



THE TOWN OF WOODBRIDGE BOARD OF FINANCE MEETING MINUTES THURSDAY, JULY 16, 2020

A Board of Finance Meeting for the Town of Woodbridge was held on Thursday, July 16, 2020 at 6:00 via Webex

BOF PRESENT: Chairman, Matthew Giglietti; Vice Chairman, Paul Kuriakose; Tom Handler; Ellen Scalettar

ALSO PRESENT: First Selectman, Beth Heller; Administrative Officer/Director of Finance, Anthony Genovese; Budget Analyst/Payroll & Benefits Administrator, Karen Crosby

PUBLIC COMMENTS

None

CHAIRMAN'S REMARKS

Matt stated that there seems to be some confusion regarding the Grand List, Mill Rates, Tax Cuts, etc.

Were this not a reval year, everyone's taxes might have been reduced by 1%. This is not the case due to reval. Some assessments went up, some went down and some stayed about the same. The Grand List went down by \$40M in the reval. With absolutely no increase in the budget, taxes would still need to increase. We did reduce the expenditure side of the budget by more than 1% and the savings on that would be dependent on your assessment. We will spend 1% less in the FY21 than in FY20. Who know with this pandemic if we will have additional expenditures.

The Board of Selectmen created an ad hoc budget committee made up of Joe Dey, Sandy Stein and Joe Crisco.

Based on conversations he has heard the budget committee will ask the departments what they would do if their budget was cut by 5%. Matt reminded the Board that 75% of the budget is made up of four departments: Woodbridge Bd of Ed, Amity Board of Education, Debt Service and Employee Benefits. You can't cut Boards of Ed by 5%, (by State Statute, Boards of Education guaranteed at least the same level of funding from the previous year), you can't cut debt service and employee benefits are from union contracts. That leaves the other departments which have been cut in the past. Matt would not support that. He understands that both Boards of Education will be coming in with increases for next year.

The directive that has been given to departments is to give us your best reasonable budget and then we will talk about it. It has worked in the past.

ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER / DIRECTOR OF FINANCE REPORT

Tony reported a preliminary surplus of \$550,000 with \$400,000 contribution from Fund Balance for an actual surplus of approximately \$150,000. This brings the Fund Balance to \$6.5M or 13% of annual projected expenses.

Revenues

Taxes – primarily due to a projected drop in collections, including back taxes, taxes are expected to experience a deficit of approximately \$150,000.

Charges for Services – projected to experience a deficit of \$82,000. The deficit is primarily due to a shortfall in recreation fees of \$100,000 due to cancelled programs offset by surpluses in building permits and conveyance fees.

Interest Income – projected shortfall of \$60,000 due to a sharp decline in rates in March.

Intergovernmental Revenue – State grants are projected to experience a surplus of \$139,760. This is primarily due to an additional \$100,397 in ECS grant revenue.

Expenses

Board of Selectmen – projected to generate a surplus of approximately \$38,000 due to a vacant position.

Registrar of Voters – due to a delay in the primary to August 11th, the registrar of voters is projected to generate a surplus of \$25,000.

Police – projected to generate a surplus of \$45,000 primarily due to vacant officer positions.

Building Official – expected to generate a surplus of \$32,000 due to the hiring of a part time building official.

Public Works – projected to generate a surplus of \$60,000 primarily due to vacant mechanic positions and a savings in overtime and material due to a light winter.

Waste Management - primarily due to increased recycling and bulky waste costs, waste management is expected to experience a deficit of 45,000.

Human Services – projected to generate a surplus of 50,000 due to a vacant senior center director position and the elimination of some part time staffing.

Recreation – expected to generate a surplus of \$110,000 mostly in part time wages primarily due to the cancellation of spring programs.

Library – due to the recent closure, the library is projected to generate a surplus of \$70,000 mostly in part time wages.

Benefits – expected to generate a surplus of \$30,000 due to a reduced workers compensation premium, healthcare savings due to vacant positions, and savings in FICA and Medicare from vacant positions and reduced part time labor. This surplus was reduced from previous months primarily due to an anticipated increase in unemployment claims.

WBOE – the Woodbridge Board of Education is reporting a fiscal year end surplus of \$96,000 and that is currently increased to \$104,830 according to recent information.

The Tax Deferral Program for eligible tax payers has resulted in a deferral of \$198,000 and it does not cause a cash flow problem.

Matt stated that the Town has a healthy Fund Balance and with the pandemic it is good to have that “rainy day” fund for anything that may “pop up” this year.

Status of the FY20 Audit

The audit is being done virtually. They are taking samples and are looking for compliance and proper procedures. It is going well.

Moody's Credit Opinion

Tony stated that whenever we issue debt we get a credit opinion. Moody's goes through a number of our indicators. They look at the wealth levels, fund balance, how stable the revenues are, long term liabilities, is there a lot of debt, how are the tax collections, are there surpluses or deficits. Our rating is AAA. The rating outlook is also important and the Town of Woodbridge is Stable. That rating is what you hope for in a AAA rating. They think our fund balance percentage is high.

Matt stated that this is an excellent report the negatives are the tax base and the grand list. The Town can't really do much to lower taxes if you can't grow the commercial tax base.

Tony stated that one thing that is most difficult to get a handle on are the longer term liabilities: retiree healthcare (which has been eliminated) , debt, and pension. That is an area that the Town has paid particular attention to.

Ellen stated that she appreciates how well the Town is run and the expertise of Tony and Matt in leading the financial aspects and health of the Town.

Tony reported that he is putting the lease information together for the fire truck that was ordered 1 ½ years ago. There may be a meeting in August to approve that.

FUNDING REQUESTS

- 1920-25 Allocation.....\$45,000 (Request for Funding)
- To: Waste Mgmt/Recycling 1350-00/53300
From: Board of Finance/Contingency 1170-00/56800
For: Increase costs related to the processing of recyclables
Vote: (Giglietti/Kuriakose) unanimous
- 1920-26 Allocation.....\$3,400 (Request for Funding)
- To: The Center/Natural Gas 1190-00/55222
From: Board of Finance/Contingency 1170-00/56800
For: Account was under budget for FY20
Vote: (Giglietti/Scalettar) unanimous
- 1920-27 Allocation.....\$7,500 (Request for Funding)
- To: CNR/Bldg Maint/Roof Repair 302-3700/57200/ROOF
From: Board of Finance/Contingency 1170-00/56800
For: Center Building Roof Repair eliminated from FY21 Capital Budget
Vote: (Giglietti/Scalettar) unanimous
- 1920-28 Allocation.....\$10,000 (Request for Funding)
- To: CNR/Bldg Maint/Library Improvements 302-3700/53530
From: Board of Finance/Contingency 1170-00/56800
For: Library HVAC Fence eliminated from FY21 Capital Budget
Vote: (Giglietti/Kuriakose) unanimous
- 2021-01 Allocation.....\$8,911 (Line Item Transfer)
- To: Fire Dept/PT Maintenance 1230-00/50330
From: Revenue/Misc Grants 1-2-1100/42600
For: Transfer anticipated grant funds for the additional cleaning of the fire station due to COVID-19.
Vote: (Giglietti/Scalettar) Unanimous

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The Board of Finance voted (Giglietti/Handler) unanimously to approve the minutes of the June 18, 2020 meeting as presented.

FIRST SELECTMAN'S REPORT

Beth reported that all staff continues to work at full capacity in the buildings. All buildings remain closed to the public and all business is being conducted via email or phone or, if absolutely necessary, by appointment only for curbside or drop-off. The staff remains healthy and continues to do a wonderful job taking care of all of our citizens. Update 130 positive Covid cases and 34 Covid deaths. These numbers remain the same since June 30th. Membership has been completed for the 2030 task force. This group would work on ideas on how to grow the grand list and to lower taxes and become more attractive to new business. She envisions this committee making recommendations to zoning, policy recommendations, a marketing campaign, capital infrastructure and other ideas for the Town. The committee consists of Chris Dickerson a business owner and former member of the board of selectmen, Susan Jacobs a member of the Board of Finance, Rob Klee chair of the Town Plan & Zoning Commission, Garret Luciani who is vice president of Peoples United Bank in Woodbridge, and Jeremy Rosner Chairman of the Economic Development Commission.

Beth is also working to create a committee to examine equity and diversity in Woodbridge. She hopes to announce membership at the August Board of Selectmen meeting.

The Ad Hoc Community Council will be holding a virtual community conversation. The first of the series will feature award-winning journalist Ed Gordon author of the book Conversations in Black on Power, Politics and Leadership.

Participated in a regional call with the DOT regarding the Exit 59 project. They are now working on the safety issues of the on and off ramps of Exit 59.

Beth presented the 2020 Youth Award to Alexander Pocwiercz.

Beth stated that the stellar Moody's credit opinion is due to our devoted Finance Director, Tony Genovese and the Board of Finance as well as the Finance Department and all Town employees.

LIAISON REPORTS

Amity – Matt reported that they do not meet in July

Recreation – Ellen reported that the virtual programming is going very well. They established pool schedule to accommodate both the public and aquatic club with Covid protocols in place. The playground is open with Covid protocols as well as the tennis courts. The Road Race has not yet been cancelled. The virtual summer camp has been going well. They have been doing a good job keeping virtual programs going.

Police – Paul was unable to attend the meeting.

WBOE – Tom Handler reported that they will be meeting later in the month.

The Board of Finance voted (Giglietti/Handler) unanimously to adjourn at 6:33 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Karen Crosby

Karen Crosby
Budget Analyst
Payroll & Benefits Administrator