



Town Of Webster

Massachusetts

Est. 1832

Finance Committee

350 Main Street
Webster, MA 01570

Sarah Sansom, Chairman
Laura Backus, Vice-Chairman
Matt Fitton, Secretary
Courtney Friedland, Recording Secretary

Michael Finamore
Jennifer Findlay
Christopher Markiewicz
Joshua Sterczala

FINANCE COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

March 11, 2021

Webster Town Hall, 350 Main Street, Webster, MA
via conference call in accordance with Governor Baker's
emergency "Order Suspending Certain Provisions of the
Open Meeting Law, G.L. c. 30A, §20
6:00 p.m.

The Finance Committee meeting was called to order by Chairman Sarah Sansom at 6:04 p.m. via Zoom Conference Call.

Present: Sarah Sansom (via conference call), Laura Backus (via conference call), Jennifer Findlay (via conference call), Joshua Sterczala (via conference call), Matt Fitton (via conference call) Michael Finamore (via conference call), Town Administrator Doug Willardson (via conference call), Town Accountant Timothy Bell (via conference call), and Finance Committee Secretary Courtney Friedland (via conference call).

Governor Baker issued an Executive Order modifying certain requirements of the Open Meeting Law, to enable public bodies to carry out their responsibilities while adhering to public health recommendations regarding social distancing. The Executive Order relieves public bodies from the requirement in the Open Meeting Law that meetings be conducted in a public place that is open and physically accessible to the public, provided that the public body makes provision to ensure public access to the deliberations of the public body through adequate, alternative means.

Christopher Markiewicz has resigned from the Finance Committee due to work commitments.

Meeting Minutes

Motion by Mat Fitton, seconded by Michael Finamore, to approve the meeting minutes of January 7, 2021.

Vote: Joshua Sterczala – yes, Michael Fianmore - yes, Matt Fitton – yes, Laura Backus – yes, Laura Backus – yes, and Sarah Sansom – yes.

Town Administrator's Report

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

- Easter Egg Hunt starting March 27th
- Earth Cleanup Day April 24th

1. Public Health and Safety

- a. Three police new hires start academy in April
- b. Major events in February
 - i. Fugitive arrested Feb 26th associated with Hartley Terrace shots fired in parking lot in January
 - ii. February 19th stolen motor vehicle suspect arrested after foot chase
 - iii. February 17th four arrests for heroin and cocaine after a traffic stop for no valid inspection sticker
- c. Coronavirus
 - i. 30 Cases last week
 - ii. Vaccine
 1. Enroll on website, call or come in. 1,700 responses
 2. Use state website or 211
 3. Call your doctor

2. Financially Responsible

- a. 2022 Budget:
 - i. School department requested 5.2% budget increase. Creates a deficit of approximately \$500,000
 - ii. Joint Selectmen, School Committee and Finance Committee meeting on April 26th at 6:00 pm
 - iii. Expecting significant funding from recent Federal stimulus

3. Economic Development

- a. CDBG Micro-enterprise loans now available for businesses under 5 employees; larger businesses should apply directly to the state. Lots of money still available
- b. Awarded \$30,000 to assist entrepreneurs, local business owners

4. Maintain Infrastructure

- a. Lake Parkway/Klebart Ave. Project to restart around April 20th.
- b. South Main. NGrid to finished gas lines on East Main and South Main; now doing repairs on side streets. Repave trenches in the spring.
- c. Town Hall roof. Project to start April 1st. Project
- d. Water Main Improvements. Bids due on March 11th

5. Effective Delivery of Services/Operations

- a. Reviewed Medicare eligible health insurance enrollees estimated savings of \$150,000
- b. Hired Sondra Murphy as our new Library Director. Will start on March 15th

6. Transparent, Open and Friendly Government

- a. Committee vacancies:
 - i. Finance Committee (2 openings)
 - ii. ZBA Associate Member (2 openings)

- iii. Conservation Commission alternate (2 openings)
 - iv. Water and Sewer Commission
 - v. Historical Commission (1 opening)
 - vi. Youth, Parks and Recreation Committee (2 openings)
 - vii. Trustees of Soldiers and Monuments
- b. Nomination papers can be taken out at the Town Clerk's office from now until Thursday, March 11, 2021. Nomination papers need 50 signatures and need to be returned to the Clerk's office for certification by 5 PM on March 15, 2021. The last day to object or withdraw is March 31, 2021 and the last day to register to vote is April 14th, 2021. Election day is May 3, 2021.
- i. Open seats:
 - 1. Board of Selectmen: 3 year term 1 seat
 - 2. School Committee: 3 year term 2 seats
 - 3. Regional Vocational School Committee: 3 year term 1 seat
 - 4. Board of Health: 3 year term 1 seat
 - 5. Finance Committee: 3 year term 1 seat
 - 6. Trustees of the Public Library: 3 year term 2 seats
 - 7. Trustee of Public Library: 2 year term 1 seat
 - 8. Redevelopment Authority: 5 year term 1 seat
 - 9. Housing Authority: 5 year term 2 seats
 - 10. Housing Authority: 4 year term 1 seat
 - 11. Town Clerk: 3 year term 1 seat

There will be speed control put into place when Lake Parkway is completed. The town is currently in the process of hiring a new Library Director.

Town Accountant Budget Reports

Town Accountant Timothy Bell presented the February year to date budget report. Everything within the budget looks reasonable at this point. Some of the same accounts are in a deficit for unforeseen reasons. Those accounts will be balanced within the budget.

Grant(s) Project Updates

Town Hall

The Town Hall Project will start on April 1, 2021. All of the other grants were covered in the Town Administrator's Report.

School Budget Status – Update

The School Committee approved their proposed budget with a 5.2% increase. It was requested they come to the next Finance Committee Meeting to present their budget. It was noted that the School Committee never submitted their budget to the Finance Committee.

Audit – Update

The Financial Statement has been provided in draft form. The town haven't received the Management Letter at this time.

School Building Committee – Update

The School Building Committee was deemed a very large building for the number of students enrolled. Therefore, the reimbursement rate percentage is a smaller amount. The MSBA will only pay a portion of the upgrades. Not everything is eligible for the reimbursement. They are looking into other options, such as, tear-down and re-build costs. Architects are finding out what the needs are for the school. It was asked why Webster has a low student count. Mr. Willardson expressed that he not sure why the enrollment number are down. The Bay Path assessment went up. The population and demographics have changed.

Personnel Advisory Board – Update

The Personnel Advisory Board met with Department Heads. They have a few recommendations.

Capital Project Planning

The Capital Project group is meeting soon. There is no pressing projects at this time.

FY2022 Budget

Mr. Willardson went through the FY22 budget presentation. The federal stimulus was passed yesterday and could affect the budget in a positive way. They will wait to see was the town and school gets for additional funding. There are additional grant opportunities that are available. The town and school need to be cautious because additional funding received this year will not be available next year.

Next Finance Committee Meeting

The Finance Committee will meet on April 8, 2021, at 6:00 p.m. The meeting will take place via Zoom.

Adjournment

Motion by Michael Finamore, seconded by Jennifer Findlay, to adjourn the meeting at 7:30 p.m.

Vote: Jennifer Findlay – yes, Joshua Sterczala – yes, Matt Fitton – yes, Michael Finamore – yes, Laura Backus – yes, and Sarah Sansom – yes.

Respectfully submitted,
Courtney Friedland