**Milford Finance Committee**

**Meeting at Milford Town Hall**

**October 13, 2021**

**Finance Committee Members Present:** Alberto Correia, Brant Hornberger, Andrew Lizotte, David Levine, Mike Nicholson, Vincenzo Valastro, Chris Morin, Robert DeVita, Joyce Lavigne, Carly Kearnan

**Members not present**: Jerry Hiatt, Charles Miklosovich, Jack Tennaro, Peter Wish

**Also present:** Zach Taylor, Finance Director, Richard Villani, Town Administrator, Paul Abbondanza, Financial Analyst, Jonathan Bruce, Water Commissioner, Jim Asam, Parks Administrator, Paul Pellegrini, Parks Commission Chairman, Tom Scarlata architect from BH+A

Meeting called to order at 7PM.

Al Correia explained that the purpose of this meeting was to formally vote on the articles contained in the October 25th Town Meeting Warrant. Al described that discussion of each article would likely be brief because we have already discussed each of the articles in prior meetings. However, until the warrant was final, we were unable to formally vote.

**Article #10.** Establishing a budget for the water company:Zach Taylor, Finance Director led a discussion of the article which will create a partial year budget for the Water Company for the roughly 7 month period between the planned acquisition and fiscal year end of June 30th. The budget of $3,670K will cover an interest payment of $1,150K, operating expenses and include an account for “break-fix” type of day-to-day maintenance.

Chris Morin and Andy Lizotte asked for clarification on the treatment of taxes as a portion of the land is in Hopkinton.

David Levine asked how these expenses compare to what the water company paid previously. Zach described accounting differences that come from complying with Massachusetts General Law, but otherwise expenses are similar.

Al Correia asked Zach to confirm that we are still on track to have no impact on water rates. Zach confirmed and shared that metered sales alone will cover this budget. Zach further explained how purchasing receivables will help manage cash flows.

Brant Hornberger asked how this budget compared to the “proforma” presented to Town Meeting. Zach explained that it is slightly favorable to earlier estimates.

* Favorable Motion by Vinny Valastro
* Seconded by Mike Nicholson
* Unanimously Approved

**Article #12** This article is intended to move the existing Water Company staff to the new Town of Milford Department. Per Rick Villani, the Personnel Board will be voting tomorrow. There was a question of procedure raised by a citizen and the subsequent vote will address the concern.

* Favorable Motion by Mick Nicholson
* Seconded by Vinny Valastro
* Unanimously Approved

**Article #13** To see if the Town will approve $200K to cover remaining legal fees to finalize the acquisition of the Water Company. Zach Taylor described that we’re in late stages and working on the bonding process. Unless we want to walk away from the Water Company purchase, we have to pay these fees.

* Favorable Motion by Bob DeVita
* Seconded by Andy Lizotte
* Unanimously Approved

**Article #19** To see if the Town will vote to accept sections of Chapter 40 of general laws which will allow the Town to place a lien upon real estate if the owner does not pay their water bill.

* Favorable Motion by Bob DeVita
* Seconded by Andy Lizotte
* Unanimously Approved

**Article #37** Rick Villani described that the Article seeks to authorize the Select Board to petition to make the Chair of the Water Board Chair a Town Meeting Member at Large for the purposes of casting a vote in Town Meeting.

Andy Lizotte asked if there was a comparable position at the Sewer Department with the same treatment. The answer is that this is the same treatment as the Chair of the Sewer Department.

* Favorable Motion by Carly Kearnan
* Seconded by Andy Lizotte
* Unanimously Approved

**Article #8** Parks Commission, renovate Town Pool. Jim Asam Parks Administrator, Paul Pellegrini, Parks Commission Chairman, Tom Scarlata architect from BH+A presented the $4.6M renovation. Vs prior presentations the cost increases of $800K are for construction and materials, not soft services.

Noting the inflationary environment, Vin Valastro asked about timing of issuing the contract to lock in prices. He was informed that the contract can’t precede the Town Meeting vote on October 25th. But there is a contingency in the budget of 20% which is larger than a more traditional 10% because we only have a conceptual design at this stage.

Mike Nicholson asked about the 89% increase in costs for the “pool and spray deck” as it seems as it must be beyond just material cost. Tom Scarlata shared that this is the raw material and equipment pricing that he is getting from his pool contractors based on a similar job in Salem. Both labor and materials are up.

Mike Nicholson followed up with a question for the potential for cost over runs if we started in the next 12 months? Tom Scarlata shared that he has a contingency based on what’s scoped but there in uncertainty in cost being in conceptual design phase.

Dave Levine asked if the project do more than just the pool? Specifically, there is need for a dog park in town and perhaps some of the contingency could go for that. Jim Asam shared that there is a plan for a playground in the back, we'll keep the trees, but the playground will take up some of that space. A dog park is not scoped in this project. Al Correia added that even if there was money left if the project budget, a dog park would need to be discussed as a standalone project and to go to Town Meeting for approval.

* Favorable Motion by Vinny Valastro
* Seconded by Bob DeVita
* Unanimously Approved

**Article #1** Godfrey Brook Culvert. Al Correia described the renovation of two sections of the Godfrey Brook Culvert. The project is $1M in total expense, after grants the towns portion is $300K and will be entirely funded by reallocating funds from existing articles. No funding is being requested.

* Favorable Motion by Brant Hornberger
* Seconded by Chris Morin
* Unanimously Approved

**Article #2** Birch Street Fire Department roof repairs. Al Correia described this $35K roof repair which has been on the long term capital plan for several years. It was originally planned for $300K for a full repair but Chief Nelson has learned that a partial repair for $35K will suffice and has reduced the request.

* Favorable Motion by Chris Morin
* Seconded by Vinny Valastro
* Unanimously Approved

**Article #3.** Al Correia described this $300K cost to replenish the fund for accrued time off. The current balance is approaching $0 and needs to be recharged. We spend roughly $125K per year so this will last several years.

* Favorable Motion by Andy Lizotte
* Seconded by Vinny Valastro
* Unanimously Approved

**Article #4** Time Tracking System for $21K. This system will move our time tracking onto an electronic platform.

* Favorable Motion by Carly Kearnan
* Seconded by Andy Lizotte
* Unanimously Approved

**Article #5** Stacy School Interior Painting for $200K. Al Correia described that the painting was originally part of maintenance budget, but carpet replacement was prioritized during COVID and we’re flipping the two projects on our lists.

* Favorable Motion by Chris Morin
* Seconded by Mike Nicholson
* Unanimously Approved

**Article #6** Police Station Garage Doors, $100K. Rick Villani described that these are the insulated rolling steel doors that allow the police department to drive a prisoner inside and park motorcycles inside.

* Favorable Motion by Carly Kearnan
* Seconded by Vinny Valastro
* Unanimously Approved

**Article #7** Personnel Bylaw, in section 3.13 strike the word “grade” and replace it with “step”

* Refer to Sponsor Motion by Andy Lizotte
* Seconded by David Levine
* Unanimously Approved

**Article #9** Accept Gordon Drive as a public way

* Refer to Sponsor Motion by Chris Morin
* Seconded by Andy Lizotte
* Unanimously Approved

**Article #11** Sr Center project costing $35K to replace worn carpeting with vinyl flooring. Al Correia described that the success of the Sr Center means that we have more people using the center and it’s worn out the carpeting.

* Favorable Motion by David Levine
* Seconded by Vinny Valastro
* Unanimously Approved

**Article #14** Zoning bylaw change to strike the words “Board of Selectmen” and inserting the words “Select Board”.

* Favorable Motion by Brant Hornberger
* Seconded by Bob DeVita
* Unanimously Approved

**Article #15** Transfer two Town owned parcels of land totaling 2.3 acres to the conservation commission.

* Favorable Motion by David Levine
* Seconded by Vinny Valastro
* Unanimously Approved

**Article #16** Supplement Council on Aging budget. Sr Center Bus budget was set before the bids were received, increases in fuel and labor costs leave a $20K shortfall.

* Favorable Motion by Chris Morin
* Seconded by Vinny Valastro
* Unanimously Approved

**Article #17** ADA Compliance projects totaling $150K. This is the 3rd year of a 5-year funding program divided equally between schools, parks and general government.

* Favorable Motion by Mike Nicholson
* Seconded by Andy Lizotte
* Unanimously Approved

**Article #18** Authorization to spend MWRTA funds. There is $0 in expense, this is an accounting transfer of $12,500 to make funds available for use toward the bus.

* Favorable Motion by Carly Kearnan
* Seconded by Bob DeVita
* Unanimously Approved

**Article #20** Sr Center Upstairs fitness room $100K. Al Correia described that years ago the Finance Committee was suspicious of the first ask for a fitness room, but the good news is that the space is a success and is well used. The concept has been proven and this is part two of the project.

* Favorable Motion by Vinny Valastro
* Seconded by Bob DeVita
* Unanimously Approved

**Article #21** Stacy Middle School Fire alarm for $125K. This project has been on capital plan for several years and is a control system that detects fire / smoke and in addition to being an alarm, the system opens and closes doors to control the flow of students.

* Favorable Motion by Carly Kearnan
* Seconded by Bob DeVita
* Unanimously Approved

**Article #22** Personnel bylaws amended. Rick Villani described that this article brings the Article 2 non-union employees longevity pay on par with unionized employees. This is a matter of fairness. Mike Nicholson asked about the value of the increase, its $75 per category. Vinny Valastro asked about the types of leave offered and the practice of affording people time off around holidays that is not official leave. Zach Taylor reminded us of the value of the time tracking software for instances like this. David Levine asked about the total expense, which is about $2K per year.

* Favorable Motion by Chris Morin
* Seconded by Vinny Valastro
* Unanimously Approved

**Article #23** Personnel bylaws amended. Vacation time for non-unionized employees should be on par with unionized. Bob DeVita asked a question on specific language which strikes a sentence about using time by end of fiscal year with no replacement language. The answer was removal of this language shifts to calendar year end with max of 5 days carry over.

* Favorable Motion by Vinny Valastro
* Seconded by Chris Morin
* 5 in favor, 2 against

**Article #24** Zoning article from the Planning Board about restricting freestanding warehouses. Mike Nicholson confirmed that this was forward looking only and not retroactive.

* Motion to Refer to Sponsor by Chris Morin
* Seconded by Andy Lizotte
* Unanimously Approved

**Article #25** Dog kennel.

* Motion to Refer to Sponsor by Andy Lizotte
* Seconded by Chris Morin
* Unanimously Approved

**Article #26** Insurance advisory committee. The current 8-member board is an even number, this article adds an article 2 employee get to 9 board members and include a town employee.

* Motion to Refer to Sponsor by David Levine
* Seconded by Andy Lizotte
* Unanimously Approved

**Article #27** Demo of Depot Street for $100k. This incremental funding to the original $133K. Town council is working with owner, there is still a chance they will remedy this on their own.

* Favorable Motion by Bob DeVita
* Seconded by Andy Lizotte
* Unanimously Approved

**Article #28** Fleet Maintenance supervisor. This is not an incremental person because of a retirement. Scott Crisafulli would use replacement person to manage and plan maintenance and ensure we get best pricing. Vin Valastro asked if this was just for the Highway Department – originally it will be, but Scott’s vision is to open this to town.

* Favorable Motion by Mike Nicholson
* Seconded by Carly Kearnan
* Unanimously Approved

**Article #29** Library Fence. $40K for vinyl fence to replace failing, old wood fence around the library.

* Favorable Motion by Bob DeVita
* Seconded by Vinny Valastro
* Unanimously Approved

**Article #30** Bylaw Amendment for Vernon Grove. This article will allow Vernon Grove to take over the management of Purchase Street Cemetery and change name to Vernon Grove Cemeteries.

* Motion to Refer to Sponsor by Andy Lizotte
* Seconded by Vinny Valastro
* Unanimously Approved

**Article #31** Amend Zoning Bylaw to make their site plan review more efficient.

* Motion to Refer to Sponsor by Bob DeVita
* Seconded by Andy Lizotte
* Unanimously Approved

**Article #32** Parks department tractor for $74K.

* Favorable Motion by Andy Lizotte
* Seconded by Carly Kearnan
* Unanimously Approved

**Article #33** Highway department replace 10 doors for $90K. The current doors are old and frequently get stuck.

* Favorable Motion by Carly Kearnan
* Seconded by Vinny Valastro
* Unanimously Approved

**Article #34** Committee Bylaw creates a mechanism to ensure that people are sworn in. David Levine clarified by asking if this was about meeting attendance, the article is really limited to being sworn in.

* Favorable Motion be Vinny Valastro
* Seconded by Bob DeVita
* Unanimously Approved

**Article #35** SCBA tanks for firefighters. This $47K project allows for every fire fighter to have the equipment they need. Andy Lizotte asked if the number of tanks was based on the number of people working on shifts, or the full fire department. Carly Kearnan explained that it covers all fire fighters in the event of a second call.

* Favorable Motion by Bob DeVita
* Seconded by Vinny Valastro
* Unanimously Approved

**Article #36** Sr Center interior painting project of $81K. Bob DeVita described that this is a good example of the department taking care of a beautiful facility. David Levine asked if we had painted this before, the response was that we had painted only a small portion. Mike Nicholson asked if the Sr Center was hitting capacity, and at times it is. This in part helps justify the article for the second fitness room, but David will follow up via that subcommittee on LT planning.

* Favorable Motion by Bob DeVita
* Seconded by Vinny Valastro
* Unanimously Approved

**Article #38** Personnel Board Article to move assessor from level 3 to level 4.

* Favorable Motion by Chris Morin
* Seconded by Vin Valastro
* Unanimously Approved

**Article #39** Upgrade Library lightening. Mike Nicholson described the project which will replace antiquated incandescent and CFL light fixtures with LED light fixtures. The project cost is $80K, $72K after the grant. Considering $13K of annual electrical savings, the project has a 5.5 year payback.

* Favorable Motion by Mike Nicholson
* Seconded by David Levine
* Unanimously Approved

**Article #40** Land transfer of 5 parcels of land to the conservation committee in the vicinity of Bear Hill. This is 27 acres in total, largest piece is wetlands and not buildable.

* Motion to Refer to Sponsor by Chris Morin
* Seconded by Bob DeVita
* Unanimously Approved

**Article #41** Vernon grove mapping software for $24K. This Article seeks to replace paper-based mapping with a digital, cloud-based tracking system. Mike Nicholson asked if there was an annual expense, Carly Kearnan confirmed that it’s roughly $2K per year.

* Favorable Motion by David Levine
* Seconded by Andy Lizotte
* Unanimously Approved

**Article #42** New Water Truck for the Fire Department. The existing water truck is not up to code. We were awarded a 10% match grant, so the Towns total cost is $40,609 on a $400K truck.

* Favorable Motion by Andy Lizotte
* Seconded by Carly Kearnan
* Unanimously Approved

**Article #43** Sr Center Exterior Painting for $80K.

* Favorable Motion by Bob DeVita
* Seconded by Andy Lizotte
* Unanimously Approved

**Article #44** Youth Center Dehumidification and AC for gym. We commissioned a $30K study of the building and the original estimate was $500K. The latest estimate is that the project could be as much as $650K. Chris Morin described that after all the investment in this building we can’t allow damage to the gym floor from the humidity.

* Favorable Motion by Bob DeVita
* Seconded by Brant Hornberger
* Unanimously Approved

**Article #45** New Liquor License for Purchase Street Market. Current license is for beer and wine, this new license is for the sale of all alcohol.

* Motion to Refer to Sponsor by Andy Lizotte
* Seconded by Brant Hornberger
* Unanimously Approved

**Article #46** Highway Department sidewalk tractor for $169K. Al Correia described that the key issue is the safety of school walkers, schools can’t open without the sidewalks cleared. David Levine asked if these machines were on the long-range plan, the answer is that a replacement machine is on the plan every 4 to 5 years.

* Favorable Motion by Vin Valastro
* Seconded by Carly Kearnan
* Unanimously Approved

**Article #47** Vernon Grove Cemetery Leaf Blower for $10K. Mike Nicholson asked if we considered subcontracting leaf removal, the answer is that because it’s a prevailing wage rate job the cost would be far more.

* Unanimously Approved

**Article #48** Land Transfer to Conservation Commission. The parcels total 8.76 acres near Camp Street and are environmentally sensitive areas including wetlands.

* Favorable Motion by Andy Lizotte
* Seconded by Vinny Valastro
* Unanimously Approved

**Article #49** Transfer of $3M to stabilization.

Zach Taylor described the anticipated uses of the $10.9M of free cash. After stabilization, the pool, other capital projects, and this stabilization transfer, we’d have $2M left for the school feasibility study if our application is approved.

$4.6M excess levy capacity which is slightly better than goal of $4.5M.

$3M for stabilization: $1M from raise and appropriate, $2M from free cash.

Vinny Valastro asked for the stabilization balances: $23M in classic stabilization, $7M capital stabilization, $4M sewer stabilization.

David Levine asked how revenues were trending year to date vs the plan, specifically new growth and room occupancy tax. Zach described that we were on track.

* Favorable Motion by Vinny Valastro
* Seconded by David Levine
* Unanimously Approved

Motion to Adjourn the meeting by Andy Lizotte

Seconded by Chris Morin

Unanimously Approved

Meeting Adjourned at 8:46PM