2.5	\$158,673	
	CTE Teacher – Robotics	1	\$54,072	
		TOTAL	\$706,922	



Then...COVID-19



(4)

5/5/20

FY21 Budget Gap

FY21 Budget School Committee Voted 3/26/20	\$76,119,856
FY21 IT Obligations (originally funded from capital)*	\$493,300
Required to Continue Current Services Into SY 2020-21	\$76,613,156
FY21 Mayor's Budget Submitted 4/27/20	\$74,392,872
	<i>\$14,352,012</i>
Total Budget Gap	(\$2,220,284)

*adjusted IT number is explained on the next slide



FY21 Capital IT Obligations (Revised)

Lease Groups (Year of graduation)	Devices	2018-2019 (1:1 Grades 7 & 10)	2019-2020 (1:1 Grades 7,8,10,11)	2020-2021 (1:1 Grades PreK-12)
Grade 7 (2024) & 10 (2021)	1000 Chromebooks	\$92,614	\$92,614	\$92,614
Grade 7 (2025) & 10 (2022)	1000 Chromebooks		\$92,614	\$92,614
Grade 7 (2026) & 10 (2023)	1000 Chromebooks			\$92,614
3-12 Teacher 1:1	500 Chromebooks	\$46,458	\$46,458	\$46,458
PK-2 Teacher 1:1	100 iPads	\$12,384	\$12,384	\$12,384
Refresh Grade 3-6 (1900 total)	400 Chromebooks	\$37,221	\$37,221	\$37,221
	750 Chromebooks		\$69,536	\$69,536
	750 Chromebooks			\$69,536
	450 iPads	\$55,731	\$55,731	\$55,731
iPad refresh PreK to 2 (1:2) (750 total)	150 iPads		\$18,577	\$18,577
(150 1012)	150 iPads			\$18,577
Internetive Disates	120 panels		\$68,165	\$68,165
Interactive Displays	120 panels			\$68,165
Total	6,490	\$244,408	\$493,300	\$493,300

- > Original FY21 IT Capital request was \$742,192
- > Cut items noted in GREY total \$248,892



5/5/20

FY21 Budget Funding IT Obligations

FY21 IT Obligations (originally funded from capital)	\$493,300
Savings from FY20 Substitute Line (one time)	(\$306,000)
Savings from FY20 Utilities Lines (one time est.)	(\$300,000)
Savings from Transportation Contract (pending negotiation & State Legislation – one time savings)	(\$200,000)
Remaining Funds Needed for Current Obligations* *utilize savings for FY21 7 th /10 th Chromebook initiative (\$92,614)	\$312,700 est



FY21 Budget

Funding Universal Full-Day Kindergarten (UFDK)

Total Kindergarten Cost	\$1,223,716
Mandatory 1/2 Day K Funds in Operating Budget	\$337,100
Remaining cost of Universal Full-Day Kindergarten	\$886,616
Balance of Kindergarten Revolving Account	\$890,000
	(anticipated)
Remaining Cost of Universal Full-Day Kindergarten	\$0 estimate

We propose:

- > Using the revolving fund for full-day Kindergarten FY21
- > Pilot UFDK for one year and reevaluate for FY22
- > No expectation to continue UFDK if budgets do not rebound



5/5/20

FY21 Budget

\$2,220,284
(\$493,300)
(\$886,616)
\$840,368



Reduction/Savings Options

PROPOSED REDUCTIONS/SAVINGS CONSIDERED FY21

CLOSING OF NASH SCHOOL

PAUSE CHROMEBOOK 1:1 INITIATIVE

REDUCTION OF ATHLETICS/EXTRA CURRICULAR

REDUCTION OF SOME CTE PROGRAMS

ELIMINATION OF TUITION FREE FULL DAY KINDERGARTEN

FY20 SAVINGS OF COVID-19 SHUTDOWN

NON-UNION SALARY FREEZE

ONE-TIME SALARY FROM OPERATING TO REVOLVING

REDUCTION IN ADMINS (ASST. CURRICULUM CORD. & ASST. SPED DIR)

REDUCTION IN FORCE (ALL UNITS)

ALL NON COMPLIANCE NEEDS LIST ITEMS

NON FUNDED CAPITAL REQUESTS (CURRICULUM MATERIALS FOR CLASSROOMS)



5/5/20

Reduction/Savings Options

PROPOSED REDUCTIONS/SAVINGS CONSIDERED FY21		
Non-Union Salary Freeze	\$300,000	
One-Time Salary from Operating to Revolving (8 FTEs- Unit A&D)	\$350,000	
Weycare Asst. Director	\$70,000	
2 Primary/Preschool Principals (shared oversight of schools)	\$212,418	
Curriculum Coordinator	\$120,000	
2 Current Assistant Principal Positions	\$202,400	



Chair Molisse thanked them for their presentation. He noted that this is a work in progress and has not been voted by the school committee.

Vice Chair Hackett suggested they step back and not make major decisions until they must be made. The situation is changing continuously and it's an unprecedented and trying time and this is the starting point. They can't put significant impacts out there in May, when they don't know what services they will be required to provide, or what educational expectations will be come September.

Supt. Whipple Curtis agreed; they don't know potential impacts yet; however, many of the positions that they have to look at must be contractually determined must be made by the end of May.

Vice Chair Hackett responded that she is speaking more globally. They have no idea what the town will be facing. It's premature to start utilizing stabilization funds.

Councilor Heffernan noted the proposed closure of Nash, that was subsequently rescinded. There will be public health aspects of COVID-19. DPH will issue guidance, but they aren't sure yet what kind. How was the decision reached to consider increasing populations in the other primary schools, with increased Kindergarten population, and a Nash closure? The superintendent responded that closure of Nash is off the table. When they looked at what the entire cost of running Nashn would be, and determined what would be fiscally responsible for the entire school community, it was not to keep a building open that costs \$2.2 million when there is space in other buildings to accommodate them. It was never a done deal. She hears about the social distancing; across the entire population, many classrooms have 26 or more students, while some Nash classes only have 11. They were given a budget with a \$2.2 million gap. The proposal was determined with input from the school administration and school committee. Councilor Heffernan responded that he was approached with concern from the residents and he did not have any information. He asked what the process was- as his mentor on the Council once relayed, the process matters as much as the decisions that they make.

Councilor Kiely noted there were lots of emotions expressed over the last week. She sent a letter earlier in the day regarding the proposed Nash closure (and read it into the record). She asked why they are considering increasing in the face or reductions in enrollment. The superintendent responded that this reinstates positions lost in 2008. Layers of curriculum needs have had to be increased. Councilor Kiely asked if new vehicles were purchased for administrators? The superintendent responded that vehicles were purchased for the department; not for administrators. They also turned over vehicles to the town side. The superintendent respectfully disagrees with the characterizations in Councilor Kiely's letter.

Councilor Burga acknowledged all of the hard work in this difficult budget. She looks forward to an amicable resolution and forward to better communication.

Asst. Superintendent Smith noted the budget book was completed over the weekend and it was delivered yesterday. He anticipates the auditor will review and provide his questions. He looks forward to meeting again.

Chair Molisse asked what the difference in enrollment was from 2020 to projected for 2021? The superintendent's office will provide this information. Kindergarten enrollment has increased.

Chair Molisse asked if the \$706,000 in compliance issues listed in the presentation are mandates? The superintendent responded that some are state mandated; some are contractual.

He also asked about the custodial overtime? Asst. Supt. Smith responded that they anticipate using it to move a significant number of classrooms required with the Chapman project.

Chair Molisse asked about the Athletic Director position. The superintendent responded that an interim director is on staff, but they haven't filled the director position due to the uncertainty with the budget.

He asked how the Kindergarten revolving fund has amounted to almost \$900,000. The superintendent responded that it has grown over the years. They intended to use it as a stabilization fund at times if they needed to add staff mid-year or to acquire capital items like furniture. Mr. Smith added that revolvers are used to support services that aren't included in the operating budget. A lot of revolvers have balances that may be used to cover shortfalls over receipts. School committee chair Belmarsh added that previous school administration paid items from the operating budget that should have been paid from revolvers; this was changed 5-6 years ago. Chair Molisse asked for a complete organizational chart for the school administration, including consultants on the payroll, and the vehicles assigned to the school administration building.

Chair Molisse reported that he is not in favor of adding a full time kindergarten program at this time; to start a new program at this time is reckless. They need to be stable and work with what they have.

Vice Chair Hackett asked about the IT component; this is capital that the town is committing to fund in order to provide Chromebooks for students in grades 7-10, that still needs to come out of the budget? The superintendent responded yes; this is a new lease agreement. The school budget subcommittee next meets on 5/6.

The program reverted back to the town presentation with Chief of Staff Langill and the Mayor. The Mayor clarified that two texts were received concerning not communicating directly with the Council. That is not accurate; he never indicated it to the superintendent.

Ms. Belmarsh noted she can provide the documentation that asked that they not directly contact the Town Council with regards specifically to this budget. Vice Chair Hackett responded that there is nothing in the Charter that prohibits the superintendent speaking with any Town Councilor; period.

Mr. Langill continued with the rest of the Powerpoint presentation and the Plan to Maintain Existing Services.

He reported April's state numbers look dismal. There is no funding to open Station 2 or staff the new library, which is now not scheduled to open until September. This recession could be over quicker than the last, but potentially could be more costly.

Ms. Belmarsh clarified that they are not asking for additional funding to the budget to cover the full day kindergarten program. They will use their entire reserves for one year to fund a pilot program; if the situation does not recover after that, it's off the table. No vote will come until the school committee has a final number.

The chair commented that it's an unusual way to do it, but it's good considering the circumstances. Adding a new program is irresponsible at this time.

The superintendent thanked the committee. She does not feel this is educationally sound but will do their share. She added that she looks forward to future conversations in order to do what's best for the students.

Vice Chair Hackett asked about the state assessments on p. 7 of the presentation, and asked what is driving the assessment? Mr. Langill responded that it is almost entirely comprised of Charter school tuition. The detail is in the budget book.

Councilor Kiely asked when was last time the pilot program with South Shore Hospital was revisited? Are there any thoughts to reinstating discussion, given the growth? Mr. Langill responded that they had started the conversation, but it was put on hold when the ambulance bid was being done, because they were responding to the bid. They will not be interested in discussion while they are losing money. The agreement dates back to the 80's or 90's and was poorly written. They can't change anything without their permission. It is up to \$800,000, and they do want to revisit.

Councilor Burga asked why the Building Liability increased- what was the reason cited? Mr. Langill responded that the reason given was that premiums are going up in FY21 (first time in 5 years). He will provide the detail.

Councilor Heffernan thanked Mr. Langill for the discussion and information and school committee and school administration, and the chair for an orderly, professional meeting. Policy issues are not personal. They are heading into a situation with reopening and without a full indication of the economics. 20% is comparable to the great depression in 1932. When will they have the next snapshot? Mr. Langill responded that the first indication was mid-April with the DOR report; the full numbers may be out tomorrow

showing billion dollar losses. This is the first evidence of how bad this is -725,000 people claiming unemployment. Councilor Heffernan noted the document presented is one in flux. Once things reopen, the economy may not be moving at the same rate as in the past. There will be some changes, globally, nationally and statewide going forward. Not one of them has lived through this before. Mr. Langill responded that's why they painstakingly put money into reserves.

ADJOURNMENT

At 8:53 PM, there being no further business, a motion was made by Councilor Hackett to adjourn and was seconded by Councilor Heffernan. A roll call vote was taken: Councilor Burga- Yes, Councilor Heffernan- Yes, Councilor Kiely- Yes, Vice Chair Hackett- Yes, Chair Molisse- Yes. UNANIMOUSLY VOTED.

Attachments:

- 1. R. Swanson's questions on the budget
- 2. Plan to Maintain Existing Services
- 3. Maureen Kiely's letter to the school superintendent re: potential Nash School closure

Respectfully Submitted by Mary Barker as Recording Secretary

Approved by Michael Molisse as Budget/Management Committee Chairman Voted unanimously on 15 June 2020