



Town Of Webster

Massachusetts

Est. 1832

Finance Committee

350 Main Street
Webster, MA 01570

Mat Fitton, Chairman
Sarah Sansom, Vice-Chairman
Joshua Sterczala
Courtney Friedland, Recording Secretary

Michael Finamore
Scott Dziedzic
Joseph Ralph

FINANCE COMMITTEE

MEETING MINUTES

Tuesday, October 4, 2022

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 Mat Fitton at 6:03 p.m. via Vonage Conference Call.

Present: Sarah Sansom (via conference call), Joseph Ralph (via conference call), Joshua Sterczala (via conference call), Scott Dziedzic (via conference call), Matt Fitton (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.

Pledge of Allegiance

Motion by Sarah Sansom, seconded by Joseph Ralph, to waive the Pledge of Allegiance. Call Vote: Joseph Ralph – yes, Joshua Sterczala – yes, Scott Dziedzic – yes, Sarah Sansom – yes, and Mat Fitton – yes.

Meeting Minutes

Motion by Sarah Sansom, seconded by Joseph Ralph, to pass over the meeting minutes of June 21, 2022. Call Vote: Jennifer Findlay – yes, Joseph Ralph – yes, Joshua Sterczala – yes, Scott Dziedzic – yes, Sarah Sansom – yes, and Mat Fitton – yes.

Town Administrator's Report

The Classification Study is almost complete. Most of the job descriptions are done and the Salary Survey is complete. The Collins Center has presented the draft to the Personnel Advisory Board. The evaluation format was presented at the last Department Head Meeting. A system will be developed once the Classification Study is complete.

The Conservation Agent has been advertised for a second time. Three candidates were scheduled to be interviewed, one of those candidates dropped out. Ann Morgan is working very hard in the additional role of agent, and she hopes to work with a new agent to make the Conservation permitting process more user friendly.

The Recycling Center contract is set to expire at the end of October. The Highway Superintendent, Kenny Pizzetti, and other Town officials are satisfied with the current service. However, the Town owns the equipment and if there is an issue, it is a Town issue. The current company agreed to take over maintenance and help with infrastructure with a possible 5-year contract. The Town will retain ownership and responsibility for the scale.

The Economic Development Committee met with Nichols College Employee Partnership Coordinator to discuss internship possibilities in Webster. Developing a more robust web presence and updating and maintaining web materials were identified as needs. They also discussed reaching out to the Business Alliance for job descriptions. A subcommittee of the Economic Development Committee spoke with Nichols College about an intern project to review the concerns about a hotel in Webster and to discuss how to keep businesses updated on information and Town services available to them.

There have been some summer traffic safety issues at Memorial Beach. There was a crosswalk on Thompson Road to the beach. When the road was repaved, the crosswalk was never put back. The Safety Committee agree that this area was dangerous and agreed it would be helpful to have a crosswalk and safety signs. This project is moving forward but would need to meet ADA compliance.

Police Chief Shaw graduated from a 10-week FBI National Academy training program. The graduation was broadcasted on YouTube. Deputy Chief Wheeler and his command staff did an excellent job in the Chief's absence.

The Rt. 395 Project is moving forward with a projected completion date of 2025. The design is 75% complete. The town is responsible for obtaining 12 easements, which consists of around 5 owners. This could cost the town money with appraisals, takings, and title transfers. The property is owned by the State and the area subject to the project is not maintained or owned by the town.

The Capital Improvement Plan is coming along. Capitals requests from Department Heads are due this week. It will allow the town to look at the bigger picture of the town's capital needs.

The Library is starting their 5-year Strategic process. This might bring some budget implications at some point.

Town Accountant Report

There is not much to review regarding current expenditures. The incumbrances do show a negative. Once the books are closed, this number should go to zero.

Tim Bell sent out the year end pre-closing check list of to do's. This changes slightly year to year. Reconciliations through July were completed in September. They are still working on receivables, which have been completed through July. Mr. Bell is still working on the closing and hopes to have it done before the end of October. The end of November/December is a very busy time for the Department of Revenue. It is anticipated that there will be a finding in the Fiscal Audit regarding procurement. The budgeting of the ARPA Funds might also be a finding. Mr. Bells has spoken to two auditors and they have both said different things. The Board of Selectmen will have this on their agenda for review/discussion.

FY2023 Goals and Objectives

The Board of Selectmen are putting together their Town Administrator Goals which includes a 5-year forecasting plan. The Finance Committee will add this to their next full agenda for discussion. This will allow Mr. LaFond to review Mr. Bell's previous goals and objectives.

Appointments

Motion by Sarah Sansom, seconded by Scott Dziedzic, to appoint Mat Fitton to the School Building Committee and Joseph Ralph to the Library Strategic Plan. Call Vote: Joseph Ralph – yes, Joshua Sterczala – yes, Scott Dziedzic – yes, Sarah Sansom – yes, and Mat Fitton – yes.

October Town Meeting Warrant

The Finance Committee nor the Board of Selectmen have a report, thus Article 1 will be passed over.

The town is still compiling the prior year bills for Articles 2, 3, and 4. As of today, there are only prior year bills for the General Fund. It was recommended putting an amount in the recommendation for approval.

Motion by Mat Fitton, seconded by Sarah Sansom, to recommend approval of Article:

2: Up to \$12,000.00

3: Up to \$5,000.00

4: Up to \$5,000.00

5: As read

Call Vote: Joseph Ralph – yes, Joshua Sterczala – yes, Scott Dziedzic – yes, Sarah Sansom – yes, and Mat Fitton – yes.

Article 6: A Public Hearing was held in August regarding this proposed project. Early estimates came in around 30-40 million dollars. MassDEP has a lower threshold than the Federal Government for PFAS levels. This will essentially be a mandate. The town's facilities need to be rehabbed. This is a huge issue across the State. This was recommended by the Water/Sewer Commission. This will be borrowed on the water rates. This article is only for the design phase of the project, which is estimated at two million dollars.

**Motion by Sarah Samson, seconded by Joseph Ralph, to recommend approval of Article 6
Call Vote: Joseph Ralph – yes, Joshua Sterczala – yes, Scott Dziedzic – yes, Sarah Sansom – yes, and Mat Fitton – yes.**

**Motion by Sarah Samson, seconded by Joseph Ralph, to recommend approval of Article 7
Call Vote: Joseph Ralph – yes, Joshua Sterczala – yes, Scott Dziedzic – yes, Sarah Sansom – yes, and Mat Fitton – yes.**

**Motion by Sarah Samson, seconded by Joseph Ralph, to recommend approval of Article 8
Call Vote: Joseph Ralph – yes, Joshua Sterczala – yes, Scott Dziedzic – yes, Sarah Sansom – yes, and Mat Fitton – yes.**

**Motion by Sarah Samson, seconded by Joseph Ralph, to recommend approval of Article 9
Call Vote: Joseph Ralph – yes, Joshua Sterczala – yes, Scott Dziedzic – yes, Sarah Sansom – yes, and Mat Fitton – yes.**

**Motion by Mat Fitton, seconded by Sarah Samson, to recommend approval of Article 10
Call Vote: Joseph Ralph – yes, Joshua Sterczala – yes, Scott Dziedzic – yes, Sarah Sansom – yes, and Mat Fitton – yes.**

Motion by Joseph Ralph, seconded by Sarah Samson, to recommend refer to sponsor for Article 11. Call Vote: Joseph Ralph – yes, Joshua Sterczala – yes, Scott Dziedzic – yes, Sarah Sansom – yes, and Mat Fitton – yes.

Next Finance Committee Meeting

The Finance Committee will meet on Monday, October 17, 2022 at 6:30 p.m. This will be prior to Town Meeting at Bartlett High School.

The Finance Committee will meet Wednesday, November 9, 2022 via Vonage Conference Call.

Informational Mail

Ms. Sansom sent out the Finance Committee Handbook and Financial Policies. She also sent out information regarding the Association of Town Finance Committee's Annual Meeting on November 5, 2022 at the Sharon Community Center.

Any Other Items Not Available at the Time of Posting

Mr. Bell stated after speaking with the HillTop Securities, the Town's Consultants, they will be going before the Municipal Finance Oversight Board in November. The town is looking for approval as soon as possible with concerns that rates might go up on December. The cost to bond would be higher. This would be primarily for the Bartlett High School Reconstruction project. Bonding usually happens at the end of the project, but to lock in at a lower rate, the town would bond half in December. If the town waits, it runs the risk of going over the 5% rate as estimated in the proposal. The town would be able to refinance after 11 years. The town could be at risk if they do not bond earlier. Many communities are moving up their borrowings.

Adjournment

**Motion by Joseph Ralph, seconded by Scott Dziedzic to adjourn the meeting at 7:38 p.m.
Call Vote: Joseph Ralph – yes, Joshua Sterczala – yes, Scott Dziedzic – yes, Sarah Sansom – yes, and Mat Fitton – yes.**

Respectfully submitted,
Courtney Friedland