

Maynard Finance Committee
Zoom Meeting 833 9938 9275
8/24/2020
Final

Present: Tom Black, Elliot Bruce, Peter Campbell, Ken Estabrook (Chair), Alannah Gustavson, Jillian Prendergast (Vice Chair)

Absent: None

Others: Kelly Kane, Colleen Andrade, Wayne White, Brian Haas, Greg Johnson, Mike Guzzo, Lydia Clancy, Mary Brannelly, Natasha Rivera, Armand Diarbekirian, concerned citizens

Meeting called to order 7:06pm. This meeting was not recorded.

Ken went over the Zoom meeting rules and our agenda for this meeting.

The committee viewed the minutes from August 10th. Peter made a motion to accept, Alannah 2nd. Vote 5-0 to accept, 1 abstain.

Chair updates

Ken had sent some email updates; one being the change of Town Meeting time and place. Ken anticipates we may not have all article recommendations approved this evening to make into the printed warrant as this is our last meeting before the Sept 1 deadline. We will likely have an additional handout at STM. Ken believes the STM to be run similarly to the ATM where he is seated up front, and the rest of the committee are in their cars. We do need a quorum in case a vote is needed on the floor.

No member updates.

Maynard School Committee Discussion

Ken went over the DESE requirements for schools to make 3 models for reopening. The School Committee has voted to have a mostly remote opening, and phase into a hybrid model.

Ken anticipates going into some details about the reopening plan, but that discussion will focus on the budgetary implications.

The state does not have a finalized budget, but gave some guidelines that Chapter 70 funding will remain at FY20 levels.

The BOS has been given a recommendation for balancing the budget. This includes a series of cuts. The schools were given a cut of approx. \$265k.

Ken turned the discussion over to Lydia and Brian. Lydia asked Ken to open an updated spreadsheet with their additional expenses related to COVID. Brian said about 60 kids will return to in-person school because they were identified as having trouble being successful in a remote model. They will also have staff in the buildings. The rest of the students will be remote. Teachers have the option to come to the buildings or stay home, depending on their needs and students' needs. Additional needs for COVID include PPE, an additional nurse, additional custodial needs, technology upgrades, and additional training. They added Google Enterprise to better serve teachers in the remote model. They are looking to hire building subs, who are onsite and part of the payroll, instead of the usual substitute model because many substitutes

are often retirees and in this case, a higher risk population. Bus monitors are also needed to help keep to covid guidelines on buses. They are still collecting leave requests from staff as well. The budget also builds in a bit of compensatory services for students who may need more help due to the disruption to schools.

Ken asked a clarifying question about the Cares Act funding. The spreadsheet has a section called "Submitted to Chief Stowers" for the items they have asked for reimbursement for. Not all expenses are eligible for Cares Act reimbursement, and the money given to the town via the Cares Act also has to cover other town departments.

Brian clarified that buying ChromeBooks is a big expense because below grade 6 never had 1 to 1 chrome books provided.

The next sheet showed the Funding Sources coming to the town, which consisted of grants and an estimation for the Cares Act.

The last sheet showed differences in revenue from FY19 to FY21. There are several unknowns for FY21, including PreK, Facilities Rental, Excel, Transportation, and Food Service.

Ken asked when the operational plans for the Fowler and High School will be done, so their financial needs will be known. Brian said the program won't change the financial needs at this point. Ken followed up asking about the possibility of high school students having the option of being remote or hybrid increasing the staffing costs. Brian does not think they would need more staff for it. Lydia added that there may be some issues with teachers at the high school who may not be willing/able to teach both remote and in person, which could lead to needing additional teachers. Natasha added that the safety protocols are adding to the bus expenses, which the schools will have to absorb.

Jill asked what the \$265k budget cut would look like. Brian said the building subs would be cut by half, additional nurses by zero, some technology reductions. Ken asked what those reductions would mean. Brian said without the building subs, they would use more paras, each building would still have a nurse and one floating. Brian explained what a Comfort Room is, which involves negative air pressure to quarantine students if needed, and that that would need a dedicated nurse to be there when used.

Jill asked if the MSBA program is still being funded before we vote at STM. Brian said yes, it is still moving forward.

Alannah asked a clarifying question about the \$265k coming out of the additional covid expenses versus the operational budget. School committee members explained that the operational budget couldn't be cut by that and that is why they asked BOS for relief.

Peter asked where the money not covered by CARES act was coming from. The SC said those positions added may be cut. He asked if the expenses equalled the funding. They are close, but not exact.

Ken asked if there were any expenses, such as sports, that would provide some relief. Brian said that they would be pretty minimal, but it is an unknown at this point. Ken clarified, that if we were to proceed as if we were going to have sports and then they are cancelled, what expenses would we incur. Brian said he would not eliminate unless absolutely necessary because extracurriculars are important for students, and some of it is based on MIAA.

Ken asked what the status of the Excel program is. Brian said that if there was a program, it is mostly self sustaining, and that is the expectation for it. Greg added that the town has had to cover some unemployment costs for Excel staff.

Ken gave the School Committee a chance to add any final thoughts.

Natasha asked if some relief could come from general stabilization. She also added that the facilities loss, about \$57k, and the additional transportation costs, plus the PreK costs for supporting IEPs. Those will need to be absorbed by their budget.

Lydia reminded us that Capital Improvements can be bonded, whereas operational budgets cannot. Perhaps the feasibility study could be a capital expense instead.

Brian thanked the Fincom for having him and appreciates any support given to the schools.

STM Prepartation

Ken shared the draft Fincom recommendations for warrant articles.

The final order of articles has not yet been decided.

Ken made a motion that we accept Article A with recommendation, Tom 2nd, 6-0 vote to accept.

Ken made a motion to accept Articles O, B, BB, CC, Z, and Y, Tom 2nd, 6-0 vote to accept.

Ken made a motion to accept Articles N, HH, C, H, RR, Elliot 2nd.

Discussion: Alannah asked if Open Space was irrevocable. Peter asked if the liquor license is an additional one, or just a change of information. He also asked where the first year monies for the lease of the mower is located, it is in the operating budget.

Vote 6-0 to accept.

Article Q discussion: Ken asked what we have in capital stabilization. Greg provided the numbers: FY21 \$699.633 in capital stabilization. Ken asked if there was a recommended amount in capital stabilization. Mike said the DOR recommendation is for towns to have 10% in all of their reserves combined. Greg and Mike reiterated that 10% is very aspirational. Ken asked what was typical, and Mike thought 3-5%. Ken asked what level is considered very concerning. There is not a hard and fast rule. Mike guessed about 1%, Greg said it was very situational. Peter added that the purpose matters as well, for example the covid situation, versus dipping into it in a healthy year.

Ken asked about General stabilization and Greg said currently we have \$2,376,521.

Ken lost connection to the meeting.

Greg became Zoom host, and Jillian took over the Chair position.

We moved onto Article OO discussion. Jillian went over the article and our recommendation comments.

Peter made a motion to recommend with the addition of the General Stabilization Fund amount added, Tom 2nd Vote 5-0 to accept.

Jillian went over article MM and our recommendation comments. Alannah asked a clarifying question for the bridge process. Peter made a motion to recommend Article MM with the amount of the Capital Stabilization Fund added, Jill 2nd. 5-0 vote to accept.

Articles D, J, and K: Jillian went over the articles and our recommendation comments.

Ken returned to the call. He motioned that we recommend D, J, and K. Peter 2nds. Alannah added that CPC discussed that a separate vote is needed to return the unused monies to the

CPC. Ken changed wording on comments. Ken made a motion to accept as changed. Tom 2nd. 6-0 vote accept to.

Ken made a motion to accept article Q, Peter 2nd 6-0 vote to accept.

Peter suggested that we vote to recommend Article E, but not accept the comments.

Ken made a motion to recommend Article E with comments provided at Town Meeting. Jill asked if maybe we could just change the recommendation tonight. Peter and Ken discussed adding wording to have voters refer to our bigger picture. Further discussion led to keeping motion as made. Tom 2nd, Vote 6-0 to accept.

Ken shared the spreadsheet with the cuts made to the General Government budget line items for Article F discussion. Alannah asked for clarification on where exactly those cuts would come from. Lydia clarified. Ken said that we shouldn't vote without a course of action addressed to the BOS. Peter suggested deferring the recommendation. Ken asked the Committee members thoughts on deferring and what actions they would like to take. Greg also recommended that the Committee watch the video of the August BOS meetings with regards to this cut. The Committee felt they were not ready to vote on a recommendation this evening. Ken asked the Committee to send along any requests for information from the School Committee that he will pass on.

Next meeting is September 14th. We will have to discuss Article E and F. Ken would like a couple members to get together to discuss the reasons for F. Peter, Elliot, and Jill will work on Article F. Ken, Tom, and Alannah will work on Article E. Ken asked for the team recommendations by September 10th.

Ken also asked the Committee to look through the draft of the Fincom recommendation for a long term outlook and give feedback.

Alannah motioned to adjourn 11:16, Tom 2nd, 6-0 vote to accept.

FinCom Reserve FY20

Expenditures: \$77,630.00 Balance: \$172,370.00

FinCom Reserve FY21

Approved at Town Meeting, Article 13: \$250,000.00