

Town of Bedford Finance Committee

Remote Meeting - Zoom

January 6, 2022

Minutes

Finance Committee Members in attendance: Stephen Carluccio (Chair), Elizabeth McClung, Paul Mortenson, David Powell, Stephen Steele, Karen Dunn, Ben Thomas, Erica Liu,

Others in attendance: David Castellarin, (Finance Director), Bill Moonan (Select Board), Tony Fields, (Planning Director), Heidi Porter, (Director of Health and Human Services), Anita Raj, (Chair, Board of Health), Mike Rosenberg (Bedford Citizen)

Chair Carluccio called the meeting to order at 7:02 pm.
Reads Remote Meeting Guidelines.
Calls the Roll of Committee Members in attendance.

Noted for the record that the meeting is being recorded by Bedford TV.

I. REGULAR BUSINESS

1. Public Comment

None

2. Bedford Planning Board Budget Presentation

Chair Carluccio notes the appearance of Planning Director Fields.

Mr. Fields notes that he has no formal written presentation. Other than the changes to the salaries, there are no changes to our expense accounts. The expense accounts are being level funded and the only other changes are the merit increases for the Staff.

Chair Carluccio posts on screen page 3 of the Planning Board Budget and asks for any Member questions.

Member Thomas asks about any training costs for any new Board members.

Mr. Fields notes that such training costs are expected to be quite small since the only expected new Member at this point will be a person who has been a member of the ZBA for 10 years.

Member Mortenson asks about whether there are any matters which Mr. Fields has been holding back on.

Mr. Fields says no since these days a lot of the training has gone on line and, therefore, training costs have been reduced.

Member Powell notes only \$600 in fee revenue. What does that reflect?

Mr. Fields notes that there have been very few formal applications in the past year. Possibly due to the pandemic and finance issues.

Member McClung asks about the salary increase numbers.

Mr. Fields notes that the amount of salary increases per year is controlled by the Town Manager based upon performance reviews.

Member Steele asks about a budget line referring to an intern.

Mr. Fields describes what that item is meant to cover. Notes that the money has previously been put there but due to Covid and a zoning code reorganization in process has not yet been expended.

Member Liu asks about how often the Housing Study is updated.

Mr. Fields notes that there is generally an attempt to update the Housing Study or Housing Plan every ten years or so. Last Plan was 2019.

Chair Carluccio thanks Mr. Fields for his attendance.

Chair Carluccio asks for any general questions on this budget by Members.

Member Powell asks about a worksheet that the Committee would normally have to use every year during this budget process to keep track of where we are at for each budget since the Committee would generally vote them all at once.

Mr. Castellarin suggests that he been forwarded a copy of what has been used in the past and he will attempt to replicate it for use this year.

Member Powell states that he will forward the item.

3. Bedford Board of Health Budget Presentation

Chair Carluccio promotes Heidi Porter, Director of Health and Human Services, and Anita Raj, Chair of the Board of Health as participants. Asks what written items Ms. Porter would like to bring up for presentation.

Ms. Porter notes this year's budget has no changes in expenses. Does ask that the salary for the Public Health Nurse position be bumped up from \$75,000 to \$85,000 since it has been lower

than the regional salary report for that position. The current salary has been limiting responses to the Town's efforts to hire for that position.

Ms. Porter discusses the Covid Response team and volunteers. What they do and how they do it.

Ms. Porter discusses in general the services provided by the Board, what they do and how they do it.

Ms. Porter discusses regional grant that will be used for contact tracing.

Ms. Porter discusses reinstating monthly meal program.

Chair Carluccio posts this budget on screen and moves to Member comments or questions.

Member Thomas thanks Ms. Porter and Ms. Raj for all their efforts.

Member Thomas asks about the "flu fund".

Ms. Porter discusses this revolving fund. Discusses regular flu clinics and inoculations which cost the Town to provide. This fund provides coverage.

Member Thomas asks what Ms. Porter feels is the biggest risk economically.

Ms. Porter states that on line efforts have increased and have reduced costs. Helping to keep the budget flat funded. The only item which would be an increase is the request for the Public Nurse salary increase. Otherwise, we are in very good shape.

Member Dunn expresses thanks. Asks is there appear to be any needs going unmet due to a lack of funding.

Ms. Porter states no at this point. That may change as we go forward. We have a good staff and resourceful workers. Just need to hire this nurse and get this nurse in place.

Member Powell expresses thanks for all that is done for the town. In the salary payroll category there is a partial offset of your salary that gets shared by the Youth and Family budget. Asks for details.

Ms. Porter provides details.

Member McClung expresses thanks to Ms. Porter and her department. Asks for details on the use of federal and state funds received. How have we received those funds and how have they been allocated. Specifically the state and federal COVID funds.

Ms. Porter notes that most of those funds are managed by the Town Manager. Ms. Porter puts together a budget and requests the funds she needs. She discusses some money being spent and where. Discusses fields of response and the use of volunteers and the actual use of the funding.

Member McClung asks for amounts involved.

Ms. Porter states that her initial ask was for about \$85,000. We are fortunate to have all the volunteers and some grant funds. We are not skimping. We are putting forth reasonable response.

Member Steele gives thanks to Ms. Porter and her staff. Asks about efforts made to hire for the nurse position. Has salary been an issue?

Ms. Porter states that in initial conversations with people, the salary was an issue and unacceptable. Also explains the market study done. The salary we were offering was substantially below where it needs to be.

Member Steele also asks about the food bank.

Ms. Porter provides details as to how that is managed at this point and by whom.

Member Steele asks about contact tracing.

Ms. Porter details current contact tracing efforts still ongoing.

Member Steele asks what we are doing about testing now.

Ms. Porter details use and supply of test kits. Purchasing from all three vendors. Likely to be a drive through.

Member Liu expresses thanks for the work being done. Asks for details on mental health concerns.

Ms. Porter provides details as to what is being done, by whom and through what sources. Now have a full time clinician working in our department. Been able to eliminate waitlist. Also discusses social workers available to all town departments. Still more that needs to be done but grateful for the funding we currently have.

Member Liu asks about the potential for a shared nurse arrangement with another town or a nurse that only wants to work less than a full week.

Ms. Porter states that we have always used 100% of the nurses' time – full time.

Chair Carluccio thanks Ms. Porter and her staff. Comments on returning to programs such as community dinners. Believes that these are very helpful to senior citizens.

4. Minutes

None

II. RESURRING BUSINESS

1. Meetings Attended

Member Steele discusses Capital Committee.

Member Thomas discusses Select Board discussion of Capital.

2. Open Discussion re Future Agenda Items/New Business/Old Business

Chair Carluccio asks Mr. Castellarin for an update on the State approval of Free Cash.

Mr. Castellarin states that the State is behind. Has spoken to the Town of Ipswich finance person who said that their number was just certified after two and a half months.

Motion to adjourn by Member Powell.

Second by Member Steele

Roll call of Members in attendance

Vote: 8-0-0

Time: 8:21PM

John B. Connarton
Recording Secretary

DOCUMENT LIST

Agenda for January 6, 2022 Meeting

Model FY23 - December 14, 2021

1750 Planning Board Budget Summary

5000 Board of Health (Health and Human Services Department) Budget Summary

Board of Health/Health Department – Grant, Intern and Volunteer Projects – FY2011 to Present