

TOWN COUNCIL MINUTES
Budget/Management Committee
Budget/Management and Parks & Recreation Committee Joint Meeting
Town Hall Council Chambers
March 15, 2012-Thursday

Budget/Management Committee

Present: Kenneth DiFazio, Chairman
Patrick O'Connor, Vice Chairman
Arthur Mathews, Council President
Michael Molisse, Councilor
Michael Smart, Councilor

Public Parks and Recreation Committee

Present: Michael Molisse, Chairman
Robert Conlon, Councilor
Kenneth DiFazio, Councilor
Thomas J. Lacey, Councilor

Not Present: Edmund Harrington, Vice Chairman

Also Present: William McKinney, Chief Financial Officer
Jane Hackett, Councilor
James Clarke, Director, Planning & Development

Recording Secretary: Mary Barker

Chairman DiFazio called the Budget/Management Committee Meeting to order at 6:30 PM.

12 -015 Free Cash-OPEB Liability Trust Fund

Chairman DiFazio reported that this matter was referred to the committee on February 21, 2012. A public hearing was held at the last Town Council meeting. CFO William McKinney presented the measure. The town's unfunded liability for post-employment benefits currently is \$236 million, as outlined in a recent audit report. \$600,000 requested will begin to chip away at the liability. Auditor Swanson contacted the consultant to appear before the committee to provide a review of the findings and was advised it would be at a cost of \$500. Chairman DiFazio noted that if the committee decides after the CFO's review that the appropriation should be made, it will be considered. CFO McKinney reviewed the actuary study.

Councilor Mathews requested that when this goes out to bid next time, the contract includes a provision for public presentation by the consultant of the audit findings. CFO

McKinney noted that an advance copy was not provided to the administration, but they did meet with him prior to the study being completed. He reviewed the information that was included in the study which includes mortality rates, number enrolled or eligible to enroll in Medicare, town's contribution share. It also assumes a rate of return of 4.25% unfunded. Chairman DiFazio asked if the town at one time assumed a higher rate. CFO McKinney responded that it had when the discount rate dropped and the amortization cost has risen as the time to fund has been shortened from a 30 to 27 year funding schedule. It also includes a change in mortality table and from self-funded to GIC, and accurately reflects spousal coverage. It also includes a breakdown by plan adopted. Chairman DiFazio asked if the yearly cost increase is factored in. CFO McKinney responded that it is in the report. (During this discussion, Councilor Conlon arrived.) CFO McKinney noted the methodology is the same as the pension, and the same actuary provides the information to the retirement board. They determine the town's contribution to the pension each year. The town is mandated to fund that.

Chairman DiFazio asked why \$600,000 and why now? Mr. McKinney responded that the town should be contributing more, but this begins to start funding. Other towns have begun contributing, and one has already fully funded its liability through a Proposition 2 ½ override.

Chairman DiFazio asked if there is any harm in delaying a decision. Mr. McKinney responded that the town is in a position to begin to fund the liability, and when it goes out for bonding the reduction in liability will positively affect ratings by bond counsel. The town is already in the process of refunding bonds, and this will help.

Councilor Smart noted at the public hearing one of the requirements was a funding schedule. He asked if there is one. Mr. McKinney noted that they have to have the schedule; they don't necessarily have to meet it.

Councilor Hackett asked if a similar appropriation is under consideration from the Water & Sewer Enterprise Retained Earnings and if it will be a proportional share. Mr. McKinney responded that it is being considered and will be based on a percentage (by number of employees) of the town's share.

Councilor Mathews noted that prior to the GIC, employees were contributing 50/50. Now retirees are contributing 12.5 – 20% depending on the plan. He asked when the GIC contract is up for renewal. Mr. McKinney responded that the contract is in year 3 of a 6-year contract.

Chairman DiFazio noted that although joining the GIC may have lowered the town's yearly costs, the change is actually driving up actuarial responsibility. After the six years is up, the town will renegotiate under collective bargaining with all of the unions.

Chairman DiFazio noted he hasn't reviewed the tables. He is an advocate of the measure, based on his personal research. There are competing interests regarding FY13 budget. \$100K might be a lot to the citizens in town on a certain line item. It's already been

bandied whether free cash should be used to fund these and he wonders whether every use of free cash should be scrutinized until the budget process is completed. He reminded the members to be cautious spending funds before the FY13 budget process has been completed.

Councilor Mathews responded that while he understands concerns he in favor acting upon it now, and with an additional measure for additional funding from Water & Sewer Enterprise funds to cover the employees in that fund. The time to do this is now; as it will affect the town's bond rating.

Mr. McKinney reminded the committee that the auditors pointed out that a 5-10% set aside would count towards this. He is trying for strong stewardship of the town and reminded the committee that this issue will not go away. It's an appropriate time and an appropriate amount. In April, the town will be refunding bonds and it will be important to maintain a strong rating. Chairman DiFazio noted his comments should not be misconstrued; he is in favor of the measure. Mr. McKinney responded that he is comfortable with the amount.

Councilor Lacey asked if the good faith effort would have the same effect on the town's bond rating if the payment was \$200,000 instead of \$600,000, since the town isn't likely to be able to raise the \$230,000. Mr. McKinney responded that he thinks it would make a difference to bond counsel, but that the amount is appropriate.

Vice Chairman O'Connor noted that with the town's fiscal restraints, the town should do the fiscally responsible thing and begin to make payments on its liability by paying the \$600,000. It's less in the long run that the town will be responsible for when this bill eventually becomes due.

A MOTION was made by Vice Chairman O'Connor to forward item 12 015 to the full town council, with a recommendation for favorable action, and was seconded by Councilor Mathews. Vice Chairman O'Connor withdrew the motion. Councilor Hackett pointed out that the \$600,000 represents 25% of the total free cash. Councilor Smart thanked the Mayor for putting forward the measure. It isn't enough, and he will support the motion.

A MOTION was made by Vice Chairman O'Connor to forward item to the full Town Council with a recommendation for favorable action and was seconded by Councilor Mathews. Chairman DiFazio noted that although he agrees with the Mayor's approach, he does not agree that the amount is necessary or action needs to be taken immediately. Vice Chairman O'Connor asked Mr. McKinney if the \$600,000 can be invested? Mr. McKinney responded that it should be. Vote passed 4/1 (Chairman DiFazio-NAY).

12 -016 Reappointment to Waterfront Committee-Daniel Keefe

Chairman DiFazio reported that this measure was referred to the committee on February 22, 2012. Mr. Keefe is not present; as this is a reappointment.

A MOTION was made by Vice Chairman O'Connor to forward item 12 016 to the full Town Council with a recommendation for favorable action, and was seconded by Councilor Molisse. UNANIMOUSLY VOTED.

Councilor Mathews noted that as a point of information; there is no need to adjourn the Budget/Management meeting, but merely to open the Parks & Recreation Committee meeting.

At 6:45 PM, Chairman Molisse called the Parks & Recreation Committee meeting to order.

12 007-Special Purpose Stabilization fund-Turf Field Feasibility Study

Chairman Molisse reported that this item was deliberated on February 21, 2012 and was continued. Jim Clarke was to further review and update the proposal based on the concerns brought forward at that time.

Jim Clarke and Mayor Kay presented. Chairman DiFazio noted for the audience that a public hearing on this measure has already been held and no public comment will be entertained at this time. This meeting is informational only.

Mayor Kay noted that the administration has listened to the concerns, and using resources of Jim Clarke, Jeff Richards, Tom Slattery, Mike Doyle and Jeff Bina, has conducted an inventory of all fields, including conditions and number of events played. Some changes have been made following concerns brought out in the last hearing. The memo from Jim Clarke requesting funding has outlined the scope of work, with some changes. The major issue raised at the hearing was that an analysis of all fields be done before selecting the direction for focus. The group will look at all fields and not pre-select. Six fields will be chosen based on potential for reuse and use of turf, and the analysis will include reuse as a grass field for comparison. The installation and maintenance of both types of fields will be included. A consultant will oversee the work to prepare the study. The permitting and maintenance of the fields will be looked at concurrent with the study.

Matt Soule presented a vision for Legion Field at a meeting a few months ago. He will be put under contract to work with the town to go out to the community to get input as well. The administration intends to go forward with Legion Field.

Mayor Kay noted that there are groups who have put funds into the fields, but it is time for long-term solutions. The usage figures show there is a need for fields and maintenance and this is the first step in the process. Other funding options could include group purchasing or using host community funds that were slated for purposes such as this.

Councilor Molisse noted that the original proposal earmarked three fields; is the funding request sufficient with the focus changed to encompass all fields? Mr. Clarke responded that it should be.

Councilor Lacey requested as a point of clarity; is it the administration's intent to hire Matt Soule to pursue the plan for Legion and bring it forward. Mr. Clarke responded yes; the plan Matt is suggesting is less complicated than what was presented several years ago. They will still need soil samples and analysis and community feedback, but the plan is a good basis for a blueprint. Councilor Lacey asked if this eliminates the use of a rectangular field for recreational use at Legion Field. Mr. Clarke responded that it does not. Mayor Kay reported that an application to the Department of Agriculture is in process for grant funding for plantings.

Councilor Lacey thought there was a mixed message sent with the last hearing. The power point presentation in his opinion clouded the issue as to who was presenting the measure; the administration or an outside entity. The fields are overdue for attention and though the measure did not address specific fields, the PP presentation clearly earmarked three. He also asked the Mayor if the administration has identified a funding source to meet the recommendations which come from the study. Mayor Kay responded that the last hearing included information previously collected. No particular funding source has been identified yet, but there are several sources that can be used. Councilor Lacey responded that whatever comes of the study, if it is recommended to make some changes to improve fields, the town takes the responsibility. The town owns the fields and the responsibility to invest in them and cautioned to not rely on any other entity. He supports the town determining how to do that; whether it is through bonding, host community agreement funds, etc. Mayor Kay agreed. The complete package with multiple funding sources will be quite costly. There may be several options including bonds. It is time to invest in capital improvements.

There was a brief discussion on the fields proposed for the study. Mayor Kay noted there are 33 fields in town. The study will look at the rectangular field because they are the ones used for multiple sport activities and most of the events are played on these. Any recommendation for turf fields will be determined after the study is complete.

Councilor Conlon asked if the town has considered permit access to the fields proposed on Southfield. Mayor Kay responded that Southfield has no intention to join with the adjacent towns for use of their proposed fields but she would be happy to discuss with LNR and Tri-Town.

Councilor Molisse reported that this topic has generated 250 emails and phone calls to the Town Council. There is a lot of public concern. There isn't another public hearing planned and he asked Jim Clarke to review the scope of the study for the public.

Jim Clarke reported that the study is a Turf/Grass Feasibility Study-request for funding that will include:

Part I - preliminary analysis

- a. review of the information already collated from the sports group, recreation department and the schools
- b. Site visit and review of all Weymouth fields
- c. Recommend sites for further analysis- no more than six in total

Part 2 - preparation of site plans for preferred locations

- a. Analysis of existing conditions (soil, slope, site and other access issues)
- b. Base plan preparation-using existing GIS data
- c. Analysis of any site constraints
- d. Review of synthetic turf products
- e. Review of options for grass field rehabilitation

Part 3 – Cost preparation for preferred sites

- a. Demolition/site preparation
- b. Materials and installation
- c. Survey and engineering fees
- d. Athletic equipment to budget
- e. Field care equipment to budget
- f. Review of design construction options

Part 4 - Review of required permits for field construction

- a. timeline
- b. permitting requirements

Part 5 – Preparation of Feasibility Memorandum for both grass and turf

Part 6 – Preparation of presentations materials for (up to 5) public meetings

Councilor Hackett asked for a timeline; as to when plans will be ready, public meetings take place and when improvements will begin. Mr. Clarke responded that the RFP will be out through April; consultant review to take about 3 months, with recommendations to the end of the summer. The timelines will be incorporated in the RFP. Mayor Kay noted the process will depend on the results of the study. The work may have to be done in phases. There will be fields in play concurrent with construction. There was a brief discussion on timeframe for work on Legion Field. Mayor Kay noted that Legion Field could be up and running as passive recreation fairly quickly.

Councilor Mathews noted he is happy that the scope was revised after listening to the public comments. Councilor Smart recommended that any plan for Legion Field going forward should involve the neighborhood group as well as the district councilor. He also noted that Mr. Slattery can be very helpful providing turf field information from WHS, and that the study incorporate health studies and injury statistics from DEP and EPA for both turf and grass surfaces. He applauded the measure.

Councilor Hackett noted that the current field conditions adversely affect the town's reputation and property values and there is need for relief. While the process is huge, the Legion Field portion could be separated out and fast tracked for use by next spring. Councilor O'Connor agreed. He also noted that adding turf fields will drive property values in the right direction and could conceivably generate revenue for the town. There is the security issue to consider. The town needs to do a better job maintaining its property.

A MOTION was made by Vice Chairman O'Connor to forward item 12 015 to the full Town Council with a recommendation for favorable action and was seconded by Councilor Smart.

There was a brief discussion; Chairman DiFazio noted the Parks and Recreation Committee would like to vote before the Budget/Management Committee votes whether to recommend voting the measure to Town Council.

A MOTION was made by Vice Chairman O'Connor to withdraw the motion and was seconded by Councilor Smart. UNANIMOUSLY VOTED.

Councilor Lacey and Molisse noted they will support.

Councilor Lacey asked if the scope of work from the administration's standpoint will include any lighting. Mr. Clarke responded that lighting has not been a part of the discussion.

Councilor Molisse noted his concern with spending funds without having a parks plan in place. It's a great plan, but the improvement plan needs to have a maintenance plan as a component.

Councilor DiFazio noted that the council did not request the measure; it was brought forward by the administration at the request of the various sports group.

A MOTION was made by Councilor DiFazio to forward item 12 015 to the Budget/Management Committee with a recommendation for favorable action and was seconded by Councilor Conlon.

Councilor Lacey noted his support. In his opinion, the plan should be more aggressive. Councilor Molisse noted his support.

There was a brief discussion of lights. Councilor DiFazio asked the administration to address the possibility of lighting in the plan. If the town anticipates increased playing times, lighting should be a consideration. Mayor Kay responded that they will address this internally; it will not be a part of the feasibility study. There currently is no plan for lighting. Councilor Molisse noted that any recommendations made as a result of the study will be deliberated when the study results are presented.

UNANIMOUSLY VOTED.

A MOTION was made by Vice Chairman O'Connor to forward item 12 015 to the full Town Council with a recommendation for favorable action and was seconded by Councilor Smart. UNANIMOUSLY VOTED.

At 8:03 PM, there being no further business, a MOTION was made by Councilor Lacey

to adjourn the Public Parks and Recreation Committee meeting and was seconded by Councilor Harrington. UNANIMOUSLY VOTED.

At 8:03PM, there being no further business, a MOTION was made by Vice Chairman O'Connor to adjourn the Budget/Management Committee meeting and was seconded by Councilor Smart. UNANIMOUSLY VOTED.

Respectfully submitted by Mary Barker as Recording Secretary

Approved by Chairman Ken DiFazio-Budget/Management

Approved by Chairman Michael Molisse-Public Parks and Recreation