



5:30 PM – Call to Order

Present

Chair Michelle Clement, Vice Chair Alyssa Nazzaro, Cori Stott, Rich Cowan, Nancy McDonald and Shawn Ashe. Also, present Town Manager Ann Vandal, Finance Director/Assistant Town Manager Victor Garofalo and Recording Secretary Samantha Carver.

Absent

Renee Plummer

The Chairperson opened the meeting at 5:30 p.m. Mr. Garofalo noted that members of DATV were present and stated that the DATV budget was not on the agenda. Mr. John Zimini, Mr. Phil Thibault and Mr. Gary Meuse were present from DATV. Mr. Zimini stated he received an email from Mr. Garofalo asking if they were coming to the meeting. Mr. Garofalo stated the email was an inquiry not an invite. He stated he heard that DATV may be coming to the meeting and was trying to find out.

Minutes

The Committee reviewed the minutes of March 16 2023 and made a couple of edits to the minutes. Ms. McDonald made a motion to approve the minutes as amended. Ms. Nazzaro seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Ashe asked if the solar information is going to be done through the budget. Mr. Garofalo stated that it is not in the budget, they were waiting on further information and they will be discussing it further at the Tri-board meeting.

Town Meeting Article Review and Recommendations

Article #5 – FY2024 Operating Budgets

Mr. Cowan asked how the bottom line of the operating budget has gone up by \$80,000 to 96,340,509. Mr. Garofalo stated as discussed at earlier meetings, that Net School Spending was increased by \$4.1 million dollars and State Aid increased by \$3.2 million. Mr. Garofalo explained that these are best estimates and that sometime before November they get actuals and they adjust the budget accordingly at the November town meeting. He also explained the sunset clause relative to the marijuana percentage to the Town that may be going away after five years. Mr. Garofalo stated the number in the budget is the number presented at last meeting. The Net School Spending number had not been released and now this is the number received.

Mr. Garofalo explained the Opioid Settlement funds that the Town will be receiving from now until 2035. This was part of a settlement with several drug stores. The first amount is \$60,000. The Town is working with the school department to create opioid related programs for the students' education.

Mr. Cowan asked Mr. Garofalo if they would be getting an update on the actual FY2023 revenue number. Mr. Garofalo stated the number is not going to change. Mr. Cowan was concerned about using the free

cash, which may affect the bond rating. Mr. Garofalo explained that they are well aware of the free cash that can be used for the capital expenditures and they always keep a certain amount in free cash. Town Manager Vandal stated that when the State Aid numbers come in, that's when they bring the changes to Town Meeting.

Mr. Cowan mentioned that going over these articles seems early. Mr. Garofalo stated the Finance Committee always have their review of the articles before the Selectmen so that they can have the Finance Committee's recommendations. There is currently \$8 million in free cash and after the capital projects it will \$4 million. Free cash is used for capital projects and is never used for recurring expenditures.

Mr. Ashe made a motion to Recommend Article 5. Ms. Stott seconded the motion. The motion carried with all members voting in favor.

Article 6 – Fy2024 Sewer Enterprise Budget

Mr. Garofalo stated this is the operating budget for the Sewer Department the budget of \$7,442,419. Mr. Ashe made a motion to Recommend Article 6. Ms. Nazzaro seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

Article 7 – Fy2024 Water Enterprise Budget

Mr. Garofalo explained that this is the budget to operate the Kenwood Water Department. There is no increase on services this year. They did have an increase to the water services put in place last year. Ms. Nazzaro made a motion to Recommend Article 7. Ms. Stott seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

Article 8 – FY2024 Stormwater Enterprise Budget

Mr. Garofalo stated that there is currently no stormwater charges to the residents. This is funded through the general operating budget. This is to allow the funds to be transferred from the general budget in the amount of \$429,579. Mr. Ashe made a motion to Recommend Article #8. Ms. Stott seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

Article #9 – FY2023 Snow and Ice Deficit

Mr. Garofalo stated that there was a snow deficit from the winter. They had the figure at \$200,000 however it was not that high. This is the current snow deficit figure of \$85,000 which will be paid from free cash.

Ms. Nazzaro made a motion to recommend Article 9. Ms. McDonald seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

Article 11 – Chapter 90 Program

Mr. Garofalo stated these are the funds received from the State for the roadways in Dracut. If we accept roads then the funding goes up. This year's funds are \$818,362.

Mr. Cowan asked if the number changes through the State. Mr. Garofalo stated that if roads in Dracut are accepted at the Town Meeting then the funding does increase. Mr. Garofalo discussed additional funding appropriated by the Legislature that does not need town meeting approval.

Ms. Nazzaro made a motion to Recommend Article 11. Mr. Ashe seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

Article 16 – FY2024 Capital Plan Projects

Mr. Garofalo stated that the committee has seen this list before and it is attached within the budget book. This list does not include the feasibility study for the Campbell School MSBA project. Mr. Garofalo went through the list quickly noting that most of the project are public safety and he mentioned that the Town would be purchasing the copiers. Ms. Nazzaro asked if it was all the printers/copiers in the buildings. Mr. Garofalo stated no, just the big copiers, there's two at the town hall. Mr. Cowan asked about electric vehicles for the town. Ms. Vandal noted that they are putting in charging stations at the library and town hall and Mr. Garofalo stated they will be looking into hybrid vehicles and phasing them in. Mr. Cowan asked if a cost analysis will be done to see the cost differences. Ms. Nazzaro asked how many cars were in the police fleet. Mr. Garofalo stated that there are twenty-one cars and that the average cost per vehicle currently is \$65,000. These cars will be phased into the fleet. Currently they replace three vehicles per year but continue to use the older vehicles in the background. Ms. Nazzaro asked if hybrids met the requirements for electric vehicles. The response was yes. Mr. Ashe made a motion to recommend Article 16. Ms. McDonald seconded the motion. The motion carried with all members voting in favor.

Article 17 – Sewer Pipe Lining – Sewer Department

Mr. Garofalo explained that they would use retained earnings rather than bond this project. They had gone before the last town meeting to approve the money for these phases so they can continue the project without stopping to go back before town meeting every time. Mr. Cowan made a motion to Recommend Article 17. Ms. McDonald seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

Article 18 – Transportation Fund

Ms. Nazzaro made a motion to Recommend Article 18. Ms. Stott seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

Article 22 – School Feasibility Study

Mr. Garofalo explained that the approval for a feasibility study not the actual cost of it is a requirement of the MSBA. They are putting a figure of \$1 million dollars for the estimated cost. If the amount comes in at a higher rate, they will have to bring it back before town meeting. If it comes in lower they can adjust it. They won't know the actual cost until later. This is the first step at Town Meeting that needs to take place. In August the Town should know the cost of what the feasibility study will cost. This feasibility study will be for the Campbell School, the Greenmont School and school district as a whole. Ms. Clement asked what if the Town turns this down. Mr. Garofalo stated then the project does not move forward. Ms. Nazzaro made a motion to Recommend Article 22. Ms. McDonald seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

Articles Summary

Mr. Garofalo explained these are all the articles he has so far. He has a few more, such as the cable access budget article, CPC articles and the solar article.

Mr. Cowan asked Finance Committee needed to vote on the ARPA funding? Mr. Garofalo stated they did not. They do need to be used by a certain deadline of December 2026 and the Town already has projects in place to use this funding. Mr. Garofalo explained some of the projects on the different road areas that would be repaired such as Tally Ho Drive, Sawmill Drive and Lakeview Avenue.

Next Meeting Date Scheduled

The next meeting tentatively May 4, 2023.

Adjournment

Ms. Nazzaro made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 6:23 p.m. Ms. McDonald seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

Minutes were approved unanimously at the May 11 2023 meeting.