

The Wilbraham Finance Committee
Meeting Minutes
Wilbraham Police Station
Wednesday, January 8, 2020 - 6:30 p.m.

Present: Carolyn Brennan, Kevin Corridan, Marc Ducey, Kevin Hanks, Todd Luzi, Mark Manolakis, Mike Mazzuca, and Tim Murphy

Absent: Anna Levine

Also present: Nancy Johnson, Town Accountant; Tom Sullivan, Asst. Town Administrator for Budget and Finance; Nick Breault, Town Administrator; Sue Bunnell, Selectmen; Albert Ganem, Superintendent of Schools; Howard Barber, HWRSD Director of Finance, Operations and Human Resources; Ed Cenedella, HWRSD Director of Facilities

Call Meeting to Order

Meeting called to order at 6:35 p.m. Meeting was recorded by Wilbraham Public Access and the Assistant Town Accountant/Finance Committee Secretary. No one else recorded the meeting.

I. Approve Minutes

There were no minutes to approve.

II. Open Forum

No discussion.

III. HWRSD

- a. Al Ganem clarified that the school is just beginning their FY2020-21 budget process and he, Howie and Ed are attending this meeting to specifically discuss the MSBA and the WMS roofing project.
- b. Howie reviewed the current status of the WMS roof project. The week of Christmas they submitted the final schematic design to the MSBA with a projected total cost of \$3,169,773. The project reimbursement from the MSBA is just over 55%, leaving us with an anticipated cost of just under \$1.5 million. We are expecting to hear from the MSBA on the approval, or rejection, of the schematic design on February 13th. There is a special town meeting scheduled for March 9th to seek approval of the funding for the town's portion of the WMS roof.

Tom discussed options for how we can fund our portion of the roof. If we pay for the roof using stabilization funds we will not need to have a ballot question and get a debt exclusion. Currently the stabilization funds and free cash balances are:

- Capital Stabilization Fund \$1,900,093
- Regular Stabilization Fund \$2,540,000
- Free Cash \$2,315,000

We will need a 2/3 vote at the special town meeting to use stabilization funds.

Motion: To draw money out of the Capital Stabilization Fund to pay for the roof project with the final number to be determined once the MSBA approves the project. Seconded, approved unanimously.

After further discussion the Finance Committee decided to add language to the original motion.

Amendment to Motion: The final dollar amount can't exceed the current balance in the Capital Stabilization Fund. Seconded, approved unanimously.

IV. Special Town Meeting – DPW Vehicle

Tom informed the Finance Committee that we applied for the Volkswagen emissions settlement grant for the cost of the two highway trucks. We received notification that Wilbraham is eligible for \$304,000 or 70% of the cost of two diesel trucks. Since it takes approximately a year to get new diesel trucks, the DPW would like to order them as soon as possible. We planned to have an article to authorize \$226,000 of debt for FY2021 at the annual town meeting in May. We would like to ask for authorization of \$135,000 of that debt at the special town meeting in March. We will reduce the amount we ask for in May by the \$135,000. The Capital Planning Committee is aware and will make adjustments to their capital plan.

V. FY2021 BUDGET

a. MUNICIPAL 101 PRESENTATION

Tom presented the committee with an overview of how the budget is compiled. He distributed the first page of the budget workbook which summarizes the other sections of the workbook. He explained the calculations for determining the maximum allowable tax levy and excess capacity, followed by a review of the current figures for FY2021 available revenue and appropriations/expenditures. Using this information the budget summary page calculates the amount of money under the 2½ levy limit for the current year, the amount that needs to be raised by taxation and the estimated tax rate.

At this time the FY2021 budget is under the 2½ levy limit by \$1,090. There is also approximately \$973,651 of excess capacity. These figures are based on a 2½% increase in the school district budget over last year, which will likely change. We know, for example, that Wilbraham will be affected again this year with an increase in the percentage split with Hampden due to the per pupil population shift.

b. Nick discussed a change in the FCC regulations this year that could have an effect on the funding we receive from Charter to support the WPA. Although he has not heard of any other communities being affected by this regulation change yet, he is keeping a close eye on that situation. Probably it is just a matter of time before the change affects Wilbraham.

c. Tom informed the committee that the Tree Warden has identified the need for approximately \$77,000 in tree services due to the infestation of gypsy moths. There was some discussion on how to best fund the project, but no final decision was made.

VI. Wilbraham Council on Aging Building - Update

No discussion.

Next meeting will be Wednesday, January 22, 2020 at 6:30.

Meeting adjourned 8:10 p.m.

Diane Hamakawa
Assistant Town Accountant/Finance Committee Secretary