

Tri-Board Meeting

December 15, 2022 7:00 PM EST
Veterans Memorial Building Room #229
Zoom Remote Meeting Platform
Millis, MA 02054

In Attendance:

Finance Committee

Peter Berube, Chair
Jodie Garzon, Vice Chair
Peter Underhill, Clerk
Joyce Boiardi
Patrick Gatto
Jonathan Loer
Cathy MacInnes
Sara Reyes
John Steadman

Select Board

Erin Underhill, Chair
Craig Schultze, Vice Chair
Ellen Rosenfeld, Clerk

School Committee

Steven Catalano, Chair
Denise Gibbons, Secretary
Robyn Briggs
Marc Conroy

Michael Guzinski, Town Administrator
Carol Johnston, Finance Director
James Duffy, Millis Resident

Pete Berube called the Finance Committee Meeting to order at 7:04 PM

Erin Underhill called the Select Board Meeting to order at 7:04 PM.

Steven Catalano called the School Committee Meeting to order at 7:04 PM.

Tri-Board Meetings are held a couple times a year as a collaborative effort for the Finance Committee, Select Board and School Committee to discuss important topics impacting the Town's Finances and Capital Needs.

SPED Funding:

Steven Catalano notified the participants that the FY24 Budget is grim. A \$1.4 million deficit is anticipated. SPED Tuition Costs will increase by 14.1% and additional vans and drivers will be needed. Providing SPED is mandatory and tuition costs are not negotiable. The School Department is also seeing a loss in revenue of approximately \$250,000.00 in Choice In Tuitions; 20 less students. It was noted the deficit numbers are preliminary. In the past, a 2% increase in SPED Salaries was the norm; 14.1% is due to the impact of COVID and salary incentives to retain teachers. The School Committee plans to reach out to State Representatives to help alleviate the costs. Efforts to collaborate with surrounding towns to offset transportation costs have been made but are dependent on student needs. Circuit Breaker Funding is expected to increase \$100,000.00 but that is used as a buffer in the event additional students with special needs move into town.

Marijuana Impact Funds:

HCA (Host Community Agreement) Funds are used to offset the impact to the community hosting a marijuana facility and include:

- Social Work Services
- School Resource Officer
- Extended Library Hours
- Teen Program Coordinator Salary and Benefits
- Administrative Support in the Executive Office

- School Adjustment Counselor
- Social/Emotional Learning Program Teacher
- Public Safety Training and Stipends
- Inclusive Camp Salaries and Expenses

The total cost for FY23 is \$507,734.25. Carol Johnston confirmed that the current HCA is in its 4th year of operation. The remaining HCA Funds will be used to fund FY24, FY25 and ½ of FY26. The town will have to consider how the above positions will be funded at the expiration of the HCA.

The CCC (Cannabis Control Commission) has implemented new regulations which allow an HCA Facility to appeal/question exactly what the funds are being used for. The Town's ByLaw for Retail Marijuana Facilities is limited to one; CommCan, Inc. The current HCA is 3% of gross sales which is trending down due to the oversaturation of the market.

Town Department Needs (IT, DPW, Etc.):

Mike Guzinski outlined the additional staffing needs:

- General Town Engineer
 - An in-house engineer will reduce the DPW's Expenses for Engineering Costs and assist with Peer Review Engineering Costs for both the Conservation Commission and Planning Board.
- DPW Laborer
 - Analysis of DPW Staffing reflected a need to increase staff funded by the General Fund
- Additional Council on Aging Staff
 - To offer more programs
- Full Time IT Director
 - Currently the town has a Part Time IT Director; shared with the Town of Norfolk. A Full Time IT Director would help improve the Town's Website. The School Department has its own IT Staff.
- Full Time Benefits Administrator
 - The position will be used for both the Municipal and School Departments
 - Assist with data entry and track benefit costs, etc.
- Public Safety Staffing
 - To assist with the growing needs of the town.

Seniors:

A November 2022 Town Meeting Warrant Article to construct a new Senior Center at Cassidy Farm failed to be approved. It was noted that the current Senior Center has limited space which limits the ability to service Millis' Senior Population. Consideration should be given to broaden the center's hours including nights and weekends in order to provide more programs and services. School Department Facilities are not available when school is in session. Consideration should be given to renovate/expand the Town Hall which would centralize town services. The Council on Aging hopes to redesign a new facility with a more reasonable price tag and bring it forth to another Town Meeting. However, the redesign would require funding architect costs. There is a lot of support for a new Senior Center.

Cassidy Farm is limited to Conservation Restrictions and the vote at Town Meeting approved its use for General Municipal Purposes; it's unlikely that the town could sell the property to offset the cost of a new Senior Center.

The residents have concerns with increased taxes with renovations to the Middle/High School, Tri-County School, additional PFAS Facilities and a new Senior Center.

Disposition of Town Assets (Braun Property, Etc.):

The Town of Millis owns many properties and should develop a plan to utilize the buildings and space to fulfill the long term needs of the town. The town owned property at 64 Exchange Street, also known as the Train Station, would require several updates in order to accommodate Town Departments or is not adequate to facilitate a Senior Center. The most recent purchase was the Braun Property located on Village Street. The May 2021 Town Meeting voted in favor to purchase the property in the amount of \$1,000,000.00. The property was an investment and will appreciate over the years and could be sold in the future. Potential uses of the property are Senior Housing and a PFAS Treatment Facility.

A proposal to the Community Preservation Committee to fund a study, approximately \$167,000.00, to review the potential of town owned properties was not possible due to lack of funding. The Conservation Commission has scaled down the scope of the study to cost \$10,000.00 from the Conservation Commission Budget and the Conway School of Design will conduct the study of 14 town owned properties; the report should be available by April.

Building Maintenance:

Mike Guzinski: In May 2022, the Town and Schools made a collaborative effort for all Town Buildings to be maintained under John Engler, Director of Operations and Facilities and his staff. The buildings include Town Hall, Library, Police, Fire and DPW. It is anticipated that an increase in salaries will be necessary for overall maintenance and snow removal.

Capital Planning Resources/Budget, Software, Training, Etc.:

Pete Berube, who served on the Capital Planning Committee, suggested the town invest in software to assist the committee with updating the Town's Asset Inventory and Capital Needs. Since the inception of the committee, the Chair, Jonathan Barry, has kept the information in an Excel Spreadsheet. It was suggested training staff to maintain the software would be ideal and the hope is to implement the software and training in the FY24 Budget Cycle.

FY24 Budget Timeline and Process:

The Preliminary Timeline is available on the Town's Website:

https://www.millisma.gov/sites/g/files/vyhlf901/f/uploads/fy24_preliminary_budget_calendar.pdf

Of note, Capital Item Requests are due by January 14, 2023 and Revenue Estimates will be available in mid-January. More definitive SPED Tuition Costs will be available after January 1st. A Tri-Board meeting is tentatively scheduled for Wednesday, February 15, 2023. The Finance Committee will meet with Department Heads to review their FY24 Budget Requests starting in late February through March. The committee's Final Recommendations will be made on April 12, 2023. The committee's report is due to residents by April 24, 2023.

MSBA Timeline Refresher:

Denise Gibbons thanked the town for approving funding for a Middle High School Feasibility Study at the November 2022 Town Meeting. A Project Manager search will begin in January 2023, it's typically a two-month process. A Design Firm will be selected in May 2023 and will develop options for the renovation. This process typically takes 18 – 24 months. When options are available, Public Forums will be held giving residents an opportunity to voice their input. It was noted that School Committee Meetings are open to the public via Zoom. The School Committee will keep the Finance Committee updated on the results of the study and suggested a non-voting Finance Committee Member participate in the School Building Committee Meetings.

MBTA 3A Advisory Committee:

Jodie Garzon gave an overview of the committee. The committee is working with the Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC) to comply with Massachusetts State MBTA Community Regulations and how the town is zoned for dense multi-family housing. To comply with the new regulations, zoning on 50 acres of land for multi-family housing and 750 units will need to be proposed at a Town Meeting. Craig Schultze noted it is early in the process and the committee, consisting of nine members, is weighing the town's options.

Adjourn Tri-Board Meeting:

Craig Schultze made a motion to adjourn the Select Board Meeting at 8:59 PM; Ellen Rosenfeld seconded. Vote 3/0 motion carries unanimously.

Steven Catalano made a motion to adjourn the School Committee Meeting at 8:59 PM; Marc Conroy seconded. Vote: 4/0 motion carries.

Pete Berube asked the Committee Members to consider volunteering as a Finance Committee Liaison to the School Building Committee.

Jodie Garzon made a motion to adjourn the Finance Committee Meeting at 9:01 PM; Joyce Boiardi seconded. Vote: 9/0 motion carries unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,
Deirdre Gilmore