

Weare Finance Committee

Meeting Minutes

Wednesday November 18, 2020 7:08 pm

Opening

The Meeting of the Weare Finance Committee was called to order at 7:08 pm on November 18, 2020 at the Weare Town Hall Selectman's Conference Room by Tom Downing, Committee Chair.

Present

Eileen Meaney – Town Moderator, Naomi Bolton – Town Administrator
Tom Downing
Megan Thellen
Leah Borla
Tom Clow
James Drury
Tammi Hagman (via Zoom)
Rachel Cisto (via Zoom)
Gary Evans
Neal Kurk (Via Zoom)
Bill Anderson
Nicole Herbst (absent)
Dennis Aubin (absent)
Christine Hague (via phone)
Jack Dearborn – Guest Speaker - CIP Budget Review

Approval of Minutes

The minutes from the October 21, 2020 meeting were discussed. The committee discussed the format and details of how the minutes should be recorded. Changes regarding names, and minor spelling/grammatical errors were noted. Neal Kurk objected to nearly the entire minutes as written as he felt they did not accurately portray his recollection of what occurred during the meeting. Committee Chair Tom Downing suggested that Neal Kurk put his suggestions in writing and distribute to the committee so his edits can be reviewed by the entire committee. Minutes will be edited and reviewed via email.

Outstanding Actions

None to discuss

CIP Review

Out of respect for the schedule of guest, Jack Dearborn who was present to review the CIP, Chairperson Downing called Jack Dearborn to the podium to speak first. Mr. Dearborn reviewed the CIP which was forwarded to the Selectperson Board from the planning Board with a 3 to one vote. Mr. Dearborn distributed a detailed packet outlining the CIP request for the 2021 Town budget. The total net on the 2021 – \$738,350.00 which is an impact \$1.35 per thousand to tax rate. An overview of the CIP outline is as follows. Details are included in the distributed packet:

Fire Department -Truck 2 has pump issue, must repair estimated \$20k repair. FD had 3 requests – needs this one for this year. The request for a hydraulic lift to assist with loading and unloading patients into the ambulance has been deferred as the pump is a priority. This will be offset by special revenue fund.

Police Department – In order to make use of the current vehicle pool, Chief Moore will get 2013 Explorer. For safety and access reasons, Chief Moore wants to replace two vehicles that were scrapped with a Tahoe SUV. This results in .07 impact to tax rate (per thousand). Committee member Gary Evans noted that last year that two vehicles were requested and only one this year, why the change? Mr. Dearborn stated that the department absolutely needs one, but two would be preferable. There are currently 5 front line police cruisers. The old ACO vehicle was scrapped and a used vehicle was purchased as a replacement. Mr. Dearborn reviewed the necessity for the request for the 4-wheel drive SUV. Repairs have been in the \$70K range in the past for vehicles in the prior few years. This does not included wages paid to the department staff for drop ff/and pick up of vehicles that need to be serviced.

Public Works – They are requesting funds for a new 10-wheel plow truck, trash trailer, bridge improvement, road reconstruction (guard rails, culverts, crushing bank run, shimming dirt roads.) and a request to replace the 2004 Volvo 6 wheeler with the 10 wheeler. It will increase the sand/salt mixture load by 50%. All vehicles and trailers being replaced are in very poor condition that pose a safety hazard and liability for employees and the Town.

Bridge – Three bridges on the red list by the State – \$2.1 million for all 3 bridges - 20% is required by the state up front in order to qualify for the grant. The state has moved repairs to 2026 due to other bridge work outside of the town. There may be inflation that will increase the cost of what the town would be required to pay. By that time, the bridges may

require replacements instead of repairs. River Road bridge needs additional repairs. There is a request of an additional \$25K was made for road repairs.

Mr. Dearborn noted the DPW Equipment schedule and proposed rotation and that parts alone in 2019 totaled \$107,000 not including labor.

Board of Selectpersons – The Board has requested funds to replace the Library AC units. The anticipated cost would be \$29,000 to replace with mini split system. The impact would be .03 on tax rate (per thousand).

RF Communication Study – This pertains to the Police, Fire, DPW radio system there is currently limited communication when in remote areas of the town. A more reliable system is necessary to ensure the safety of the police, fire and DPW when in remote areas of the town. They may be at risk if there is a life/safety issue and they cannot make contact for back up or additional assistance. Current system has limitations due to age of technology in place. Request for a LIDAR study to find the best locations to place new towers.

Sub Committee Reports

Tom Clow discussed the Town Committee – estimated revenue decreases possible as much as \$356,000. Default budget impacted by last year – collective bargaining agreement, raises for non-union employees, additional DPW employee, library warrant article resulting in expenses that were 2.49% higher than strict budget. Police dept, F&R budget review – more a full-time department personnel are planned. They would like to add 2 additional people to the staff. There will be hearing from the department heads in future meetings to review the specifics of the budget requests. The estimated fuel cost \$2 gas and are \$2.15 diesel. Tax rate set at \$23.95 up from \$23.71. This second lowest of the surrounding towns. (Dunbarton, Goffstown, Deering, Hopkinton, Concord, Henniker and Warner). James Drury added - Fund balance \$1,594,575 retaining 5% recommendation of the state \$350,00 to reduce the taxes. This is the largest in the few past years.

JSRHS – No report at this time. Next Meeting for JSRHS School Board December 9, 2020

Weare School – Workshop scheduled for November 3, meeting December 15th. Meeting was 11/17/2020 via Zoom. First look at budget was presented at the meeting – 8% higher than the current operating budget with the largest impact being Health Care, retirement, and technology. This budget is a starting point for the school. There was no discussion regarding the teachers' contract which expires in the summer of 2021. This may appear as warrant article. There is no information currently on a potential teachers' contract. Proposed preliminary budget is on the SAU web site. Grant – CARES funding grant can be used until September 2021. They will apply additional funds to COVID related

expenses. There will also be a review of options. Preliminary budgets starting point are \$789,307 Weare - \$418,175 JSRH..

New Business

Tom Downing asked Neal Kurk to review proposal that he submitted to the committee. Mr. Kurk reviewed his proposal that he submitted on November 16, 2020 via email. Mr. Kurk would like the committee to set a baseline for the tax rate and require the town Budget committees to work with that given rate. Megan Thellen reviewed the Finance Committee guidelines aloud and stated that her stance is that the committee should not be setting the guideline but giving the voters the benefit of the budgets being fully reviewed and allow them to make an educated vote based on that. Tom Clow agreed with Megan on offering the voters the information and make their own decisions. Leah Borla understands the guidelines in that manner as well. Bill Anderson commented that his opinion is in line with Mr. Kurk and that the committee should be setting the guideline. Gary Evans commented that he believes the committee should make recommendations and let the voters decide. Tom Downing stated that he is not comfortable setting a guideline and that he believes the voters deserve the opportunity to review the committee recommendations and make their own decisions. Tom Downing expressed his appreciation to Mr. Kurk for putting together the suggestion and doing the research to provide to the committee. Tom thanked Mr. Kurk for his presentation.

Chair Tom Downing gave Eileen Meaney the floor to answer an email about Neal Kurk requesting her notes on the first meeting so he can re-draft the minutes to his liking. Eileen stated that she did not take notes and after reviewing the minutes provided by Secretary Leah Borla, she believes that they accurately depict what she said.

Bill Anderson requested that the committee names and contact information be distributed.

Agenda for Next Meeting

Next meeting December 2, 2020 at 7:00 pm. The next meeting agenda will be distributed prior to the meeting but it is anticipated that the first round of budget information received will be reviewed and discussed.

Adjournment

Meeting was adjourned at 9:30 pm by Tom Downing, Committee Chair. The next general meeting will be at 7:00 on December 2, 2020, at the Weare Town Offices.

Minutes submitted by: Leah Borla, Secretary