

TOWN OF PRINCETON, MA  
Princeton Advisory Committee  
Meeting Minutes  
March 10, 2020 – 7:00 p.m.

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

**Advisory Committee (AC) Agenda**

Joint meeting with Select Board and TA to review draft FY21 town budget

**Meeting Minutes:** Meeting started at 7:00 p.m.

**Budget Discussion**

**Parks and Recreation:**

AC had requested a business plan during prior year's budget season to address the usage of Krashes Field. Demand for the fields has been diminishing as groups outside town no longer use the fields, hence funds are insufficient to maintain the fields. In the meantime, the Parks and Recreation Director has resigned. The Parks and Recreation Commission is having a hard time keeping volunteers.

A lengthy discussion took place re:

- 1) What to do with the fields and who should manage them?
- 2) After school programs and who should manage them?

A budget was set at \$21K annually to include \$10K for a new recreation director (at 10 hours/week), \$10K for the maintenance of fields and \$1K for electricity and a phone.

**Capital Budget Items:**

- TPS Parking Lot – the budget figure of \$100K was adjusted downward to \$70.9K as based on a quote from Massachusetts Broken Stone. The work includes milling and repaving of the entire parking lot. It was noted that the parking lot will need to be included in a future maintenance program as there is no evidence of prior maintenance.
- Police Cruiser - The request for two police vehicles was reduced to the replacement of the 2009 Chief's cruiser. The second vehicle will go into next year's budget. At that point, hybrid options might be available as well as Green Community grants
- IT proposals – Microsoft 365 or Outlook is not needed for the police cruisers. The overall IT strategy is still in development and budget figures are not finalized

- Town Gazebo – request for additional \$5K was deleted. Wood shingle for the roof replacement was deemed appropriate
- Front End Loader – it was suggested to undertake more research into a used vehicle

#### Operating Budget Items:

- Management Salaries – This amount includes \$35K approved for this year. The amount has yet to be used. The item will be moved into management expenses and remain available for projects as needed. The amount will be carried into next year's budget.
- Police equipment – an amount of \$19K was added to the operating budget for special project support (previously listed as capital items)
- Library – more detail is needed on salary study to finalize salaries
- WRSD Budget – large increase of 4.8% was reduced slightly (\$100K for district) due to lower health insurance expenses. It was noted that the budget increase is excessive and lacks transparency. In particular, salary increases, benefit costs and a large increase in retirement obligations are driving the increase and sufficient details were not provided. More discussion will follow regarding recommendations of this budget item.
- Montachusett Budget – yet to be submitted
- PFAS – the amount was increased from \$10K (interest only) to \$100K to reflect the first year of the tax burden approved at STM
- The budget presentation was adjusted to show the overall increase from the prior year. The resulting increase was \$426.7K or 4.63% with the main drivers being PFAS at \$100K and the WRSD School Budget at \$237K or a 4.8% increase from the prior year.

#### Revenue Items:

- Tax Levy – to be determined
- Reserve for Abatements – to remain at historical levels

The next joint SB/AC/TA budget meeting is scheduled for 3/17/20 at 7 pm.

The AC Meeting was adjourned at 10:05 p.m.

Minutes recorded by Helga Lyons, Secretary