

Finance Committee Meeting

Tuesday May 11, 2021

Called to order by Chairman Joe Freitas at 6:03 pm.

Committee Members in Attendance

Per Covid – 19 verbal roll call of attendance:

Chairman Joe Freitas, Clerk Michele Hamilton, Matthew Chabot, Tabitha McCrohan.

Motion was made and seconded to accept the minutes of May 5, 2021 as written. Verbal roll call for approval and the committee unanimously voted to approve the minutes as written.

New Business/Mail

Chairman Joe Freitas shared a couple of emails received from various locations regarding our financial status. First, Massachusetts Department of Revenue, Director of Accounts, and Mary Jane Handy sent email to the Finance Committee regarding the amount of certification of free cash based on the un-audited balance sheet submitted to the state.

In accordance with the provisions of G.L. Chapter 59, section 23, as amended, the amount of certified amount of available funds or “free cash” as of July 1, 2020 for the Town of Berkley is \$1,667,516.00.

Chairman Joe Freitas shared with the committee an email sent to the Director of the Library requesting information related to the State Funds Account. Director Carol Buote sent a detailed email showing a starting balance of 7/1/2020 of \$22,627.64. In addition she provided detailed information related to what the funds can be utilized for. State aid is meant to provide money for supplemental library materials and services. State funding cannot be used to meet the Municipal Appropriate Requirement (MAR or as we call it, the magic number).

Thank you!

Chairman Joe Freitas expressed the committee’s gratitude for all the assistance received in the preparation of the Fiscal Year Budget of 2022 from the Town Administrator, Town Accountant, Town Treasurer, Town Collector and the Town Assessors. Without their help and diligent, a difficult task became that much simpler for the Finance Committee.

The purpose of this meeting is to walk through the Fiscal Year 2022 budget and hopefully finalize, vote and approve a budget to be presented to the Selectman on May 12, 2021.

Reviewing the front page, with the revenue changes funds received from Motor Vehicle Excise, New Growth and E.M.S. Receipts Reserved funds and changes in Back charges, to balance out the budget the amount of free cash needed is \$355,540.00.

Going through the Operating Budget by line item, we discussed the account line items and made necessary changes. The accounts bolded are subject to further discussion after review of budget line items.

- Moderator lowered line item of other charges from \$5,000 to \$2,200.
- Selectman increased salaries from \$11,151 to \$11,374. This is divided by 3 Members.
- Finance Committee lowered from \$1,770 to \$1,330. Reducing funds by \$440.
- **Assessor increased the salary by \$600.**
- Town Council lowered legal-Land Court to \$40,000. Reducing funds by \$10,000.
- **Elections lowered Temporary salaries to \$3,950, elections to \$3,950 and other charges registration to \$2,100.**
- Town Buildings reduced salaries to \$13,400. Reducing Account by \$1,600.
- **Public Safety Building reduced R & M Buildings & Grounds by \$1,500. Added request for Plymo Vent at a cost of \$6,000.**
- **Police Department reduced Cleaning Supplies and Services by \$1,500. Office Supplies to reduce by \$500. Other miscellaneous by \$200. AED & Narcan added \$6,000.**
- Emergency Medical Services reduced overtime salaries by \$7,000. Office Supplies reduced by \$250. Additional equipment Reduce by \$1,750.
- Communication Department reduced Office Supplies by \$500.
- **Animal Control/Dog Officer removed stipend of \$2,600.**
- Miscellaneous reduce In-Line of duty Injury Fund by \$5,000. Reduce Unfunded Liability by \$50,000.
- School Department increase in school spending by \$22,182. K-8 Health Insurance reduces by \$28,742.
- Highway Department reduced salaries by \$659. Increase stipend to \$9,000. Reduced permanent positions by \$21,322. Office supplies by \$1,200.

Some of the departments may seem repetitive from other meetings or a couple of the accounts may not be listed as there was no change or a brief discussion ensued.

Chairman Joe Freitas explained that above was one of two budgets to be discussed tonight and presented the committee members another budget for review which include discussion of the bold topics listed above.

Further discussion on the Assessor's office and the funds approved for clerical staff remaining but the position wasn't posted. Also there is a concern regarding the number of inspections that are being done to increase tax revenue. Chairman Joe Freitas shared with the committee that it may be possible that the Clerical work will be part of the Assessor's position and the possibility to outsource the inspections to get us caught up. Based on this discussion the committee recommended we remove the funds in the amount of \$8565 left for the clerk.

Based on the last town election and lack of community interest and the fact that in the coming year we will have one town election and no federal or state elections for this fiscal year. It was discussed by the committee to reduce the requested amount by \$7,100. Cuts are recorded above.

There has been some discussion regarding the need for a new fire truck. Part of the Police Department Budget for the last several years is a request for a new police vehicle for a sum of \$56,550. After some discussion the committee decided to remove the line item for the police vehicle.

With a possibility for a fire truck, it was decided to remove the amount originally kept in for the request of a Plymo Vent at a cost of \$6,000 for the Public Safety Building.

Next, we discussed the situation of the Animal Control line item for a stipend of \$2,600. This was set up to provide an additional person to cover for the animal control director. No one has applied for the position and the committee decided to remove this line item.

After some discussion, regarding the above changes, the fact that these changes have reduce the actual budget to a more stainable number and understanding that a lot of what will take place on Wednesday the 12th of May at the FAC meeting will determine the outcome of this budget. As a committee we may have to revisit some of the above changes to accommodate the request.

Following the discussion, seeing the data and figure's that help reduce the budget, the committee decided to go with Budget 2 as their recommendation.

Chairman Joe Freitas entertained a motion to vote for Fiscal Year Budget of 2022 in the amount of \$20,556,644.00 which includes the need to transfer free cash in the amount of \$305,530.00 to balance out the budget.

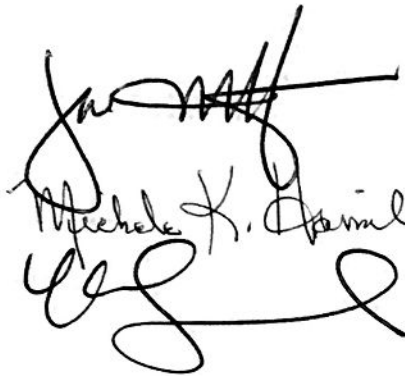
A motion was made and seconded to approve the Fiscal Year Budget of 2022 as listed above. Roll call vote taken and the members voted unanimously to approve the budget.

A motion was made and seconded to approve the Fiscal Year Budget of 2022 as listed above to be presented as recommended budget to the Selectmen. Roll call vote taken and the members voted unanimously to present budget as listed above.

The budget will be presented to the Selectman on May 12, 2021 meeting. Requested to post an agenda for the committee to attend.

Chairman Joe Freitas indicated he would entertain a motion to adjourn for the evening at 8:00pm.

A motion was made and seconded to adjourn at 8:00 pm. Roll call vote taken and the members in attendance voted unanimously to approve the budget.



Michele K. Hamilton



Nancy B. Gayoli