

Town of Longmeadow  
Minutes of the Joint Meeting of the Finance Committee and Select Board  
March 10, 2021 – Teleconference

Finance Committee Members present Andrew Lam-Chair, Maury Garrett Jr.-Vice Chair, Eileen Morin-Clerk, William Welch, Donald E. Griffith, Tom Dignazio and Armand Wray,

Visitors: Paul Pasterczyk-Finance Director

The meeting was called to order at 7:01 pm.

There were no visitor comments.

**Discussions:**

Andrew Lam expressed appreciation that the FY22 budget reflected the Committee's recommended limitation of any tax levy increase to no greater than 1.75% and stated the Committee's fiscal recommendations were made with the overall goal of maintaining level services for as long as possible under the constraints of the looming tax ceiling. He asked Town Manager Lyn Simmons for the reasons to hire an Assistant Town Manager at this time and whether any additional COVID-19 relief funds received in FY22 might serve to reduce the budget by offsetting some expenses. Lyn Simmons stated that the Assistant Town Manager's position would be instrumental in procuring more grants as well as provide expertise in project planning, zoning by-laws and environmental sustainability issues. Grant monies successfully awarded could help to offset the expenses related to this position. Paul Pasterczyk stated that federal funds for COVID-19 expenses thus far have been mainly restricted to cover unbudgeted COVID-related. If this remains true then the additional funds would not be used for non-pandemic expenditures. Tom Mazza of the School Department noted that the school district's FY22 budget was based on a pre-pandemic approach.

Paul Pasterczyk stated that the Capital Planning Committee reduced its request for some paving projects and that the Select Board's recommended policy of annual .25% increases in annual capital spending is usually done made only when such increases are affordable. Richard Foster of the Select Board mentioned that repairs to sidewalks were also cut from the FY22 budget. Mr. Pasterczyk later corrected his early statement regarding the Capital Planning Committee. The Capital Planning Committee increased its recommendation for Pavement Preservation projects but had reduced the amount for Sidewalks when compared to the Town Manager's recommendations.

Fire Chief Dearborn discussed the request for approximately \$125K for new radios that would be used by multiple departments and positions in order to sync alerts and responses. The current system, in place since 2006, is cumbersome and requires individually calling cellphones when discussions and services are needed.

Paul Pasterczyk mentioned that the Operation Stabilization Fund is at a record high level and believes this will have a positive effect on agencies that rate the Town's credit worthiness.

Bill Welch offered three examples of how the Town's leadership might learn from its experience with the pandemic: through possible repurposing of staffing, reducing staffing or staff hours devoted to rote clerical processes (such as town dump sticker approvals) and enhancing revenues in the School Choice program.

Andrew Lam expressed thanks to the Select Board for inviting the Finance Committee to the joint meeting and for allowing Committee members to share their thoughts, questions and concerns regarding the budget.

The Committee voted to adjourn the joint meeting at 8:08 pm (7-0 in favor)

Respectfully submitted

Eileen Morin, Clerk