

TOWN OF PRINCETON, MA
Princeton Advisory Committee
Meeting Minutes
December 12, 2019 – 6:00 p.m.

AC members in attendance: Wayne Adams, Helga Lyons, Rick McCowan, Judy Dino, Mary Jo Wojtusik

AC members absent: Bill Lawton

Also present: TA Sherry Patch, SB Chair Karen Cruise, SB Richard Bisk, Highway Superintendent Ben Metcalf, Road Advisory Committee members, Town Treasurer Jim Dunbar, Council on Aging Director Aimee Kindorf & Members of Council of Aging, Vicki Maimone, Chair of Building Maintenance Committee.

Advisory Committee (AC) Agenda

- Draft 2021 Budget review: AC/SB/TA review of draft budgets for Roads, Buildings, Treasury, General Government and Council on Aging.

Meeting Minutes

Meeting started at 6:05 p.m.

Discussion

Ben Metcalf presented the operating and capital budget for the Highway Department. The operating budget is level funded. It was noted that the salary variance from the prior superintendent to the current superintendent was transferred to regular wages to cover over-time payments. The line item for on-going road maintenance increased from the prior years amount of \$350K to \$364K.

Long-term capital requests were as follows:

- Loader at a cost of \$250K (replacing 21 year-old existing loader) – needed for FY21
- Propane powered generator at a cost of \$46.2K (replacing 1979 trailer mounted diesel-powered generator which has not worked for years) – needed for FY21
- Large (80' x 65') storage facility for de-icing materials at a cost of \$120K – this would be a new facility to bring de-icing materials inside. Most of the materials are currently stored outside, which presents two problems: 1) material freezes and can't be used until it thaws; 2) salt leaches into the ground and nearby pond (creating pot. Environmental issues) – needed for FY21
- Backhoe at a cost of \$85K (replacing 23 year-old existing backhoe) – needed for FY21
- Dump Truck at a cost of \$100K (replacing current 21-year dump truck) – needed for FY24
- Trackless MT7 with attachments for \$150.3K – this would be new equipment for the Town to allow for the maintenance of sidewalks. Reportedly, the construction of new sidewalks in East Princeton require the Town to provide on-going maintenance. AC/SB requested a copy of

respective contract. It was proposed to research the cost of hiring a contractor to provide the service.

Road Advisory Committee Member Kevin Toohey presented the road budget. The request is to increase the annual amount from \$350K to \$364K which is slightly higher than the amount of \$360K (or 3.55%) recommended by the Collins Center. The goal is to increase the road budget gradually to cover the projected \$16.7MM in identified projects over the next 10 years with annual costs of \$1.2 million to \$1.5 million. The cost will be partially covered by Chapter 90 funds plus grant funds available. It was reported that Ann Neuburg (new member to the Road Advisory Committee) will be researching and applying for the various grants available.

Director of Council on Aging Aimee Kindorf presented the operating budget for the Council on Aging. The overall budget is level funded with some movements within expense items. Notably, salaries will be up by \$2K to allow for additional staffing at the senior center. The expense is offset by lower heating costs (down \$2K).

Treasurer Jim Dunbar presented the operating budgets for Treasurer, debt schedule and employee benefits.

- The treasury budget is level funded with the exception of a 2% salary increase. It was suggested to investigate electronic mailing of the tax bills in order to lower the annual postage expenses of \$5.2K.
- The debt schedule will decline from \$487.1K in FY20 to \$437.7K in FY21 as the TPS Green Repair Debt will be paid off and interest expenses are assumed to be slightly lower due to debt amortization. It is noted that FY21 will have \$25K in interest expenses for an expected new debt issue of \$1.2 million to cover the cost of Bagg Hall renovations. Debt amortization is not included in FY21.
- The budget for employee benefits shows an increase by \$22.4K to a total of \$807.1K. It was noted that these figures are pre-liminary as retirement obligations have not been communicated to the Town (as based on an updated actuarial study) and insurance rates are still pending. The budget includes ~\$30K in OPEB obligations, which the Town pays directly as OPEB is not fully funded.

TA Sherry Patch presented the operating budgets for Town Administrator, Administrative Assistant, Town Clerk, Elections & Regulations, Street Lights, Assessor, Environmental and Building Maintenance.

- The Town Administrator FY20 budget has a surplus of \$32.5K (pegged for potential new position or contract work to help with town administration) was eliminated from the budget. SB/AC explained the context of this budget item and TA will consider to keep all or part of this amount in the budget to help with on-going construction projects.
- The budget for Administrative Assistant is up \$3.7K before consideration of the revolving account.
- The Town Clerk budget is level funded except for 2% salary increase and doubling of professional development fees.
- The budget for elections is up \$5.2K to \$13.78K due to an 82% increase in professional services and projected four elections during FY21 (to include 2 Town Meetings).
- The budget for street lights is down \$693 due to installation of LED lighting.

- The Assessor's budget is level funded with a 2% salary increase offset by a reduction in other expenses.
- The environmental budget is level funded.
- The building maintenance budget is level funded with a 3.27% salary increase (to include over-time) offset by a decrease in building repairs and maintenance. An expense item for \$3.5K in postage needs clarification.

Chair of Building Maintenance Committee Vicki Maimone informed SB/AC that they are in the process of information gathering and had two immediate requests:

- A generator for emergency dispatch to be located at the Princeton Public Safety Building was purchased in 2014 with grant funds. Since the emergency dispatch center was not implemented, the generator has been stored at the Highway barn. Chief of Police Michele Powers would like to have the generator installed at the current Public Safety Building. Respective expenses would be \$12K to \$16K. These funds were appropriated in 2014 via a special article. It will be necessary to determine what happened to these funds to see if they are still available to proceed with the installation.
- It was noted that better clarification of responsibilities for building maintenance, maintenance planning, procurement and work order documentation is needed. TA Sherry Patch will work with building manager to address these issues.

The AC Meeting adjourned at 8:45 p.m.

Handouts: Budget documents of all departments

Minutes recorded by Helga Lyons, Secretary