

Finance Committee Meeting

October 2, 2019 7:30 PM EST
Veterans Memorial Building, Room #229
900 Main Street
Millis, MA 02054

In Attendance:

Jodie Garzon, Chairman
Peter Berube, Vice Chairman
Doug Riley, Clerk
Joyce Boiardi
Jim Borgman
Jim Bullion
Shawn Power
Craig Schultze
Katie Tieu
Mike Guzinski, Town Administrator
Carol Johnston, Finance Director
Geri Sprague, Millis Plastic Reduction Initiative
Beverly Temple, Millis Plastic Reduction Initiative
Kathleen Lannon, Board of Health
Abby Barrett, High School Senior
Chief Soffayer, Police
Jim McKay, DPW Director

Jodie Garzon called the meeting to order at 7:33 PM.

Millis Plastic Reduction Initiative Presentation:

Geri Sprague explained the importance of implementing a By-Law banning plastic bags at checkouts. The presentation was well received at the recent Select Board's Meeting. Jim McKay helped with information on how the town disposes of plastic bags and Kathleen Lannon guided the group in drafting a By-Law for the Warrant Article which has been reviewed by Town Counsel. This article has no impact on the town's Operating Budget. Plastics affect health through their air supply and food. Many towns, 122, in the Commonwealth are migrating toward a By-Law banning plastic bags at checkouts. This ban would reduce disposal costs to the town. The By-Law would not apply to newspaper, dry cleaning, vegetable, meat or fish or paper bags. Alternatives to plastic bags are reusable bags made from cloth or canvas. They are inexpensive or free.

The group began community outreach in February 2019 with leadership through the Millis Garden Club and Library. Their initiative has been sent out via the town's ListServe. The Library is considering a program where residents can check out a reusable bag similar to checking out books and DVDs. The group has made a presentation to the Lions Club, shown movies such as Wall-E and Bag It and has a Facebook Page. The By-Law would not take effect until six months after it has passed at Town Meeting. The group is asking for the Finance Committee's endorsement of the By-Law. Roche Bros, probably the biggest business in town this By-Law would affect, is supportive of the initiative.

Although Medfield does not have a plastic reduction initiative in place other towns, Ashland, Wrentham, and Hopkington do. The committee asked the group to expand their efforts in the future to ban plastic bottles, especially "nips".

Abby Barrett expressed her passion for eliminating plastics in the world and is working with the Millis Plastic Reduction Initiative for her Senior Project. Kathy Lannon explained that the Board of Health would be the enforcing agent of the By-Law.

Police Department November Town Meeting Warrant Article Discussion:

Chief Soffayer has requested funding to add (2) Officers to his staff and funding their Police Academy Training costs. The cost is approximately \$60,000.00 and is included in the Operational Item Article. The department consists of (16) Officers and (1) SRO (School Resource Officer); the second lowest staffing level in comparable towns. The midnight to 7:00 AM shift has only (2) Officers assigned to it. The request would allow (3) Officers on that shift and would reduce overtime. It takes approximately eight months after the start of training to have him/her "road ready". The department rarely requests Capital items, other than cruisers, due to the revenue the department generates through Administrative Fees on billing Police Details and their recurring receipt of grants; approximately \$300,000.00 in the last two years. The State 911 Grant of approximately \$40,000.00 is guaranteed annually. The 1033 and gun programs pay for the purchase of rifles. Jodie Garzon asked the Finance Director to work with Chief Soffayer to provide the committee with a one-page list of grants the department has received and what items were purchased with those funds. New developments in town require more public safety support, Police, Fire and DPW. The department has received increased calls and more severe calls in the past few years. The department already has candidates for the academy inhouse. The department hires Dispatchers who want to become Police Officers.

The Chief noted seven extremely serious incidents in town last year: (2) Stabbings, (3) Barricades with firearms and (2) Mental Health incidents involving weapons. In situations like this, mutual aid could take 6 – 10 minutes to respond putting the residents and Officers in danger. His responsibility as Chief is to protect the taxpayers and his staff. Their safety is paramount and with (3) Officers per shift the responsibility will ultimately save lives and taxpayers money in overtime. The impact on the FY21 Operating Budget would be approximately \$100,000.00 with offsets through new growth, overtime and the Marijuana Sales Revenue which will fund approximately \$30,000.00 of the SRO's salary.

The committee requested the department's staffing history and the anticipated population growth of the town. The department has not added an officer since 2001. The committee agreed there is a need for additional officers but are hesitant due to the timing of the request, at the November not the May Town Meeting, and the ability to fund the positions in FY21 without making cuts to other departments. Grants for Police Officers are not awarded unless the population is 30,000 – 40,000 residents. In closing, Chief Soffayer encouraged the committee members to schedule a time to meet with him to discuss the department, its call history, etc.

DPW November Town Meeting Warrant Article Discussion:

Jim McKay addressed the department's first request which is part of the Capital Items article. Engineering Services for the Village & Birch Streets Drainage Project. The project is a Stormwater Management project and will be funded by Stormwater Surplus Reserves. An article to execute the project will be requested at the May 2020 Town Meeting. The project would entail installing (4) cul-tec systems on Village Street between Forest Road and Birch Street to alleviate consistent flooding of the roadway. The estimated cost is in the vicinity of \$700,000.00 - \$900,000.00.

The department's second request is part of the Capital Items article as well, Intersection Safety Signs. A video was shown of the intersection at Village Street and Forest Road where similar signs were installed due to public safety concerns at the dangerous intersection. Flashing Stop Signs and Yellow Warning Lights were installed to warn motorists prior to the intersection. The blinking lights do not blink 24/7 but only as a vehicle is approaching. This article was discussed with the Police Chief, Fire Chief and Town Administrator. Similar safety signs will be installed at Holbrook Square. Flashing signs were recently installed at the intersection of Village & Plain Streets and the Police Chief would like to install a pedestrian light and crosswalk on Main Street.

The Tree Trimming/Removal item is part of the Operational Item Article in the amount of \$50,000.00. Brutus Cantoreggi, Millis Tree Warden, gave a fabulous presentation at the Select Board's Meeting recently. The presentation which can be viewed on the town's website outlined the abundance of trees throughout town that are dead and pose safety concerns. The DPW's Tree Care budget of \$25,000.00 is already in a deficit due to the removal of several dangerous

trees on Main Street and Dover Road. Eversource has given the town a list of trees as part of their winter clearing of wires program. The town's Tree Warden has jurisdiction on cutting down trees on scenic roads. The Regency at Glen Ellen project is looking at possibly removing some trees along Orchard Street. The town's Public Right of Way is usually 30 – 40' from the center of the road or 5 – 10' off the curb. The DPW's limited staff tries to cut back brush throughout town at the request of residents. Residents can cut back any brush that overhangs their property.

Free Cash Update:

Carol Johnson: All necessary forms were filed Monday, September 30, 2019 with the Department of Revenue. The School's Food Service Account deficit of \$33,000.00 will reduce the amount of Certified Free Cash. The Certified Free Cash amount will be disclosed Monday, October 7th.

November Town Meeting Warrant Article Update and Review:

Mike Guzinski cautioned the committee that the Warrant is still in draft form; the Select Board will meet on Monday, October 7, 2019 to finalize and sign the Final Warrant. He acknowledged the Finance Committee's condensed timeline for making recommendations on each Warrant Article.

Article #1 Plastic Bag Reduction By-Law was thoroughly explained earlier in the meeting.

Article # 2 Unpaid Bills is a recurring Warrant Article and the list is still being finalized; the total should be in the vicinity of \$5,000.00 of FY19 bills that were not paid.

Article #3 Operational Items:

- A. Study to Combine Town/School IT & Facilities Maintenance: \$20,000.00
The Select Board will discuss this article at Monday's meeting
- B. Fire Engine II Motor Replacement: \$27,679.00
The motor blew and the department was required to replace it due to safety concerns. Since the equipment fell short of its anticipated life the Chief is in discussions with the manufacturer in an attempt to recoup some of the cost to replace the motor. The department has already incurred the cost.
- C. Police Academy Training Wages: \$60,000.00
Chief Soffayer had given a thoroughly explanation of this article earlier.
- D. Tree Trimming/Removal: \$50,000.00
Jim McKay summarized the need for this article earlier in the evening. It was noted that the best time to perform tree trimming was during the winter months to avoid public safety issues.
- E. OPEB/Actuarial Study: \$ 7,000.00
The study is required every other year and was overlooked for the May Town Meeting. Not doing the study could have a negative impact on the town's bond rating.

Craig Schultze recommended a separate Warrant Article number for the OPEB/Actuarial Study item and Mike Guzinski agreed. Mike Guzinski made the committee aware that one additional Warrant Article may be added at Monday's Select Board Meeting, a part time IT Director. The anticipated salary is between \$20 - \$30 thousand and it would be a non-benefitted position. Craig Schultze voiced his concern with adding positions to the Operating Budget at the November Town Meeting; it circumvents the budget process. Jodie Garzon agreed, typically the committee does not recommend funding positions with Free Cash. Mike Guzinski stated not funding such a position would hinder the overall operation of the town. Mike Guzinski will provide the committee with FY21 projected New Growth to ease any concerns the committee has with funding new positions with Free Cash. Peter Berube voiced his concern with continuously increasing departments operating budget and not looking for cutting expenses in all town budgets; it appears discretionary funds are available in some budgets.

Article #4 Capital Items:

The items listed represent the highest rated by the Capital Planning Committee:

A. Police	New Police Vehicle	\$ 46,000.00
B. Fire	Scott Air Packs & Bottles	\$ 30,000.00
C. DPW	Intersection Safety Signs	\$ 13,000.00
D. DPW	Main Street Road Repairs	\$200,000.00
E. DPW	Engineering Study – Village & Birch Streets Drainage	\$ 38,000.00
F. Schools	MS/HS Main Boiler System Repair	\$ 25,000.00
G. Schools	MS/HS Engineering Study – Mechanical System & Roof	\$100,000.00
H. Schools	MS/HS Locker Replacement Phase II	<u>\$ 20,000.00</u>
Total:		<u>\$472,000.00</u>

The committee would like to invite Chief Soffayer to next week's meeting to elaborate on the need for another vehicle and to clarify if it is a lease or a purchase. Bob Weiss, Jim McKay and Mike Guzinski are working on grants to offset the cost to execute the Village and Birch Streets Drainage project which is a Stormwater Management project and would be funded with Stormwater Enterprise Surplus.

The committee would like a list of all items/projects that town department paid for with grants and earmarked funds from the state. This list would be included in their semi-annual report to make the residents aware of the efforts town employees and officials put into getting much needed items without a cost to the taxpayer.

Craig Schultze asked to expand the above list to include the last (4) items on the medium priority list. Mike Guzinski noted the \$200,000.00 item in road repairs may be deferred to the May Town Meeting. The committee considered listing all the items on the Capital Planning Committee's priority list, giving them the flexibility to fund another item if an item on the above list is not passed at Town Meeting.

Article #5 Zoning By-Law Amendment Change of Name from "Board of Selectmen" to "Select Board". This article is self-explanatory.

Article #6 Zoning By-Law Amendment Municipal Facilities Overlay & Zoning Map.

Article #7 Zoning By-Law Amendment Senior Residential Community Development Age Qualifications.

The committee would like to invite a member of the Planning Board to discuss Articles #5 & 6.

Finance Committee Officer Vote:

Craig Schultze made a motion to keep the committee's current officers:

Jodie Garzon, Chairman
Peter Berube, Vice Chairman
Doug Riley, Clerk

Jim Bullion seconded. Vote: 9/0 motion carries unanimously.

Annual Payroll Signatories Vote:

Peter Berube made a motion, The Finance Committee votes pursuant to MGL Chapter 41, Section 41 to authorize *either* of the following two signatories, Chairman and Vice Chairman, below to sign/approve payroll. It is understood that this provision does not eliminate the responsibility of the other members of the Board/Committee/Commission;
Craig Schultze seconded. Vote: 9/0 motion carries unanimously.

Bills Payable:

Craig Schultze made a motion to approve bills payable to Association of Town Finance Committees in the amount of \$180.00 for annual membership; Jim Bullion seconded. Vote: 9/0 motion carries unanimously.

Craig Schultze made a motion to approve bills payable to Clear Gov in the amount of \$5,500.00 for the town's annual subscription; Jim Bullion seconded. Vote: 9/0 motion carries unanimously.

Peter Berube made a motion to approve bills payable to Mills Postmaster in the amount of \$647.58 for postage to mail the semi-annual Finance Committee Report; Jim Bullion seconded. Vote: 9/0 motion carries unanimously.

Meeting Minutes Approval:

Craig Schultze made a motion to recommend approval of the July 10, 2019 Meeting Minutes; Shawn Power seconded. Vote: 5/0 4 abstained motion carries.

Craig Schultze made a motion to recommend approval of the September 23, 2019 Tri-Board Meeting Minutes; Shawn Power seconded. Vote: 8/0 1 abstained motion carries.

Adjourn:

Craig Schultze made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 9:30 PM; Peter Berube seconded. Vote 9/0 motion carries unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,
Deirdre Gilmore