

February 16, 2023

**Minutes**

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

Others in attendance: David Castellarin, (Finance Director); Emily Mitchell (Select Board); Philip Conrad, Superintendent of Schools, Julie Kirrane, Finance Director, Schools, Brad Morrison, Chair, School Committee, Tony Fields, Planning Director

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 13, 2022.

Motion to approve the Minutes for October 13, 2022 as amended by Member Mortenson.

Second by Member Dunn

Roll call of members in attendance.

Vote: 9-0-0

Motion carries

**3. 2024 Budget/ATM Draft Warrant/Vote**

**Schools presentation by Superintendent Conrad and Schools Finance Director Julie Kirrane.**

Mr. Conrad states that the previously submitted budget has been amended and an Updated School Committee FY24 Budget Proposal had been submitted on February 14, 2023. Mr. Conrad

notes that the School Committee had approved three changes which reduced the budget by \$233,393 or 0.5 percent to a 3.5% increase over last year. The new total budget is \$46,737,588.

School Committee Chair Morrison noted that if it is determined that during this fiscal year further funding is needed, the School Committee will be seeking transfers from the Reserve Fund.

Members discuss this budget.

Motion to approve Schools budget by Member Steele

Second by Member McClung

Roll call of Members in attendance.

Vote: 8-0-1

Motion carries.

## **Article 22 – Zoning Bylaw Amendment – Two Family Dwellings**

Tony Fields, Planning Director appears for the Planning Board.

Mr. Fields discusses the Zoning Amendment and the purpose of the Amendment. Also notes that pursuant to Town Counsel, the Amendment will require a two-thirds majority at Town Meeting. Planning Board will go ahead with proposed amendment as is.

Mr. Fields states that the projected change will be slow. According to Assessors, most two families are older.

Mr. Fields states that there should be no increase in traffic.

Member O'Brien asks about the possible increase in school population.

Mr. Fields states that there should not be any.

Member O'Brien asks why?

Mr. Fields states that the size limit for a two family under this amendment is limited by floor area ratio.

Member Seibert asks why do this?

Mr. Fields notes that the previous substantial efforts taken to secure allowance of Accessory Dwelling units has only produced one application. Planning Board views this as being one of several measures referred to in the Housing Study. Also notes that there is little available for residents to downsize in Bedford. Mr. Fields also notes the "missing middle" in Bedford.

Member Seibert asks about any opposition noted so far.

Mr. Fields states not much.

Member Liu asks if this is an effort to convert to a Waltham.

Mr. Fields states that not trying to urbanize the Town.

Member Liu asks about statement that there will be no effect on taxes.

Mr. Fields states that this would depend on type of units.

Member Liu asks what is the difference between existing zoning and the proposed amendment.

Mr. Fields explains.

Member Mortenson asks about phasing this in.

Mr. Fields states that this was considered but not agreed.

Member Dunn states that she is concerned about this.

Member McClung asks about software issue in the budget.

Mr. Fields notes that is location selection.

Mr. Fields discusses allowing mixed use being allowed in business districts.

Member McClung states she would like to see a study of family size.

Mr. Fields states that you can't predict the end result.

Member Rowan asks about accessory dwelling units use result.

Mr. Fields discusses limits on the size of ADUs to 900sf. So far, only one application has been filed.

Member Rowan asks about economics. Is this being driven by developers or by homeowners?

Mr. Fields states that he believes that this will be driven by homeowners.

Chair Thomas states that should be cautious. Concerns about speed of this. Should hold off and look at other results elsewhere. What is the result? This would be better to come up in two years. Concerned about the costs of this and what will happen. Need to have more experience with this.

Mr. Fields states there is no place you can build a 2 family in Bedford today.

Motion to approve Article 22 by Member Mortenson

Second by Member Seibert

Roll call of Members in attendance.

Vote: 1-8-0

Motion fails

Motion to disapprove Article 22 by Member Steele

Second by Member McClung

Roll call of Members in attendance.

Vote: 8-1-0

Motion carries

Member McClung notes that she appreciates the work involved in this effort.

Chair Thomas states there are too many “don’t knows” here.

Member Liu states there are too many areas without proper information.

### **Open/Undecided Warrant Articles**

Motion to recommend Article 12-Operating Budget FY24 by Member Mortenson

Member Steele states that he wants to go through the Model first. Determine where Members stand on this.

Member Dunn states that she is not comfortable with this now. The Model has to be updated.

Motion to approve Article 11 – Salary Administration Plan Bylaw Amendment – Classification and Wage Schedule by Member Mortenson

Second by Member Seibert

Members discussion

Roll call of Members in attendance

Vote: 5-4-0

Motion carries

Motion to approve Article 14 – Salary Plan Additional Funding by Member Mortenson

Second by Member Seibert

Members discussion

Roll call of Members in attendance

Vote: 5-4-0

Motion carries

Chair Thomas suggests Members do a walkthrough of the Model. Member Mortenson comments on Line 379, OPEB; the Finance Committee Reserve Line 343 and the Stabilization Fund Line 381.

Motion to reduce Line 343 Finance Committee Reserve Fund to \$550,000

Second by Member Steele

Roll call of Members in Attendance

Vote: 9-0-0

Motion carries

Members discuss Stabilization Fund.

Ms. Mitchell explains Stabilization Fund increase..

Motion by Member McClung to increase Stabilization Fund by \$1.4 million.

Second by Member Mortenson

Roll call of Members in attendance

Vote: 4-5-0

Motion fails

Members discuss Line 66, State Aid

Motion to recommend Article 16 – Stabilization Fund by Member McClung

Second by Member Dunn

Roll call of Members in attendance

Vote: 5-4-0

Motion carries

Member Steele comments on procedure for Annual Town Meeting

Motion to recommend Article 8 – Proposed FY2024 Capital Projects Plan by Member Mortenson

Second by Member Seibert

Roll call of Members in attendance

Vote: 5-4-0

Motion carries

Motion to recommend Article 12 – Operating Budgets – Fiscal Year 2024 by Member Mortenson

Second by Member Seibert

Roll call of Members in attendance

Vote: 5-4-0

Motion carries

Member McClung suggests a discussion of School Department Federal Aid Balance – Impact Aid

#### **4. Discussion of Future Agenda Items**

Member Dunn comments on the Model, preparation and use and how to work with it. Discusses spread sheets she has prepared.

Chair Thomas agrees this should be made a future Agenda item.

Member McClung recommends a discussion of water and sewer service and rates as an Agenda item.

Member Liu recommends a discussion of the process and improvement of the process for Town Meeting.

Member McClung recommends looking at insurance rate issues as an Agenda item as well.

Member McClung also recommends having a discussion of Free Cash as an Agenda item.

Chair Thomas states that the next meeting should be March 2, 2023

## **II. RECURRING BUSINESS**

### **1. Meetings Attended**

Chair Thomas discusses the last Select Board meeting.

No other meeting reports.

### **2. Finance Committee Adjourns**

Motion to adjourn by Member Mortenson

Second by Member Steele.

Roll call of Members in attendance.

Vote: 9-0-0

Motion carries.

**Time: 10:40 PM**

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John B. Connarton  
Recording Secretary

## **DOCUMENT LIST**

Agenda for February 16, 2023 Meeting

Minutes for Finance Committee Meeting for October 13, 2022

Bedford Public Schools Superintendent's Revised Proposed Fiscal 2024 Budget

Printed Slide Presentation – Superintendent's FY24 Revised Proposed Fiscal Budget

FY24 School Committee Proposed Budget BY Responsibility Center – revised 2-14-23

Draft 2023 Annual Town Meeting Warrant

Model 2-16-23

Free Cash historical summary sheet by year 2011 -2021

Stabilization Fund balances summary sheet FY2012 – FY2022

Real Estate Levy Summary Sheet for Bedford 2013 – 2023

Approved FY23 Budget Totals Sheet with FY24 Model Numbers