

MINUTES OF TOWN OF BERKLEY SELECTMEN'S MEETING OF 5/31/2022

SELECTMEN IN ATTENDANCE: George F. Miller, Chairman, Dean R. Larabee, Clerk, Wendy F. Cochrane, Member

TOPIC		ACTION
	Meeting Convened at 5:35 p.m. in the Moitoza – Pettey Hearing Room	
Appointments (out of order)	Board to accept resignation of Zoning Board of Appeals Marcus Baptiste. Mr. Miller proceeded to read the resignation letter, effective June 30, 2022. Mr. Miller commended Mr. Baptiste on his work on the Zoning Board and wished him the best. The Board voted to accept the resignation effective June 30, 2022.	Cochrane to motion to accept, Larabee 2 nd , voted.
Minutes to be Approved	1. May 18, 2022 Meeting Minutes The Board voted to approve the May 18, 2022 Meeting Minutes.	Larabee to motion to approve, Cochrane 2 nd , voted.
New Business	Board to vote on recommendations from the Financial Advisory Committee for Annual Town Meeting of free cash spending. Ms. Martin-Sterling state the recommendations from the FAC for the Board's vote for free cash are the following: \$81,806 for the snow and ice deficit; \$367,281 for the balance of the replacement of Engine 1; \$22,444 to the OPEB account (other post-employment benefits); \$15,500 for tabulators for the Town Clerk. She stated with \$225,000 going into the budget, it'll leave a balance of free cash which was certified at \$1,019,894. The balance will be \$132,971 which will be re-certified. Mr. Miller noted the \$15,500 for the tabulators was voted by the committee to come out of free cash, and it is an item that was included on the debt exclusion. If it gets approved at Town Meeting, it will be backed out of the debt exclusion. Ms. Cochrane mentioned she reached out to the bonding company and had them do figures in reference to the debt exclusion for Town Meeting. The best interest rate that the town could get right now is 3.5%, as long as it is before June 15 th . If it's after the 15 th , it will jump to 4%. Ms. Cochrane was given one on 4%, with the \$1 million, it would be 3 payments of \$335 for principal, \$30K for interest for the first year, \$26,600 for interest for the second year, and \$13,200 for interest for the 3 rd year. Based on the information given, the average tax bill based on \$365K property value would be \$0.35 per thousand in the first year, \$0.34 in the second year, and \$0.33 in the third year. If the town went with the \$750K vs. the \$1 million at 4%, the debt would be \$250 for the 3 years, and the interest would be \$30K in the first year, \$20K in the second, and \$10K in the third. This translates to \$0.27 per thousand in the first year, \$0.26 the second year, and \$0.25 the third year. If the town went with 3.5% interest for \$1 million it would still be the principal pay-down of \$335. The interest would be \$26,250 in the first year, \$23,275 the second year, and \$11,550 in the third year, with insurance costs of \$1100 to insure it. The impact would be \$0.34 per thousand in the first year, remain that in the second year, and \$0.32 the third year. On the \$750K, it would remain at the \$250 principal pay-down for 3 years. The interest would be \$26,250 in the first year, \$17,500 the second, and \$8750 in the third year. The interest on that would be \$0.26 per thousand the first year, \$0.25 the second, and \$0.25 in the third year. Mr. Larabee asked Ms. Martin-Sterling if there was any money that is necessary to put into the MSBA account, to which she replied that there is not at this time. He then asked where the specific number for OPEB came from, to which she replied it was money that was returned for health insurance for the town. Mr. Larabee suggested that the Board present a graphic interpretation of Ms. Cochrane's information for people to view at Town Meeting on an overhead. The Board voted to approve the recommendation of the Financial Advisory Committee for the Annual Town Meeting of Free Cash spending.	Cochrane to motion to approve, Larabee 2 nd , voted.
New Business	Town Administrator to review Board of Selectmen's FY23 Budget. Fire Chief Scott Fournier was present with concerns regarding budget cuts he was facing with the Fire Department. He stated he saw that there were labor cuts made to his department totaling approximately \$18K. He noted he had met with Ms. Martin-Sterling months ago and agreed on what budget cuts he was facing at that time. He explained to the Board how hard it is to attract new hires with their current pay scales, and found out last minute about the labor cuts. Ms. Martin-Sterling explained prior to meeting with Mr. Freitas last week to finalize	Information only; no action needed.

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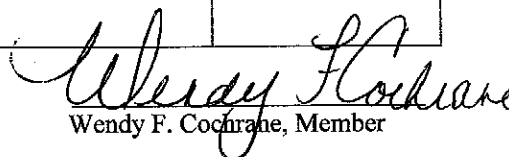
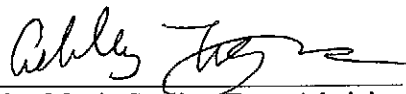
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	the budget, she sat with the Town Accountant to go over labor costs for both the Police and Fire departments. She stated based off what was appropriated at June's meeting last year vs. what was spent this year, the Fire Department was level funded and was reduced by approximately \$2600 as far as the on-call fire services. Mr. Freitas explained he met with Ms. Martin-Sterling and talked about how they'll deal with some of the possible shortages, and she did state to him that the numbers would work until November. He stated that by the special town meeting they'll have to have the funds in the unbalanced budget of what they're trying to carry over of \$70K. His concern was in previous years we discussed how to pay the on-call at an earning wage. Ms. Martin-Sterling stated after going over the numbers with the Town Accountant, the town will have money on the table at the end of this year. Mr. Miller asked Chief Fournier if he is able to continue to operate with the numbers given until November. Chief Fournier replied he is able to, after discussion about extending shifts from 8 hours to 12 hours. Mr. Freitas noted tough decisions had to be made due to unaffordable overtime rates, and cutting overtime was the only way to make sure there was an adequate amount by November. Ms. Cochrane asked if the 8 to 12 hours is increased coverage, and the Chief replied yes, it'll be 2 hours on either end of the shift.	
Appointments (taken out of order)	Board to have a joint meeting with the Board of Health regarding the appointment of Ann Marie Rapoza to vacant Board of Health seat. Board of Health Chairman James Romano and Board of Health member Daniel Fournier were present. Ms. Martin-Sterling explained the Board of Health member who passed away was re-elected for a term of 3 years. However, this appointment is only until the next election which would be next May, and there would be a seat put back on the ballot for 2 years as it would finish out the term of the original member of the board. Mr. Miller asked if anyone else has expressed any interest as to wanting to be appointed. Mr. Romano stated no one verbally expressed to him they wanted to be appointed, so he asked the Town Clerk to give him the count of write ins during the election. Anne Marie Rapoza got the most votes. Mr. Miller asked have any of those other people who were write ins come to the town hall and asked to be appointed, to which Mr. Romano replied no. The Board of Selectmen, Board of Health, and Town Administrator voted to appoint Ann Marie Rapoza to serve as a member of the Board of Health for a term to expire May 6, 2023.	Cochrane to motion to appoint, Larabee 2nd, BOS, BOH & TA voted.
New Business	Board to vote on FY23 Budget to Annual Town Meeting. Library Director Carol Buote was present and had a question regarding the budget. She asked how to administratively handle level funding, and if she still can give the step increases to her employees in July. Ms. Martin-Sterling replied she will refer to the contract to see how it would work and let Ms. Buote know. Ms. Martin-Sterling stated the only difference between her and the Finance Committee's Budget was that she was taking out the increases for the elected positions. She discussed where she and the Finance Committee differed with their respective numbers. The Finance Committee put in a 1.5% increase, and she didn't give any increases. The Finance Committee also gave elected department heads (Treasurer Collector, Clerk, Highway Surveyor, Tree Warden) a 1.5% increase. She had initially put in for 2%, but with further discussion with regard to ongoing collective bargaining and union negotiations, she level funded that to FY22. The monetary difference between the Finance Committee and Ms. Martin-Sterling's recommendations was \$3,304. She has a surplus going into town meeting of \$73,421, and the Finance Committee's recommendations are \$70,117. Ms. Cochrane explained when there is a surplus, it doesn't mean there is extra money. Ms. Martin-Sterling reiterated the town has an unbalanced budget going into the November town meeting of \$73,421 per her recommendation, or the Finance Committee's recommendation of \$70,117. The Board voted to accept the budget that was presented by the Finance Committee with the following changes, as noted in an email the Board received May 31, 2022; the Moderator went from \$125 to \$102, the Planning Board from \$1,002 to \$938, the Cemetery from \$40 to \$371, and a change of \$117 to the budget. Ms. Cochrane noted the reason for the changed amounts was due to an error in the spreadsheet formulas.	Cochrane to motion to accept FinCom FY23 Budget; Larabee 2nd, voted.

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Town Administrators Report	Discuss and vote on ARPA funding to purchase capital expenditure. Ms. Martin-Sterling stated she would like the Board to consider a vote on the use of the town's ARPA money to purchase one of the snow plow/sanders that have been requested from the Highway Department that has been lumped into the debt exclusion to reduce the debt exclusion on town floor. She would like the Board to allow the Highway Department Surveyor to go out to bid for the purchase of the plow/sander with the town's ARPA money that was received under lost revenue. The Board voted to fund the expenditure of the snow plow/sander as stated with town ARPA funds. Ms. Martin-Sterling stated she received a call today from Chris Silva of the Taunton Chambers. She's new to the Chamber and she's trying to reach out to the surrounding communities that the Taunton Chamber assists. They're looking to have an event either September 21st or 22nd at BA and they'd like to invite all of the local businesses in the area to give small businesses access to information that they may not know is available to them. The Chamber has requested access to the town's business listing, which Ms. Martin-Sterling stated she would put her in touch with the Town Clerk. She suggested the Board should attend this event.	Cochrane to motion to fund, Larabee 2nd, voted. Information only; no action needed.
Adjournment	Ms. Cochrane asked about the upcoming graduation schedule from the schools. Mr. Larabee stated he is attending the Somerset Berkley Regional High School as well as the Berkley Middle School graduation. Ms. Cochrane stated she will be attending the BP graduation. Mr. Larabee noted he has been serving on the SRPEDD SMMPO Board for the last year and the paperwork to be elected is due on June 6, 2022. Ms. Cochrane requested Ms. Tigano to call BA to find out when their graduation is. The next scheduled meeting is Monday, June 6, 2022 at 6:00 p.m.	Cochrane to motion to adjourn, Larabee 2nd, voted.


George F. Miller, Chairman
Dean R. Larabee, Clerk
Wendy F. Cochrane, Member
~~Heather Martin-Sterling, Town Administrator~~Ashley Tigano, Administrative
Assistant to the Board of Selectmen