

Finance Committee Meeting

April 1, 2020 6:00 PM EST
Zoom Remote Meeting Platform
Millis, MA 02054

In Attendance:

Jodie Garzon, Chairman
Peter Berube, Vice Chairman
Doug Riley, Clerk
Joyce Boiardi
Cathy MacInnes
Shawn Power
Craig Schultze
Katie Tieu
Carol Johnston, Town Finance Director
Kim Tolson, Library Director
Wendy Barry
Jennifer Ferrara
Chief Barrett, Fire and Rescue

Jodie Garzon called the Finance Committee Meeting to order at 6:07 PM.

FY21 Library Budget Request:

Kim Tolson outlined the Library's Primary Services:

- Circulation
- Youth Services/Programs
- Adult Services/Programs
- All Ages Services/Programs
- Technology

FY19 Accomplishments include:

- 24% Increase in downloadable e-books and e-audio – checkouts totaling 11,000
- 9% Increase in registered borrowers – 57% of residents in total
- 11% Increase in meeting and study spaces – averaging 70 times per week
- 46% Increase in Summer Reading Program
- Notary Public Services added
- Received grants totaling \$12,666.00 from the Cultural Council, Girls Who Code, Rural Gateways and Middlesex Savings Bank

The FY21 Budget Request includes:

Salaries:	\$288,218.00
Expenses:	<u>\$151,006.00</u>
Total:	<u>\$439,224.00</u>

Increases in Salaries include Step Raises and Collective Bargaining Agreement Increases. Expenses were increased for Library Materials; 19% of the total budget is required to be Certified by the State. The Salaries increased approximately 10% over the last two years; the Finance Director confirmed this was due to retro pay increases not included in the FY20 budget. In FY20, 10 additional hours per week were added for a Technology Coordinator.

The Library does have a visitor tracking system in place however it does not have the capability to track demographics. It was noted the Friends of the Library provide a huge support and provide fundraising approximately \$27,000.00 for: Programs - \$16,937.00, Museum Passes - \$3,430.00, Furniture - \$1,331.00, Grant Writing - \$259.00 and Historical Digitization - \$2,263.00.

The Above Level Service Request is for extended hours on Thursdays from 4:00 – 8:00 PM. It will require eight additional hours per week and will cost \$6,627.00. The additional hours will not impact Benefit Costs to the town. HCA (Host Community Agreement) Marijuana Impact Funds could be used to fund the additional hours by providing a safe place for recreation. However, those funds are earmarked for the SRO (School Resource Officer) and will not be certified until the Fall. It was acknowledged that the request would benefit the community. The Finance Committee does not typically fund Operational Salaries at the Fall Town Meeting but may consider doing so in this case due to its reasonably low cost as a whole. Shifting the library hours to open later on Thursdays until the funds are available would not be suitable and Friends of the Library funds cannot be used for salaries.

FY21 Fire and Rescue Budget Request:

Chief Barrett provided a Power Point Presentation outlining the department's functions, staffing levels, programs, community involvement, accomplishments, goals, spending highlights and non-tax funding for FY21 as well as apparatus inventory and capital replacement plan.

The first year operating at an ALS (Advanced Life Support) level and staffing a second ambulance increased call volume by 15%, per call collection rate increased 42%, monthly collection rate increased 63%; the projected annual increase for the first year is approximately \$202,000.00 more than 2019 collections.

The department received three grants:

- MIIA Asset Management and Scheduling Software - \$5,500.00
- EMPG replaced the department's multi gas meters - \$7,000.00
- SAFE provided Fire Prevention Programs to students in grades Pre-K – 5th and resident Seniors - \$5,000.00.

The department provided a Junior Firefighter Program, added a Deputy Chief position, all new On-Call Firefighters were State and National certified, Turnout Gear and SCBA's were replaced and a much-needed Department Assistant was hired.

As many residents are aware there are several large-scale new construction projects underway throughout town specifically:

- 324-unit over 55 community on Orchard Street - Regency at Glen Ellen
- 48-unit community on Acorn Street
- (2) separate 40+ home developments
- 98-unit 4-story 40B project on Union Street
- (2) separate 12-unit 40B projects on Main Street
- 120+ bed Assisted Living Facility on Bridge Street

The volume of new construction will surely have an impact on the department's response capabilities, plan review process, inspections and requests for assistance. Currently 42% of the department's call volume involves patients over the age of 55. The new developments are expected to increase their call volume by 800 EMS calls per year.

The department's goal for FY21 is to apply for a SAFER (Staffing for Adequate Fire & Emergency Response) Grant. The tiered grant works as follows:

- Year 1 pays for 75% of the Salary cost of the Firefighters
- Year 2 pays for 75% of the Salary cost of the Firefighters
- Year 3 pays for 35% of the Salary cost of the Firefighters
- Year 4 the town assumes all Salary cost of the additional Firefighters

Assuming (4) Firefighters are hired with grant funding, in the first year the town would pay for (1) Firefighter:

Annual Salary:	\$61,894.00
Family Healthcare Plan:	\$12,875.00
Average Overtime Cost:	<u>\$20,000.00</u>
Total Year 1:	<u>\$94,769.00</u>

The grant would pay for the other (3) Firefighters totaling \$284,307.00 in the first and second years. Current staffing levels have three staff members on duty each shift; the NFPA requires a minimum of four staff members per shift which has increased the department's overtime with the increase in call volume. The committee expressed their concern with sustaining the additional salaries after the first two years.

The department's FY21 Budget Request includes:

Salaries:	\$1,488,845.00
Expenses:	<u>\$ 208,800.00</u>
Total:	<u>\$1,697,645.00</u>

The department has requested \$15,000.00 funded by HCA Marijuana Impact Funds for the purchase of (1) LUCAS Chest Compression System which is an automatic CPR device that relieves personnel from performing CPR for extended periods of time and while transporting patients to the Hospital.

Capital Items for the next fiscal year include replacing Ambulance #1 \$325,000.00 and Car #2 \$60,000.00 however the Chief expressed his desire to have "boots on the ground" rather than replace equipment at this crucial time.

FY21 Finance Committee Budget – Consider Increase in Reserve Fund:

Jodie Garzon explained the Reserve Fund is used for unforeseen emergencies requiring additional funds to Operating Budgets. In FY20, the fund was reduced from \$100,000.00 to \$50,000.00. Since the beginning of the Fiscal Year, \$30,000.00 was used for Building Department Inspection Fees. The committee agreed they would rather fund budgets properly, Police Overtime and Building Inspections, etc., then reserve funds that may go unused. At this time, the committee agreed to postpone a decision until firmer numbers for FY21 were available. Funds leftover at the end of the Fiscal Year are part of Free Cash to be used the following Fiscal Year.

Meeting Minutes Approval:

Craig Schultze made a motion to recommend approval of the March 4, 2020 Finance Committee Meeting Minutes; Cathy MacInnes seconded. Vote: 6/0 2 abstained motion carries.

Old Business/New Business:

The committee inquired if Voting Procedures were put in place during Remote Meetings and suggested a "roll call" by name if the vote was not unanimous. Cathy MacInnes inquired if the committee was aware of the DPW Operating Study that is being conducted by an outside firm to assess the allocation of town funds used for the Department, specifically Enterprise Funds. The report will be reviewed after the Town Administrator and Select Board have had time to review it and will be discussed with the DPW Director during his FY21 Budget Request Presentation.

Jodie Garzon noted the changes to Important Dates on the agenda in preparation for the Spring Town Meeting:

Spring Town Meeting:	June 8, 2020
Pre-Town Meeting :	June 3, 2020
Finance Committee Report to Residents:	June 1, 2020
Final Recommendations:	May 26, 2020

The Finance Committee will continue to meet in this fashion through April, meetings will begin at 6:00 PM to accommodate Town Hall Staff. The committee awaits the Town Administrator, Finance Director and Select Board's Recommendations for the FY21 Operating Budget before making their own recommendations.

The Spring Town Meeting Warrant is closed but can be reopened at any time by the Select Board to add Warrant Articles.

The committee had agreed to use a 4% Growth Rate for all Operating Budgets in FY21. The Select Board will proceed with the typical 65/35 split between School and Municipal Departments. The School Department's goal for FY21 uses a 4% Growth Rate.

Adjourn:

Cathy MacInnes made a motion to adjourn the Finance Committee Meeting at 8:34 PM; Craig Schultze seconded. Vote: 8/0 motion carries unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,
Deirdre Gilmore