



TOWN OF TEWKSBURY
TOWN HALL
1009 MAIN ST
TEWKSBURY, MASSACHUSETTS 01876
FINANCE COMMITTEE

Robert Kocsmiersky, Chair
Richard Levasseur, Vice Chair
Jason Christian, Clerk
David Aznavoorian
Susan Bishop
Thomas L. Cooke
Stephanie Klinkenberg-Ramirez

Finance Committee

September 12, 2022 – Meeting Minutes

1. Call to Order

The Public Meeting of the Finance Committee was called to order by Mr. Rob Kocsmiersky - Chair at 7:00 PM on Monday, September 12, 2022. Also present at the meeting were Mr. Richard Levasseur – Vice Chair, Mr. Jason Christian, Clerk, Mr. David Aznavoorian and Mr. Thomas Cooke.

Also participating in the meeting was Town Manager Mr. Richard Montouri.

Ms. Susan Bishop and Ms. Stephanie Klingenberg- Ramirez were not present at the meeting.

2. Review Special Town Meeting Warrant

Prior to the individual warrant article review the committee talked about general overall funding for the budget. Town manager Richard Montouri reviewed some information with the committee. Areas of discussion included:

- State Aid money came in higher than projected.
- New growth came in higher-than-expected, as well as certain businesses personal property due to an audit that was done.
- Motor vehicle excise tax receipts were down.
- Interest earnings were down.

More details can be found in the FY22 and FY23 Budget Update document that the town manager provided the committee on August 28.

Committee members discussed the state of the overall economy and how the costs of construction and supply chain issues could impact any budget priorities. The DPW/School Maintenance Facility was the main part of this discussion. The town manager stated that we will not commit to what we cannot sustain.

Certification of free cash is expected shortly. Committee member Mr. Thomas Cooke had additional questions for the town manager. It was decided that Mr. Cooke and Mr. Montouri would meet in the near term to get the questions answered.

Article 1

This article adjusts the salaries of several elected officials for Fiscal Year 2023.

Committee member Mr. Richard Levasseur asked if there was any comparisons done to other towns salaries and if so where does Tewksbury fall in the range of salaries for these elected officials. Town manager Richard Montouri said that he will provide a spreadsheet with the analysis.

Article 2

This article relates to unpaid bills that town meeting needs to approve. The largest of which is unemployment assistance (due to Covid) of \$126,041.35

Town manager Mr. Richard Montouri noted that after investigations into fraudulent claims this is what the final number of unemployment assistance came out to be.

Committee member Mr. Thomas Cooke talked about what fiscal years these costs covered and that it should be noted in the article. Town manager Mr. Richard Montouri noted that it would be and these costs were spread over three fiscal years - 2020, 2021, and 2022

Article 3

Article 3 raises and appropriates funds for a number of town budgets for specific purposes.

Committee members had discussions on several portions of this article.

With respect to the police accounts it was noted that this would allow for the town to hire four additional police officers with the goal being a reduction in overtime costs that are currently being incurred. Police Chief Columbus mentioned that the department has been updating policies and procedures that are critical for the department's overall success.

With respect to the fire accounts the goal is to hire personnel so that the town could have a second ambulance running from 7 AM to 7 PM at least five days a week. This would increase revenue for the town. Depending on staffing the second ambulance may be able to operate even more often. Fire Department Chief Kearns went into detail on the specific items related to his department.

With respect to DPW engineering and salaries this would allow the town to hire three additional staff members to focus on road maintenance and snow removal along with sidewalk improvements.

Committee members had general questions related to police and fire operations that Chief Columbus and Chief Kearns responded to.

Committee member Mr. Thomas Cooke stated that he would be bringing up additional questions on article 3 and others when he meets with the town manager at a date in the near future.

Article 4

Article 4 transfers money from free cash to be expended on several specific items as noted in the warrant.

Committee members had questions regarding the police transport vehicle upgrade. Police Chief Columbus expressed his concern that not doing so would be putting the town in jeopardy. The vehicle is quite old and is not designed to today's standards needed for prisoner transportation.

Other increases were due to increased costs for vehicles.

It was noted that work being done by the engineering and DPW department for water related projects were being funded as follows: one third of the cost would come from stormwater management fees collected by the town one third would come from the state and one third would be borne by the town.

Article 5

Article 5 authorizes the Town to borrow funds for the cost to construct a DPW/School Maintenance Facility.

Committee members had a lot of discussion around this article specifically around the cost given the current state of the economy. The current costs estimates have the project \$4.3 million over budget. What would happen if we were not able to pay for it with the \$26.5 million dollars that is allocated with this article. Town Manager Richard Montouri spoke in depth regarding the existing design and has his staff looking at the current design reviewing what can be adjusted to bring it in line with the budget. The bottom line is if we cannot get this facility built with the \$26.5 million dollars, it will not be built at this time.

Committee member Mr. Thomas Cooke would go into more detail with the Town manager regarding his questions.

Article 6

Article 6 seeks to transfer \$7 million into the town stabilization fund.

Committee members had no questions on this article

Article 7

Article 7 seeks to add an additional \$25,000 from the Community Preservation Fund for improvements to the skate park on Livingston Street. The additional money is due to the fact that costs have increased for the improvements.

Committee members did not have any questions on this article

Article 8

Article 8 allows for the establishment of retail marijuana sales in Tewksbury.

Committee member Richard Levasseur had a question on the fines in section 5.10.070 asking if those fines were set by the State or Cannabis Control Commission or if the town could adjust them. Town Manager Mr. Richard Montouri would get the answer to the committee.

Committee members did not have any other questions on this article

Article 9

Article 9 is a zoning article amending the Tewksbury Zoning Bylaws to allow for retail marijuana sales in specific zones.

Committee members did not have any questions on this article

Article 10

Article 10 allows the Town to impose a local 3% excise tax rate on the sale of retail marijuana.

Committee members did not have any questions on this article

3. Town Manager

Finance Director Reports

- None

Transfers

- None

4. **Finance Committee member representation on other committees**

- a. Committee member Mr. Thomas Cooke submitted reports on the elementary school building project and noted that it was on time and on budget with a January 2023 opening planned.
- b. Committee member Mr. Thomas Cooke had nothing new to report on the Green committee.
- c. Committee member Mr. Jason Christian reported that there was no new news on the bylaw committee.

5. **Ratify Payment of Recording Secretary Timesheets**

A recording secretary timesheet for \$503.60 was submitted.

MOTION: A motion was made by Mr. David Aznavoorian to approve the timesheet, seconded by Mr. Jason Christian.

Motion Carried 4-0-1 Committee member Mr. Richard Levasseur abstained from the vote

6. **Approval of Meeting Minutes**

MOTION: A motion was made by Mr. David Aznavoorian to approve the meeting minutes of March 15, 2021 seconded by Mr. Jason Christian.

Motion Carried 5-0

MOTION: A motion was made by Mr. David Aznavoorian to approve the meeting minutes of March 22, 2021 seconded by Mr. Jason Christian.

Motion Carried 5-0

MOTION: A motion was made by Mr. David Aznavoorian to approve the meeting minutes of April 5, 2021 seconded by Mr. Jason Christian.

Motion Carried 5-0

MOTION: A motion was made by Mr. David Aznavoorian to approve the meeting minutes of April 26, 2021 seconded by Mr. Jason Christian.

Motion Carried 5-0

MOTION: A motion was made by Mr. David Aznavoorian to approve the meeting minutes of May 24, 2021 seconded by Mr. Jason Christian.

Motion Carried 5-0

MOTION: A motion was made by Mr. David Aznavoorian to approve the meeting minutes of July 12, 2022 seconded by Mr. Jason Christian.

Motion Carried 5-0

7. **Adjourn**

MOTION: A motion was made by committee member Mr. David Aznavoorian to adjourn at approximately 9 PM seconded by committee member Mr. Thomas Cooke.

Motion Carried 5-0

The next meeting is scheduled for September 26, 7 PM at the town hall.

Documents Presented and/or Discussed:

- Fiscal year 2022 and 2023 budget update memorandum from Town Manager Mr. Richard Montouri
- Excel spreadsheet Recap FY2023 and Revenue Info dated 8-27-22 from Town Manager Mr. Richard Montouri
- State Aid Summary FY23 State Budgets from Town Manager Mr. Richard Montouri
- Special Town Meeting Warrant as of September 12, 2022
- Summary document of proposed transfers relating to the Special Town Meeting articles from Town Manager Mr. Richard Montouri
- Elementary School Building Project Report Update dated September 8, 2022
- Elementary School Building Committee Report Project Financial Update dated September 8, 2022

Approved by FinCom at their 9/26/22 meeting