

**Town of Williamsburg
Minutes of the Finance Committee
In Person (Town Hall)/Virtual Meeting
April 14, 2022**

Members Present: Paul Wetzel, Eric Cerreta, Charles Heath, Richard Kisloski, Julia Peters, Lisa Sheehy

Members Absent: Charles Dudek, Gil Loud, Linda Rowley

Present: Town Administrator Nicholas Caccamo (virtual), Fire Chief Jason Connell, Dan Bannister (W.F.D.), Joshua Connell (W.F.D.), James Ferron (W.F.D.), Mark Girard (W.F.D.), Robert Lapointe (W.F.D.), Paul Sanderson (W.F.D.), Dan Stuart (W.F.D.), Ken Taylor (W.F.D.), Superintendent Diana Bonneville (Hampshire Regional School District); Principal Lauren Hotz (Hampshire Regional High School), Principal Stacey Jenkins (Anne T. Dunphy School), Mike Nugai (Greenwood Emergency Vehicles, virtual), Patrick Sumner (virtual), Melissa Zawadzki (virtual).

The meeting was called to order by P. Wetzel at 6:09 PM.

Discussion of Fire Department budget requests

Chief J. Connell discussed the budget request for a Rescue Truck. He obtained a revised quote from Greenwood Emergency Vehicles of \$229, 875, reduced from the previous quote of \$240,000. In addition, \$10,000 will be required for radios. The reduced quote includes a F550 chassis, gasoline instead of diesel fuel, a 1 ½ cab instead of a double cab, and no pump. The cab would be used to consolidate and carry equipment, supplies, and medication that currently need to be carried on multiple vehicles. M. Nugai, representative of Greenwood Emergency Vehicles, stated that the need for a F550 truck was supported by a weight analysis, that a fire service rating is required for the warranty, and that a vehicle meeting National Fire Protection Association standards reduces potential legal liability. J. Connell noted that the Department has responded to an increased number of calls over the past 5 years, and more than half are medical calls including motor vehicle accidents.

R. Kisloski questioned what capacity and features are the minimum necessary and expressed the opinion that a less costly truck would meet the needs.

The Fire Department requests increasing the Administrative Assistant position from 10 to 15 hrs/wk. J. Connell described the Admin. Assistant's duties and noted that the Board of Selectmen did not object to the requested increased hours. The BOS supported the salary raise requested for the Fire Chief, while the Chief will no longer be paid from the FD Labor line when responding to calls.

Chief Connell believes the Fire Department's FY23 budget request is a low realistic budget.

There being no further questions regarding the Fire Department budget requests, Chief Connell and the W.F.D. firefighters left the meeting.

Discussion of School Budgets

Superintendent Diana Bonneville (Hampshire Regional School District) joined the meeting.

Principal S. Jenkins (Anne T. Dunphy School) reviewed the ATD School's FY23 budget which the School Committee voted to approve today. Increased personnel costs are primarily due to contractual column changes, such as personnel who obtain additional qualifications, and step increases. Williamsburg's portion of Central Office costs increased from 17.21% in FY22 to 17.71% in FY23. The school and Library agreed to recommend moving school library services from the ATD School budget to the Library's budget. The increase requested for Tech Software/Hardware is to allow planned replacement of technology to spread out and manage costs. Transportation cost increases are due to higher fuel costs and shortage of bus drivers. Special Education transportation has decreased because of a decrease in the number of students needing it.

The PreK Revolving Fund is generated from PreK tuition which has decreased during the pandemic. In previous years \$10,000 from the revolving fund has been used for a PreK teacher while in the FY23 budget that is reduced to \$5,000.

At the request of R. Kisloski, S. Jenkins reviewed the roster and roles of the ATD school staff. She noted that paraprofessional aides save money for the school because they enable the school to serve students who otherwise could require more costly out-of-district placements. She reviewed the numbers of choice-in students (10 in the current school year) and choice-out students (11 in the current school year) and noted that some choice-out students will age out of the school at the end of the current school year. S. Jenkins confirmed that she regularly verifies that the choice-out students live in Williamsburg. L. Hotz said that tomorrow Smith Vocational School will send the number of Williamsburg students enrolled for the coming school year.

Principal Jenkins noted that the ATD budget is nearly a level-funded budget compared to FY22. She pointed out that if a reduction is necessary, the best places would be reducing the Technology line item by \$6,000 and moving \$5,000 back to the PreK revolving fund, representing a total budget reduction of \$11,000.

Principal L. Hotz (Hampshire Regional High School) reviewed the highlights of the HRHS budget. It includes replacement of a boiler, installation of booster pumps, and the addition of two new staff positions, an adjustment counselor and a Tier II intervention specialist. Williamsburg's formula share of the operating budget assessment increased by 4.66%.

There being no further questions regarding the school budgets, Principal Jenkins, Principal Hotz, and Superintendent Bonneville left the meeting.

Discussion of operating budget and borrowing for Public Safety Complex

The Committee agreed to postpone voting on recommendations on the warrant articles to a future meeting.

The Committee discussed funding scenarios and timelines for the Public Safety Complex. M. Zawadzki reported on her calculations comparing various bonding scenarios comparing the costs of 20-year and 30-year bonding with and without use of \$580,000 of ARPA funds for the PSC. N. Caccamo reviewed the expected construction and borrowing timeline, with \$4.1M bonding currently expected in August 2022 and the completion of PSC construction in Fall 2023. There was discussion of the potential savings with by borrowing in phases over the course of construction rather than all at once, however with likely

increased origination costs and at the risk of interest rates increasing over time. N. Caccamo stated that David Eisenthal at Unibank is preparing borrowing scenarios for the town.

Discussion of cash analysis

P. Wetzel reviewed the current version of the tax levy worksheet and cash analysis. A current unknown is whether the town may be awarded a Municipal Vulnerability grant which would be received in August 2022 if awarded. Also unknown is the amount of any future American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds.

L. Sheehy moved that the Finance Committee recommend \$140,000 be taken from Free Cash to purchase a DPW end loader. R. Kisloski seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

N. Caccamo noted that if the initial PSC interest payment is paid from Free Cash, it could avoid the need for a debt exclusion. P. Wetzel noted that the Town has previously used this strategy for the ATD School debt.

The minutes of the April 7, 2022 meeting were reviewed. R. Kisloski moved to accept the minutes. J. Peters seconded the motion. C. Heath abstained. The motion passed unanimously.

The next meeting of the Finance Committee will be held on April 28, 2022 at 6:00 PM in person and virtually.

There being no further business before the Committee, R. Kisloski moved to adjourn and the motion was seconded by L. Sheehy. The motion passed unanimously and the meeting was adjourned at 8:20 PM.

Submitted by Lisa Sheehy