

Town of Bedford Finance Committee

Remote Meeting - Zoom

February 3, 2022

Minutes

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

Capital Expenditures Committee Members in attendance: Mary Ellen Carter (Chair), William Moonan, Stephen Steele, Tom Rowan, John Carbone, Dave McClung

Others in attendance: David Castellarin, (Finance Director), Emily Mitchell, Select Board, Bill Moonan, Select Board, Fire Department Chief David Grunes, Lauren Crews, Amy Fidalgo, David Manugian

Chair Carluccio called the meeting to order at 7:03 pm.

Reads Remote Meeting Guidelines.

Call of the Rolls of the Finance Committee Members in attendance and Capital Expenditures 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. Fire Station Project Presentation/Discussion – Joint with the Bedford Capital Expenditures Committee

Chair Carluccio recognizes Emily Mitchell (Select Board) for the presentation.

Ms. Mitchell provides a historical review of the usage of the current Fire Station building including the joint use of the building by both the Police and Fire Departments. Reviews use studies conducted going back to 1994 indicating inadequacies and needs. Finding that the current station is too small for equipment, staff and needs of the community. The lot at current location is too small for any additional space renovation.

Ms. Mitchell reviews photos indicating the current conditions inside and outside the building. Bottom line is that current building and current site are inadequate.

Ms. Mitchell reviews what is needed for a new site. Response time is prime consideration. Parcel size would need to be at least 60,000 sq. ft. Prefer to avoid residential parcels and use of eminent domain. Also review other issues that need to be avoided at any particular site. Reviews the list of sites that made the final round with reasons as to why not selected.

Ms. Mitchell discusses the consideration of the TD Bank building site on Great Road. Postponed that process due to Covid. When this project came up for consideration again, further work was done on potential additional sites. Town Staff reached out to Utah State University with respect to its Lab building at 139 Great Road. Discovered the property was going to be put on the market.

Ms. Mitchell describes what due diligence the Town has been doing since then with respect to its potential purchase of this property for the Fire Station. The Select Board has now voted to move forward with a Purchase and Sale Agreement pending Town Meeting approval. The site would be \$6 million less in acquisition costs. Also would save substantial time and expenses dealing with an eminent domain situation. Have had the site reviewed by a number of experts and all agree that it should work.

Ms. Mitchell reviews efforts being made with respect to neighbors and community at large.

Ms. Mitchell reviews currently expected costs of \$1.55 million for land acquisition which would be bonded. Also expects \$2 million for design and project management. Also expect to look at bonding for \$16.2 million at 2023 Annual Town Meeting for construction.

Chair Carluccio refers to Capital Expenditures Chair Carter for any questions by her committee members.

Chair Carter polls her Members.

Chief Grunes responds to questions concerning size of site considering size of proposed new building and associated costs. Same with respect to currently expected costs.

Chair Carluccio polls the Members of the Finance Committee with respect to questions and comments.

Member Powell asks about historical significance of the existing building at proposed new site. Same for potential environmental risks at the site. Asks about potential use of current site when new Station is built and occupied.

Chair Carter responds to each inquiry.

Member Powell asks about potential move in date if project goes forward.

Chair Mitchell states probably looking at 2025.

Member Thomas asks about adequacy of size for future needs.

Chief Grunes responds.

Member Liu asks about adequacy for increased staff. Also asks about impact on neighbors.

Chair Mitchell responds.

Member Steele asks about whether Net “0” costs are included in the \$16.2 million.

Chair Mitchell responds that they are.

Member Dunn states this seems like a win-win for the Town. Appreciates that there are plans in place to deal with abutters’ concerns.

Member McClung agrees that we will need to get what the annual operating costs of the building will be. Also discusses abutter concerns. Also discusses likelihood that project costs could change.

Chair Mitchell and Chief Grunes respond to these concerns. Notes that numbers will need to be firmed up by the time of Annual Town Meeting in 2023.

Chair Carluccio asks when these project numbers will be locked in.

Chair Mitchell notes that these numbers also will need to be firmed up by the time of Annual Town Meeting in 2023.

Chair Carluccio recognizes Chair Carter with respect to concluding this part of the meeting.

Chair Carter asks for a Motion to Adjourn the meeting of the Capital Expenditures Committee.. Motion to adjourn made. Polls the Capital Expenditures Committee Members. Motion carries. Declares Capital Expenditures Committee meeting adjourned.

Time: 7:56PM

Finance Committee meeting continues.

3. Community Preservation Commission FY 2023 Budget Presentation/Discussion

Chair Carluccio recognizes Chair Lauren Crews.

Chair Crews identifies the Commission Members.

Chair Crews notes that total expenditures being recommended are \$3.9 million.

Affordable Housing related projects recommended are 21% of total budget. Discusses proposed projects.

Historic Preservation projects make up 10% of total budget.

Open Space and Recreation projects make up 68% of the total budget.

Administrative Expenses are \$10,000

Bond Payments are \$936,365

Grand total of \$3.9 million.

Discusses potential future projects.

Chair Carluccio polls Members for questions or comments.

Member Mortenson inquires about Springs Brook Park expenses.

Member Powell asks about \$600,000 for Municipal Affordable Housing Trust and what guidelines exist for spending that money.

Member Liu asks about totals of Affordable Housing numbers in Bedford now.

Margot Fleischman discusses what makes up this number. Discusses housing study in 2018.

Member Steele asks about the \$1.5 million for the Minuteman Bikeway project.

David Manugian provides a response.

Member Steele notes his disagreement with the project.

Member Liu agrees with that.

Member Dunn asks about the numbers which seem to be a policy shift as far as use as affordable housing.

Amy Fidalgo discusses the issue and use of funds for affordable housing related matters.

Member McClung asks about the Bikeway project, plowing and maintenance costs.

Chair Carluccio asks about the Reserve Accounts. Is that data somewhere?

Amy Fidalgo discusses this.

Chair Carluccio asks about the abutter's easements that need to be secured and funded.

Amy Fidalgo discusses this.

Chair Carluccio asks who the driving force behind the Bikeway paving project is.

Amy Fidalgo provides detailed information on the history of the project over the years.

Member McClung discusses the income and expenses sheet for this matter.

Chair Carluccio thanks Chair Crews, Ms. Fidalgo and Mr. Manugian for their efforts on this presentation.

4. Discussion of Unused Tax Levy

Chair Carluccio discusses why this item is on the Agenda. Wants to hear what FinCom Members think about this topic. Brings up the current Model for discussion. References Unused Tax Levy number. Looking for philosophy of how to use it.

Member Mortenson states that if we need it, we should use it. Doesn't think this should be a minimum number kept.

Member Powell discusses building it up as a good thing. Another form of reserve capacity. Something to tap into if we have to. Starting point should be to keep what we have and add to it if possible.

Member Thomas discusses his philosophy about its use. Should be a last source to use in any given year's budget process.

Member Steele would like to leave it at least the same as last year. Should be a very serious reason, almost a catastrophe, to tap into it. Leave it the same.

Member Dunn refers to it as similar to a corporation referring to retained earnings.

Member McClung agrees with Member Powell. Using the tax levy is an increase in taxes. Important to stay within the 2.5% and not use the tax levy.

Chair Carluccio agrees with most of these comments. If a need to use this arises, it should be as low as possible and measured.

Mr. Castellarin provides his comments. Discusses his experience at other municipalities.

5. Review/Discussion FY2023 Budgeting Model

Mr. Castellarin notes Line 24 which is the new bonding number with the new fire station numbers. Also updated the State aid numbers on Line 66. Also updated the Hanscom Federal Impact Aid up to \$900,000 on Line 68. Also discusses the Overlay Reserve number of \$525,000.

Also discusses Line 121 for State Assessment and Line 122 for Library Offset. Also discusses certified Free Cash number of \$9.7 million. Discusses Health Insurance number of Line 203. Also discusses the Retirement Assessment and General Insurance numbers on Lines 204 and 205. Also notes increases in Lines 213 and 214. Due to expected bond payment for the fire station land purchase of \$1.5 million. Also, put the number in for the Merit Article on Line 382.

Member Powell asks about the MITRE PILOT payment and potential use of Free Cash.

Member Steele notes that we need to insure that our borrowing number stays below 10% of our budget.

Mr. Castellarin discusses Reserve Fund number as carried in Select Board budget.

6. Review/Discussion of Draft ATM Warrant

Discussion by Chair Carluccio and Mr. Castellarin about continuing this issue until next week. May have Town Manager present to go over the Warrant.

7. Minutes

Motion to approve the Minutes for October 7, 2021 Meeting by Member Powell.

Second by Member Steele

Roll call of Members present

Vote: 8-0-0

Motion carries

Motion to approve the Minutes for October 14, 2021 Meeting with the addition of Members Thomas and Busa as having been present by Member Powell

Second by Member Steele

Roll call of Members present

Vote: 8-0-0

Motion carries

Motion to approve the Minutes for the Joint Select Board and Finance Committee Meeting of January 22, 2022 by Member Powell

Second by Member Steele

Roll call of Members present

Vote: 6-0-2

Motion carries

II. Recurring Business

1. Meetings Attended

Member Thomas states that the Select Board's vote on the Budget was a split vote of 3-2. It was for the contingency item for the Energy and Sustainability Coordinator.

2. Open Discussion

Chair Carluccio notes that the Warrant deadline is now February 10. Need to vote by February 17 on Budget recommendations and assignments.

Motion to adjourn by Member Mortenson

Second by Member Steele

Roll call of Members present

Vote: 8-0-0

Motion carries

Time: 10:16 PM

John B. Connarton
Recording Secretary

DOCUMENT LIST

Agenda for February 3, 2022 Meeting

Bedford Fire Station - Frequently Asked Questions

Community Preservation Committee – FY23 Budget Presentation to the Finance Committee
February 3, 2022

Community Preservation Budget for FY2023

Community Preservation Estimated Revenue, Expenses and Available Balance

Model FY23 – February 3, 2022

Initial Draft of Warrant for 2022 Annual Town Meeting

Draft Minutes for October 7, 2021 Meeting

Draft Minutes for October 14, 2021 Meeting

Draft Minutes for January 22, 2022 Meeting

