

Approved: February 1, 2021

Select Board Meeting: January 12, 2021

Present: Freiman, Ulfelder, Olney, Sullivan Woods, Aufranc

Also Present: Jop, Frigulietti, Strother, Dwinell

Warrants approved: none

Meeting Documents:

1. Agenda
2. Draft Budgets

1. Call to Order

Ms. Freiman, Chair, called the meeting to order at 10:02 am online.

Ms. Freiman announced the meeting was being streamed live on Comcast channel 8 and Verizon channel 40 and by Wellesley Media and recorded for subsequent viewing on the cable channels or at wellesleymedia.org.

2. Citizen Speak

None.

3. Discuss Select Board Budget Submittals

Ms. Jop stated the budget would be presented to Advisory on January 20th. She noted that at the January 19th Board meeting she and Ms. Strother would provide the Board with the most updated budget information that would include the School Department budget voted by the School Committee.

4. Building Department

Mr. Grant, Inspector of Buildings, joined the Board.

Mr. Grant stated that the Building Department had been mostly remote since March, 2020, and had been conducting inspections virtually. He added that the budget was level funded for expenses with an increase for personnel costs and remained under guideline. He provided a review of the expense increases in the past several years for digitization of records and utilizing an online permitting platform. The Board discussed the Building Department budget and the digitization of records within the department.

5. Finance and Treasurer

Ms. Lopes, Town Treasurer, joined the Board.

Ms. Strother stated that the offices had been working on a transition plan with the retirement of Mr. Waldman and additional expected retirements between the two offices. She added the offices had been working on cross-training and emphasizing strong technology skills. She recognized both offices for their ability to work without interruption through the pandemic. Ms. Strother reviewed the personnel changes, job reclassifications and fluctuations in salaries. She noted the Finance budget was under guideline with a 1.73% increase.

Ms. Lopes reviewed the Treasurer's Office budget, noting the salary changes and the anticipated retirement of the long-time part-time Assistant Treasurer in the near future. She stated that the budget met guideline at 2.5% while planning for departmental transitions she noted the office may see savings during the fiscal year. She added that the department continued to encourage online payments which reduced cash intake in the office. The Board discussed the budgets for the Finance Department and the Treasurer/Collector's Office.

6. Executive Director

Ms. Jop stated that the budget came in at 2.49% noting salary offsets and reductions in part-time/seasonable employee needs. She noted additional reductions and savings in conferences due to COVID restrictions for travel for FY22 that would likely increase again for FY23. Ms. Jop reviewed the current office makeup and expected realignment of staffing anticipated to be completed in the near future. The Board discussed the Executive Director's budget, the realignment of staff, and achievement of goals including economic development and housing goals.

7. Other Departments (Group Insurance, Law, Streetlights)

Ms. Jop provided an overview of the shared services budgets and small department budgets. She noted that the legal expenses had increased significantly due mostly to Covid-19 and were level funded for FY22. Ms. Jop reviewed the risk management budget and noted the increase mainly due to liability insurance and new vehicle purchases including the new fire truck. She provided an overview of the appointed committee budget. She noted the retirement budget had increased by 3.38% based on the actuarial study. Ms. Strother reviewed the factors included in the study that prescribed the increases per fiscal year. Ms. Lopes reviewed the worker's compensation operating request, noting in FY21 decrease that was due to a reallocation of funds to cover the salary of staff that manages the worker's compensation claims and was level funded for FY22. Ms. Strother stated that the request for unemployment compensation remained level funded, she noted the Town pays actual claims and continued to protest fraudulent claims that were part of the ongoing nationwide problem of unemployment fraud. Ms. Jop stated that negotiations with the unions would begin shortly regarding group insurance. Ms. Lopes reviewed the insurance rates based on enrollment through December and noted they rates had been increased modestly. She added that the Town expected twenty new enrollments with a conservative rate increase of 8% and a 4% increase for Medicare. She added that the rates and enrollments would be updated with actuals in February. Ms. Jop and Ms. Strother continued to review the shared services and small departments operating requests noting that all were within guideline.

8. SEC

Ms. Martello, SEC Director, joined the Board.

Ms. Martello reviewed the SEC budget, noting that FY21 budget did not include a salary adjustment that was expected to be a departmental transfer from Human Resources. She stated that for FY22 the budget, the Director's salary would be increased as her hours were revised to full-time based on the workload. Ms. Jop stated that the MLP contributes half of the salary for the SEC staff members. Ms. Martello briefly reviewed the anticipated timeline for the Climate Action Plan and the role of the SEC in moving the plan into the implementation phase. She discussed the grant funding received for LED lighting projects and other grant opportunities that may be available. The Board discussed the work performed by the SEC and the FY22 budget request.

The Board briefly discussed the budgets presented. Ms. Freiman stated that additional revisions to the budget would be necessary in order to close the deficit. Ms. Jop briefly reviewed discussions with DPW that remained ongoing to reduce capital projects.

9. New Business and Correspondence

The meeting was adjourned at 12:31pm.

The next regular meeting is scheduled for January 19, 2021 at 7:00pm online.