

February 9, 2023

Minutes

Finance Committee Members in attendance: Ben Thomas, Chair, Elizabeth McClung, Stephen Steele, Paul Mortenson, Abigail Seibert, Ron O’Brien and Tom Rowan

Others in attendance: David Castellarin, (Finance Director); Lee Vorderer (Chair, Community Preservation Committee); Philip Conrad (Superintendent of Schools); Julie Korrane (Finance Director – Schools); Amy Fidalgo, Assistant Town Manager of Operations.

Chair Thomas calls the meeting to order at 7:00 pm.

Reads Remote Meeting Guidelines

Calls the Roll of Committee Members in attendance.

I. REGULAR BUSINESS

1. Public Comment

None

2. Review/Approve Minutes

Chair Thomas asks for any comments on the Minutes for October 6, 2022.

Members suggest corrections to page 3 and to Article 5 discussion.

Motion to approve the Minutes for October 6, 2022 as amended by Member Steele.

Second by Member McClung

Roll call of members in attendance.

Vote: 5-0-1

Motion carries

3. FY24 Community Preservation Budget

Chair Thomas welcomes Lee Vorderer, Chair of the Community Preservation Committee

Ms. Vorderer offers introductory comments and then provides commentary with respect to the FY24 Proposed Projects.

Affordable Housing

Regional Housing Services Office - \$38,000

Bedford Housing Authority Life Management Program - \$37,817

Historic Preservation

Archival Records Preservation - \$28,270

Job Lane House Roof Rehabilitation - \$71,500

Old Town Hall Elevator Controls - \$75,570

Open Space and Recreation

Athletic Field Fencing - \$43,000

Springs Brook Walkway Rehabilitation - \$37,800

Trails Committee – Buehler Conservation Rehabilitation - \$152,000

Trails Committee – Pedestrian/Bog Bridges, Trail Infrastructure Rehabilitation - \$11,000

Ms. Vorderer provides comments concerning Administrative Expense and Bond Payments

Administrative Expense - \$10,000

Bond Payments - \$906,203

Ms. Vorderer discusses FY24 – FY29 CPC Six Year Plan

Chair Thomas asks for Member comments or questions.

Member Seibert asks about Marketing and Admin costs and Historic Museum.

Ms. Vorderer provides response. No proposal yet for museum.

Member McClung asks about Open Space Projects.

Ms. Vorderer explains what they are.

Member McClung comments on FY26 – Bike Trail and children’s use items.

Member Steele comments on Affordable Housing information.

Ms. Fidalgo responds.

Member Steele asks about Babe Ruth issue.

Ms. Vorderer notes that relates to allowing other town teams to play in Bedford.

Member Steele comments on warranty on field work.

Chair Thomas comments on life management issue, historic document preservation, Job Lane House roof work cost, concern for future funding,

Ms. Vorderer responds.

Chair Thomas asks about 300th Anniversary.

Ms. Fidalgo responds that this is under consideration.

Member Steele asks about potential reduction of annual assessment.

Ms. Vorderer responds that this has not been considered.

Chair Thomas thanks Ms. Vorderer and Ms. Fidalgo.

4. FY24 School Budget

Chair Thomas welcomes Philip Conrad, Superintendent of Schools, Dr. Tricia Clifford, Assistant Superintendent and Julie Kirrane, Director of Finance

Mr. Conrad notes that they have submitted a detailed FY24 Proposed Budget which was revised in January. The Proposed Budget contains a Budget Overview.

MOE Budget Detail by Five Categories

Anticipated Needs for Teachers and Learning

Best Practices Related to Environmental and Wellness

Financial Details

Supplemental Material

Mr. Conrad states that the Proposed Budget seeks a 4% increase, being .5% above the Finance Committee Guideline.

Mr. Conrad reviews various slides with the total numbers and support for the numbers for each category.

Chair Thomas thanks Mr. Conrad for his presentation and the detailed submissions provided. Also notes that historically the Town has always supported the Schools. Also notes that the Finance Committee has always supported the Schools.

Chair Thomas asks for Member comments.

Member Mortenson discusses the Finance Committee Guideline of 3.5%.

Mr. Conrad states his understanding but states that it would be very difficult to stay within that number. Substantial challenges.

Member Seibert states that she has numerous questions and presents each inquiry.

Mr. Conrad provides responses to each with references to Budget document.

Member McClung asks about employees leaving?

Mr. Conrad explains the losses.

Member McClung asks about being out of range.

Member McClung asks about the \$400,000 IT Plan referenced.

Member McClung asks about why there is a Special Ed increase.

Member Steele asks about how Bedford compares with other communities.

Mr. Conrad believes Bedford does well.

Member Steele asks about IT Security.

Mr. Conrad states that the Schools use their own people and Plan.

Member Steele comments on losing long term nurse, the Schools unemployment numbers, Health Insurance Plan and Fund balances.

Member Rowan asks for explanation of Circuit Breakers.

Mr. Conrad and Ms. Kirrane respond with what it is and how it is limited to Special Education.

Chair Thomas comments on class size numbers

Chair Thomas comments on the addition of a Special Ed person. Saves money.

Mr. Conrad agrees.

Chair Thomas asks about the Collaborative closing financial issues.

Mr. Conrad states that the Collaborative will be able to close without large funds needed.

Chair Thomas comments on IT challenges continuing.

Chair Thomas asks about cameras in the schools issue.

Mr. Conrad states that they have asked Capital for funds. Going to outside source for expertise. Explains various security issues with cameras. Would definitely need to have rules and regulations in place with policies in writing.

Mr. Conrad states that other communities have already put these in place.

Chair Thomas asks about class sizes.

Chair Thomas states that the Guideline number of 3.5% for the Schools was decided upon for reasons. States he would not be willing to agree to 4% and Schools needs to make the effort to get down to 3.5%.

Member O'Brien states that 4% is too high. That number would then become a base.

Member Mortenson would agree to 4% for this year. Is against fees.

Member Seibert states 4% is too high. Also not in favor of fees.

Member McClung states she agrees that the number should be 3.5%. Also not in favor of fees with possible exception for parking fees.

Member Steel asks if the Schools have considered possible increased students due to Carlisle Road project.

Mr. Conrad states no.

Member Steele states he would prefer going only to 3.5%.

Member Rowan states he would prefer no more than 3.5% but needs to see the total picture with better understanding of what Town revenue will be.

Chair Thomas expresses thanks to Mr. Conrad, Ms. Kirrane and Ms. Fidalgo for the excellent submissions and presentation.

5. 2024 ATM Draft Warrant/Vote

Chair Thomas refers to the Draft ATM Warrant and those Articles which have not yet been decided upon by the Committee.

Article 3

Members discuss this Article.

Motion to recommend approval by Member Mortenson.

Second by Member McClung

Roll call of Members in Attendance

Vote: 7-0-0

Motion carries

Article 5

Members discuss this Article.

Motion to recommend approval by Member Mortenson.

Second by Member Seibert

Roll call of Members in Attendance

Vote: 7-0-0

Motion carries

Article 7

Members discuss this Article.

Motion to recommend approval by Member Mortenson.

Second by Member McClung

Roll call of Members in Attendance

Vote: 7-0-0

Motion carries

Article 11

Members discuss this Article.

Motion to recommend disapproval by Member Steele.

Second by Member McClung

Roll call of Members in Attendance

Vote: 4-3-0 Motion fails

Article 12

Members agreed to defer to next meeting. **Article 14**

Members discuss this Article.

Motion to recommend approval by Member Mortenson.

Second by Member Seibert

Vote: 4-3-0

Motion fails

Article 15

Members discuss this Article.

Motion to recommend approval by Member Mortenson.

Second by Member Seibert

Roll call of Members in Attendance

Vote: 5-2-0

Motion carries

II. RECURRING BUSINESS

1. Meetings Attended

None

Chair Thomas states that he has added a discussion of future Agenda items to the Agenda for the next meeting.

2. Finance Committee Adjourns

Motion to adjourn by Member Mortenson

Second by Member Seibert

Roll call of Members in attendance.

Vote: 7-0-0

Motion carries

Time: 10:18 PM

John B. Connarton
Recording Secretary

DOCUMENT LIST

Agenda for February 9, 2023 Meeting

Minutes for Finance Committee Meeting for October 6, 2022

Community Preservation Committee FY24 Budget Presentation to Finance Committee February 9, 2023

Community Preservation Program Plan Spring 2023

Bedford Public Schools Superintendent's Proposed Fiscal 2024 Budget

Printed Slide Presentation – Superintendent's FY24 Proposed Fiscal Budget

