

Town of Williamsburg

Minutes of the Finance Committee

Meeting held Virtually

31 March 2021

Members Present: Paul Wetzel, Linda Rowley, Richard Kisloski, Gil Loud, Julia Peters, Charlie Heath, Lisa Sheehy

Members absent: Eric Cerreta, Charles Dudek

Town Administrator Charlene Nardi and Robert Stinson were also present.

The meeting was called to order by co-chair Paul Wetzel at 6:06 p.m.

The Committee discussed whether or not it should support Article 2 on the Special Town Meeting Warrant to finance a Safety Complex. Financially the proposed project is estimated to cost the Town \$5.1 million plus \$1.1 million interest for a total of \$6.2 million. \$1 million will come from the stabilization fund and \$4.1 million will be borrowed to be paid back over 20 years. The proposal includes the removal of the Helen James School and the construction of the safety complex in its place.

As mentioned at the last meeting, all members agreed the current police & fire facilities need to be improved.

Some members were most concerned about the increased tax liability, especially during a time of great economic uncertainty. Is such a large facility needed given the low crime rate and number of fire calls? It was suggested that the cost of the proposed building be reduced by making the building smaller (two truck bays instead of three) or using a pre-engineered building. These options must be thoroughly investigated.

Other members recognized that the Town was at this same place in 2015. The current project is about 2,500 ft² less than the building proposed in 2015. These members are concerned about the lost opportunity cost of not building, of lost momentum of what is already been a three year process and cost \$130,000. The need for improved public safety facilities will not go away. If the Town does not move forward than it will be forced to spend money (estimated to be \$500,000 to \$600,000) on the current police and fire buildings as well as the James School, anticipating that it will be about five years before the process will be started again.

L. Sheehy moved that the Committee support the safety complex proposal (Article 2 on the Town warrant); D. Kisloski seconded the motion. The motion passed 4 (P. Wetzel, G. Loud, L. Sheehy, C. Heath—yes) to 3 (D. Kisloski, L. Rowley, J. Peters—no).

The Committee thought that it was important to lay out the true cost of the proposed safety complex project and pass out this information to the members of Town meeting. P. Wetzel agreed to create a fact sheet that would be reviewed by the Committee before distribution.

Library Director Beverly Bullock requested a reserve transfer of \$1137.19 for maintenance expenses. L. Sheehy moved to approve the transfer. J. Peters seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

The total estimated direct municipal aid to Williamsburg under the American Rescue Plan Act is \$721,550. Town Administrator Nardi briefed the Committee on the ways the Federal stimulus funds could be used by the Town at this time:

1. Help mitigate the economic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic
2. Used for premium pay for essential workers in the time period of 3 March and 24 December, 2020. It was noted that paying employees this premium increases pension liabilities for the Town.
3. Funds for revenue replacement for government services, and
4. To fund broadband communications and water/sewer infrastructure.

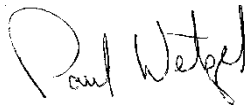
The money is available and can be used until December 2024.

The minutes of the 17 March 2021 meeting were reviewed. J. Peters moved to accept the minutes with minor corrections; L. Crowley seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

The next Finance Committee meeting is scheduled for 14 April 2021 at 6:00 p.m. to be held virtually.

There being no further business before the Committee, L. Rowley moved to adjourn the meeting and the motion was seconded by C. Heath. The motion passed unanimously and the meeting was adjourned at 7:50 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Paul Wetzel". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Paul R. Wetzel