

# **Weare Finance Committee**

## **Meeting Minutes**

Wednesday December 16, 2020 7:00 pm

### **Opening**

The Meeting of the Weare Finance Committee was called to order at 7:01 pm on December 16, 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 (via Zoom)

Leah Borla

Tom Clow

James Drury

Tammi Hagman (via Zoom)

Rachel Cisto (via Zoom)

Gary Evans

Neal Kurk (Via Zoom)

Bill Anderson

Nicole Herbst (via Zoom)

Dennis Aubin (via Zoom)

Christine Hague (via phone)

Beth Rouse Finance Administrator

Bob Vizona – Fire Chief

Benjamin Knapp - DPW

### **Outstanding Actions**

Motion on the table to define committee roles. Tom Downing motions to keep item on the table until later in the meeting to allow for guests to speak. Tom Clow issued a second. Motion is unanimously approved.

Message from Eileen Meaney – John Foss, former Town Moderator has passed away.

None to discuss- \*\*Notes for audio setup-Audio and microphone off on the laptop. Call in with external speaker and no internal microphone.

## **Review**

Out of respect for the schedule of the guests who are present to review the budgets, Chairperson Downing motioned to call guests to the podium to speak first and motioned to go out of order of the agenda. Motion was unanimously approved.

**Warrant Articles** – Naomi Bolton will be speaking about the proposed warrant articles. Handout was distributed. There may be items that still come in until January 12<sup>th</sup>. Most do not include fund requests. Budget articles – Proposed is \$7,153,503 default is \$7,009,592.

Article I Non-Union Raises 3% Town and Library personnel

Article II FF/EMS Employees \$99,291 will reduce the operating budget by \$37,783, this addition will become part of the annual budget estimated at \$182,557 Dennis Aubin asked where the \$37,783 is coming from. Chief noted line item 151 part time fire fighter wage line.

Article II Parks & Rec Wages budget will increase to \$5,382. Start at minimum wage and each year they return they receive an additional .25. This will increase an additional \$2 per hour. Hoping to attract lifeguards and additional staff. Dennis Aubin – anticipated revenue to include the new fee structure for the park? Not known at this time if the park will be open at full capacity or not.

Article IV Building Inspector \$36,400 additional part time to full time employee. \$42,479 annual budget includes benefits, insurance, retirement, etc. positions were eliminated over the years and it has become necessary to bring some of those back and increase some of the part time to full time. Chris Hague – will the contract people be continued? Naomi – hoping to not use contract. Land Use to stay full time, assessing admin full time and hope to bring building inspector full time. Tom Clow – building inspector same as code enforcement. Bill Anderson – Will full time will receive benefit? Naomi – yes James Drury - clarification on increase total closer to \$76,000 all inclusive

Article V Fire Equipment replacing pump components \$20,000 coming from special revenue fund. Tom Downing – money is available (up to 5 years) until the repair is made because it is from the special revenue fund. Must be used for the specific noted purpose. Bill Anderson – special fund balance \$275,00 plus the \$150,000- \$170,00 revenue of 2020

Article VI Police Cruiser \$61,000 for fully equipped police cruiser (front line). Tom Downing is radio included in cost. Naomi - yes

Article VII 10 Wheel Truck \$230,000 – replace a 6 wheel and upgrade to a 10 wheel

Article VIII Trash Trailer \$115,000 new ten-wheel plow truck. Replace an existing truck, not addition to the fleet. Tom Downing – upgrade to 10 wheel to replace a 6 wheel. Bill Anderson asked what the DPW needs more trailer or Plow truck. Benji explained that the needs are necessary for both. Trucks and trailer are both needed. Gary – does the old trash trailer become part of recycling? Benji explained that they used the last one for

storage, but they will eventually go to the scrap yard No value for trade. Chris – UL of new trailer? Benji – 10-15 years.

Article VIII Bridge Reconstruction \$25,000 added to fund. The anticipated cost based on 2016. On state wait list for 2026 for funds for repairs. Between now and then there will be necessary bridge repairs/replacements. Tom Clow – planning to complete the lesser bridges prior to 2026. Benji – River Road ahead of other due to need Culvert can wait, because the River Road bridge is urgent. There are 3 on the list including Lull Road. Repairs must be made to River Road so funds are being requested in 2021. This is written to also include additional repairs and not just replacement.

Article X Road Reconstruction \$525,000 for reconstruction and resurfacing. \$276,150 will be added from the state Tom Clow – are the bills for 2020 paid what is left of the bond funds to pay. Beth will verify and send to committee. Neal Kurk – what happens if article fails? Benji – state money will still be received. Goal is to not have to continue to ask for multimillion-dollar bonds. Pavement cost Increased \$5 per ton in 2020

Article XI Government Building \$20,000 to upgrade aging buildings. Nicole – what happened with the septic system? Naomi – after inspections not enough water was flushing through the system. New addition to leave valve open to allow more water to go through the lines to flush the pipes fully after use. Bill Anderson - how much is in the fund \$57,000+/- that is the thresh hold level that is preferred.

Article XII Radio Communication Met with First Net, R&R. Motorola and Verizon pending. This is a placeholder until all of these proposals of coverage areas to improve the communications for first responders and DPW.

Article XIII Cy-Pres Cemetery improvement to be withdrawn from trust fund account

Article XIII Conservation/Forest Land \$140,000 purchase of new town land. Comes from land fund. Megan Thellen – town consider choosing what is needed instead of keeping status quo annually. Naomi – select board has discussed and feels that Articles presented are the most critical. Tom Clow – original cruiser request was for 2 and they settled on one.

Beth Rouse has the floor to discuss the Town Budget. Dennis Aubin – were anticipated revenues conservative compared to prior years? Beth- they were more conservative in estimates due to the uncertainty of 2021.

BVA 2018 -2019 and 2020 YTD and 2020 Revised Revenue may be revised again due to additional revenues received.

MV Permits – increased revenue

Building Permits Increased

State Revenue – rec'd shared revenue in 2019 and 2020 and will not be received in 2021. The funds are not available this year from the state.

Sale of Town Property - \$150,000 budgeted but there were no auctions of property due to COVID. Properties will be auctioned next year. Town can keep deeded property for 10 years now.

Estimated \$80,000 less in revenues anticipated. Tom Clow – CARES act are unanticipated revenues and not listed as revenue

Chris – Distributed last week of December not available yet

Parks and Rec – Lines 65 & 66 – Chase Park and Boat has been consistent through the past few years. Increase in fees has kept numbers level

2021 Summary of Default Budget – Voter Forecasted Budget for 2021 - \$7,019,178

Default budget is about \$10,000 less than anticipated. Default Budget total of \$7,009,592

Neal Kurk – what about wage increase are they in the default budget. Beth – not in default, in the proposed budget.

2021 Proposed 2021 Budget

Insurances -\$17,022 increase

Police Dept - \$52,718 increase

Highway Dept - \$22,425

Other Public Safety -\$ 28,867

Animal Control - \$758

Parks & Rec – \$1,550

Library \$3,318

Overall \$7,153,503 2.05% Increase

James Drury – additional night hours for transfer station? Beth – one night per week

Neal Kurk – General discussion point/Suggestion? Now or later – Neal asked about placement of items in the budget. Discussion regarding whether to address now or later amongst the committee. Committee in agreement to discuss later

Tome Downing – Petition Warrants expected? Naomi – no petitions that are money related. Planning Committee may for \$14,000 may be come in but not 100% and there may be additional regarding the radio communication upgrades.

## **Sub Committee Reports**

**Town** – No new updates

**JSRHS** – Gary Evans .01% increase anticipated \$14,425,925. Tom D. asked if the Superintendent would come in this year and if we can get that coordinated. Chris – SAU usually comes in together with all 3 schools. Megan Thellen offered to contact Jackie Coe to coordinate. Neal Kurk – budget lower than the default. Two additional issues – SAU has received federal funds in the past. This is now being broken down to be distributed to all school budgets. Will need explanation when recommended. CARES funds are trying to use

that money so that it does not inflate the budget expenditures. Additional explanation will be needed as well. Bill Anderson – Proposed v. default are the CARES funded included Neal – uncertain. Clarifying with Chris Roy School Board Funds. Dennis Aubin to Neal – did budget include state funding shortfall due to student population? Neal – revenues will be completed in January at a Public Meeting and will be supplied at that time. Possible formula revision most likely will not be resolved until after voting in March. Nicole to Neal – do you have a copy of the color coded handout Neal – no 5.02% and 5.03% increase – remove federal money lowers to 2.5% increase

**Weare School** – Bill Anderson \$16.7 million proposed budget 6.1% increase that includes the \$406,000 tax neutral so only about 3.6% increase. Mostly due to Health Care and retirement cost from the State. Only 2.7% increase over current operating budget. Contract extends current contract by one year so there are no changes to pay other than step increases. Overall tax impact \$10,000. Retirement will help offset the increase. No all-day kinder this year. They will reconsider 21-22 budget year. Next meeting – public hearing 01/13/2021 – Wednesday. Megan Thellan – increases are required and state run. Only increasing Tech to full year with an increase of \$25,000 to assist with remote learning. Etc. Dennis – SAU moving out of the building in Henniker? Discussion – no discussion to date by the SAU to indicate what they will be doing. Megan to follow up. Neal – SAU buildings in SAU budget which is voted on by school board members.

**Old Business** – Tom Downing reviewed Gary Evans – subcommittee role of the members – information gathering - Nicole motion to define roles of subcommittee members on all three committees. Gary Evans seconds this motion. Eileen provided Tom an overview of sub committees. Tom read section to the Finance Committee. Neal Kurk asked for clarification on the motion. Discussion regarding the roles of the committee and its members followed. Gary moves to table for further research. Second by Megan Thellen. Unanimously approved. Motion tabled.

Tom Downing asked if the Committee would like to reintroduce the motion. Chris – document would need to be revised. Committee may want to consider that. Tom D. checked with Eileen and that would need to go to the voters. Tom Clow – not sure if the problem of prior antagonistic or aggressive behavior exists in the current committee and wonders if the committee should make an ethical stance instead of a policy change. Gary Evans – dissemination of information and what information that should be gathered and shared. Discussion regarding the topic. Nicole withdrew the motion based on committee's agreement on current information gathering roles.

Gary Second motion – Sub -Committee report should be devoid of opinion and speculation. Neal – clarifying information to be delivered to the committee. Gary – no personal opinion

Leah Borla issued a second to the motion. Bill Anderson – voice of taxpayers. Leah Borla – James Drury, Tom Clow, Tom Downing, Phone – Rachel – Agreement Dennis Aubin-interpretation of happenings are different. Nicole – ground rule instead of a motion. Addressing the issue as presented tonight is best Megan – agrees with intent but believes that opinions should be included. Respectful discussion should be had between committee members should be consistent. Tammi – respectful discussion, no restriction Tom Clow – if Gary is agreeable, withdraw the motion and come to an agreement within the committee as most items are covered in the Code of Ethics and the Governance. Gary withdraws motion based on committee discussion.

Gary motion – No Member, in the name of the FC, may request information, research or data from a town employee that is in excess of what is normally provided by routine handouts. Any such requests should be presented to the finance committee and approved prior to being submitted.

Tom, Bill, James, Leah – discussion. Chris Hague– get the information and to share with committee. Dennis Aubin – create a list of potential financial information that is generally requested annually to have presented to the finance committee each year. Clarification on why this motion was presented. Gary – has heard that some people feel uncomfortable with how information has been requested and have made excessive demands.

Gary Evans withdraws the motion based on the discussion and suggestions presented.

### **New Business**

Eileen Meaney reads correspondence – Right to Know Request – Naomi Bolton – RSA 91A2A - RSA 91A4 – 12/14/2020 reached out to Tom Downing for information. Any and all finance committee emails 8/20 to present that have anything to do with the 2021 CIP Budgets or warrant articles. Neal Kurk – request clarification year.

RSA 91-A:8 – discussion on how to respond and what correspondence should be included in the response.

Nicole – if one person has this request others might. Should the emails be read into the record as a response? Do we need to resend emails if Naomi was included in the conversation?

Tom D. Identify all communications that we believe are subject to the right to know request that involves a quorum.

Chris – define what is appropriate to send between committee members.

Leah – define

Tom Clow – add addendum to the minutes so these emails are on record.

Tom Downing – Five days with a plan and when the information will be submitted. We need clarity on what requirement under the RSA. Does quorum apply or does it apply to all communication? Relevant content, organization, and a plan for delivery of the information.

Neal Kurk – Tom D has likely been on all committee related correspondence.

Bill Andersson – confirmation that there is no correspondence or have the emails sent to Tom ASAP.

Leah Borla – Clarification does it include forwards of full committee discussion that have reduced to one or two members.

Dennis Aubin – clarification regarding statement of disagreement regarding the email discussion.

Tom D and Leah will reconstruct the discussion and add it as an addendum to the minutes.

Tom D. will compile the thread of the discussion into one cohesive thread and it will be added to the minutes as record.

### **Approval of Minutes**

Motion to approve the 12/02/2020 minutes as amended was made by Tom Clow. Gary Evans issued a second. Minutes unanimously approved.

Nicole – question regarding how guests are listed on the minutes.

### **Agenda for Next Meeting**

Next meeting tentatively set for December 30, 2020 at 7:00 pm. The next meeting agenda will be distributed prior to the meeting but it is anticipated that the full budget including warrant articles and the Select Board will be present.

### **Adjournment**

Meeting was adjourned at 10:24 pm by Tom Downing, Committee Chair. The next general meeting will be at 7:00 on December 30th, 2020, at the Weare Town Offices.

Minutes submitted by: Leah Borla, Secretary

