

Budget Subcommittee Meeting Minutes

March 17, 2021

6:00 PM

Municipal Building, 2nd Floor, Council Chambers

Members Present: Councilors Matt Kelly (Chair), Deborah Pellegrini, Thomas Mercer, Melanie Hamblen (Zoom)

Also Present: Town Administrator - Jamie Hellen, Assistant to the Town Administrator - Chrissy Whelton, Executive Assistant - Alecia Alleyne, Finance Director - Christopher Sandini, Treasurer/Collector - Kerri Bertone

Citizens were not permitted to enter the chambers, only councilors and pre-approved guests were allowed in.

Meeting called to order at 6:02 pm by Councilor Kelly.

FY22 budget Update & Discussion

Town Administrator Hellen opened the meeting by outlining the budget, he noted that the Town looks to be in relatively good shape especially considering that the past year has been spent in a pandemic. The memo to the Budget Subcommittee states that the Town is in a \$2.753 million dollar deficit, this reflects revenue assumptions to date and the optimum budgets for all departments including the schools. In reality, as we progress through the budget process certain revenue sources and new growth assumptions will increase, and once we tweak the numbers we should be a little less than \$2 million in deficit, the School & DPW/Stormwater departments represent a large part of the \$2 million deficit and the budget as presented reflects all contractual obligations.

Councilor Kelly noted the Town needs to figure out how to handle its stormwater obligation and the School Department needs to determine how they will reduce their \$3.02 million dollar request for increase. Stormwater requests equate to a \$868,000 budget increase. Councilor Kelly mentioned that he could not vote for the stormwater and School Department requests as they stand.

Councilor Pellegrini was curious about the large increase request from the School Department and why the request was so large despite the closing of the Davis Thayer School and reductions in enrollment.

Councilor Kelly asked that the next meeting be a joint meeting with the School Committee in order for the school committee and school department to provide some backup and narrative to their requests.

Councilor Hamblen asked whether the school department increase took into account the closing of Davis Thayer and does the stormwater increase include the money we have already spent on it or is it in addition to what we've spent. Mr. Hellen explained that the school department increase does take into account the closing of Davis Thayer, and the \$868,000 for stormwater is in addition to what the Town has already paid for it. Councilor Hamblen asked about the ARPA money, Mr. Hellen explained that Town will receive approximately \$3.3 million in federal aid (per municipality rate), Norfolk County received \$137 million as a county, the county commissioners have to approve a plan relative to that money, it is up to the federal government to determine

how that money can be sent. Norfolk county managers have met with the county executives and it may take another 6 months before the Town of Franklin has the opportunity to apply for the federal funds.

Councilor Mercer noted that because Davis Thayer has not been declared surplus the cost of maintaining that building still falls on the School Department. Councilor Kelly requested an explanation of the \$3 million budget increase plus their plan for turning Davis Thayer over.

Councilor Kelly made a MOTION to ADJOURN, this motion was SECONDED by Councilor Hamblen, ROLL CALL VOTE; Hamblen - YES, Kelly - YES, Mercer - YES, Pellegrini - YES. ***Meeting adjourned (4-0 vote).***

Meeting Adjourned at 6:33pm.