

Finance Committee Meeting

October 9, 2019 7:30 PM EST
Veterans Memorial Building, Room #229
900 Main Street
Millis, MA 02054

In Attendance:

Jodie Garzon, Chairman
Doug Riley, Clerk
Joyce Boiardi
Jim Borgman
Jim Bullion
Shawn Power
Craig Schultze
Katie Tieu
Mike Guzinski, Town Administrator
Chief Barrett, Fire and Rescue
Chief Soffayer, Police
Jim McKay, DPW Director and Planning Board Member
Peter Jurmain, Select Board Member

Jodie Garzon called the meeting to order at 7:32 PM.

Fire Department November Town Meeting Warrant Articles:

Chief Barrett:

The first Warrant Article request is for the Fire Engine II Motor Replacement in the amount of \$27,679.00. During a routine maintenance service, it was discovered that the engine was "dusted" which explained the reduction in power during use. The Chief went to the manufacturer for a second opinion. Cummings Sales and Service confirmed there was a crack in the intake manifold. As a result, dust particles and debris entering the engine and a faulty filter led to the "dusting". Engine II is the department's primary response apparatus and therefore had to be repaired immediately. During the two weeks it took to repair, the department's response apparatus was reduced to Ladder I and a 1987 Engine I. The Chief is working with the engine manufacturer to ensure this does not happen again. The new motor comes with a 3-year parts and maintenance warranty. The Chief is working with the manufacturer to secure some compensation for this unfortunate incident.

The department's second Warrant Article request is for the replacement of Scott Air-packs and Bottles in the amount of \$30,000.00. Air-packs are self-contained breathing apparatus; 4,500 psi of compressed air, not oxygen, that last approximately thirty minutes. They are hazardous waste chemical resistant. The air-packs were initially purchased with a grant thru Assistance Firefighters, the Federal Government. The department relies heavily on their use with additional medical calls, etc. The life expectancy of the packs is fifteen years.

Police Department November Town Meeting Warrant Article:

Chief Soffayer

The request is for a 3-year lease of a 2020 Ford SUV with the option to purchase the vehicle at the end of the lease for \$1.00. The department's vehicles typically have a life expectancy of seven years. The vehicle will be equipped with lights, all other equipment, MDT, radios etc. the department has on hand. The lease would replace Unit #40, a 2012 marked cruiser. The department has nine vehicles; the Chief and the Detective's vehicles are over seven years old. When the Chief's vehicle is replaced, it will be repurposed to the Detective's vehicle. Vehicles are not only used for routine patrols but also for training, Police details and court appearances.

Planning Board November Town Meeting Warrant Articles:

Jim McKay:

The Planning Board held a Public Hearing last night for both ByLaw Amendments. The first amendment is for the Municipal Facilities Overlay and Zoning Map. This is a housekeeping amendment to include one parcel that was originally thought to be owned by the Army Corp of Engineers but is owned by the Town of Millis. The parcel is located behind the town's Transfer Station on Island Road. This article would add the parcel to the Overlay District and update the Zoning Map.

The second ByLaw amendment, Senior Residential Community Development Age Qualification, relates to the over 55 communities in town, Rockville Meadows, Acorn Place and Regency at Glen Ellen. The original ByLaw's age qualification was 18 years of age. This changes the age to 22 years, when School Districts no longer are responsible for individuals with IEPs, etc. The amendment was vetted through Town Counsel. Exceptions would be made if a person 21 years of age was a caretaker of a resident in an over 55 community. The Homeowners Association would request the exception through the Planning Board.

Jim McKay updated the committee on a few ongoing and upcoming projects in town:

- The Assisted Living Facility located on Bridge Street and Dover Road has tied into the town's water system and is in the process of tying into the sewer system. The property is up for sale and the sellers are looking for a buyer to continue with the original project. Their commitment to the town through the Planning Board is to gift \$25,000.00 for the upgrade of the Dover Road Sewer Pump Station.
- The property located on Main Street, formerly Bob's Family Restaurant and the Sportsman's Lounge, will indeed be a gas station which includes a drive thru permit for a business that has not been determined yet. The location of the property, heading westbound on Rt 109, enticed the owner to go ahead with the gas station. The property is privately owned, and the Planning Board could not deny the permit request.
- The Regency at Glen Ellen's directional drilling of an 8" sewer main is underway. The Select Board decided to vote in favor of directional drilling as opposed to hanging the pipe on the side of the stone arch bridge. Toll Brothers has agreed to install a "dummy" sewer line in the event the directional drilled sewer main fails in the future. The freeze on Columbia Gas of MA has resulted in the use of propane tanks to heat the 12 homes currently occupied in the development. Paving will begin from the Holliston town line to the bridge. Toll Bros, the DPW and the Select Board will work together to implement a plan to prepare the roadway in that area for winter. The town's moratorium on Street Opening Permits, typically November 15th, will be lifted to install the gas line on Orchard Street if and when the freeze is lifted.
- New developments in town include a 40-home subdivision on Ridge Street, 3 homes on Causeway Street, 40 homes off Main Street, a 30-unit building located at the old Herman Shoe site, 3-story Cube Smart on Main Street and a few 40B projects throughout town.
- The DPW facility is in the design phase, the Select Board signed the contract on Monday.

Free Cash Update:

Mike Guzinski:

The Finance Director, Carol Johnston, was unable to attend tonight's meeting, The DOR (Department of Revenue) certified the town's Free Cash and Enterprise Fund Retained Earnings:

- Free Cash \$505,738.00
- Water Enterprise \$863,466.00
- Sewer Enterprise \$594,598.00
- Stormwater Enterprise \$230,073.00

There were certain items not included in the filing due to the deadline date. The Bureau of Accounts at the DOR has reviewed the filing and has certified the above figures. The committee inquired what the \$527,856.00 amount in Deferred Revenue represented. Mike Guzinski deferred that question to next week's meeting when the Finance Director will be in attendance.

November Town Meeting Article Update and Discussion:

Mike Guzinski updated the committee with the changes made to the Warrant Monday night at the Select Board's Meeting. A Part Time IT Director was added to Article #3, Operational Items in the amount of \$25,000.00. This amount would fund the salary from January 2020 to June 2020. In FY21, the salary would be approximately \$50,000.00. The position is not benefitted. Jodie Garzon acknowledged using the free labor from the Acting IT Director, Pete Jurmain, is not sustainable for the town. The group inquired about the need for a Study of the Structure and Operation of Town/School IS/IT in the amount of \$20,000.00, similar to the study done for the town's Finance Department. The amount is an estimate and all the funds may not be needed. The Select Board did not feel the study could be deferred to FY21. Mike Guzinski explained the study would cover a broader aspect of the town's IS/IT and noted that the Part Time IT Director would only address the Municipal side. It was also noted the incredible improvements made to the town's IT system due to the expertise of Pete Jurmain. The Operational Item for paving in the amount of \$200,000.00 has been deferred to May 2020 by the Select Board.

Craig Schultze inquired if there were other funds available to appropriate at the November Town Meeting. Mike Guzinski said no but other funds will become available between now and May to fund the "Must Fund" items. Carol Johnston, Finance Director, will have those funding sources available for next week's meeting. Craig Schultze maintained that historically the town has not spent funds they did not have on hand and noted the Warrant has a very limited Article list, rubber stamped, which was pre-determined by the Select Board and diminishes the role of the Finance Committee. He is disappointed a former Finance Committee member, now Select Board Member, would vote in favor of a limited Article List. Jodie Garzon agreed the list was limited and diminished the committee's role, basically a pointless exercise for the committee. Mike Guzinski admitted his knowledge with how the Warrant was handled in the past was limited but did say it was an unusual process. Surrounding towns' process includes the Capital Planning Committee's input and then the Select Board decides what items are included in the Warrant. The Finance Committee and Town Meeting's role is to decide what is funded. Craig Schultze disagrees with adding staffing to the Operating Budget at the November Town Meeting. In order to ensure the town has funds to sustain the positions these decisions are made during the budgeting process. The committee requested a forecast of projected revenues for FY21. Mike Guzinski made the committee aware that the request for (2) additional Police Officers will have mitigating funds to offset the cost in FY21. Craig Schultze warned using grant money to fund Operating Budgets is risky; if the grants are lost and new revenues are not available to sustain the Operating Budget, this would lead to cuts in other departments. Doug Riley expressed the need for a New Revenue Forecast prior to making decisions on staffing. Mike Guzinski suggested that a policy discussion with the Select Board, possible at the next Tri-Board Meeting, would clear up some of the committee's inquiries regarding the Warrant.

Jim Bullion spent two hours with the Police Chief earlier in the day and remarked the chief's commitment to fund additional officers. The Police Station is a magnificent facility and noted a lot of the equipment, etc. was obtained through grants. The committee asked for a list of grants departments have received and what items were purchased to include in their May 2020 Finance Committee Report. The list would make the residents aware of the needed items that were purchased without using taxpayer's dollars.

November Town Meeting Warrant Article Assignments:

Craig Schultze – Article #1
Kati Tieu – Article #2
Jodie Garzon – Article #3
Peter Berube – Article #4
Jim Borgman – Article #5
Shawn Power – Article #6

Joyce Boiardi – Article #7
Doug Riley – Article #8
Jim Bullion – Article #9

Jodie Garzon explained the assignments entail writing up a brief description of the articles which will be included in the semi-annual Finance Committee Report and addressing the attendees at Town Meeting with the description and the committee's recommendations.

November Town Meeting Warrant Article Recommendations:

Craig Schultze made a motion to recommend approval of Article #1, Plastic Bag Reduction ByLaw; Jim Bullion seconded. Vote: 8/0 motion carries unanimously.

Craig Schultze made a motion to recommend approval of Article #5, Police Cruiser Lease, in the amount of \$17,700.00; Joyce Boiardi seconded. Vote: 7/1 motion carries. Jim Bullion noted the Police Chief should extend the life of the department's cruisers by one year. The department has too many unused vehicles.

Craig Schultze made a motion to recommend approval of Article #6, OPEB/Actuarial Study, in the amount of \$7,000.00; Shawn Power seconded. Vote: 8/0 motion carries unanimously.

Craig Schultze made a motion to recommend approval of Article #7, Amend Town Charter – Name Change: Board of Selectmen to Select Board; Joyce Boiardi seconded. Vote: 8/0 motion carries unanimously.

Craig Schultze made a motion to recommend approval of Article #8, Zoning ByLaw Amendment Municipal Facilities Overlay and Zoning Map, Doug Riley seconded. Vote: 8/0 motion carries unanimously.

Craig Schultze made a motion to recommend approval of Article #9, Zoning ByLaw Amendment Senior Residential Community Development Age Qualification; Jim Bullion seconded. Vote: 8/0 motion carries unanimously.

The committee expressed their concern with not setting aside funds for the "Must Fund" Articles at the May 2020 Town Meeting. Jodie asked that a "Must Fund" Article for Unpaid Bills in the amount of \$5,000.00 be added to the list. The group expressed the need for better New Revenue Forecasting and the town's future revenue stream.

Meeting Minutes Approval:

Craig Schultze made a motion to recommend approval of the October 2, 2019 Meeting Minutes; Joyce Boiardi seconded. Vote: 8/0 motion carries unanimously.

Adjourn:

Craig Schultze made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 9:16 PM; Joyce Boiardi seconded. Vote 8/0 motion carries unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,
Deirdre Gilmore