

**TOWN OF WINCHENDON
BOARD OF SELECTMEN
INCLUDES JOINT MEETING WITH FINANCE COMMITTEE
MONDAY, AUGUST 24, 2020 6:30 P.M.**

**-- Conducted by Remote Meeting --
Zoom Meeting ID: 971 2032 2695**

Board of Selectmen

Present:

Michael Barbaro, Chairman
Rick Ward, Vice-Chairman
Barbara Anderson

Keith R. Hickey, Town Manager
Joanne Goguen, Town Accountant
Linda Daigle, Executive Assistant
Taylor Tower, Executive Assistant

Absent:

Audrey LaBrie
Amy Salter

Finance Committee

Present:

Tom Kane Jr., Chairman
Maureen Ward
Philip Levine

Douglas Delay
Charles Corts
Keith Kent

Absent:

David Alexander

List of Documents Presented at Meeting:

- Introduction to Remote Meeting (filed)
- Order Suspending Certain Provisions of the Open Meeting Law, G.L. c. 30A, §20 (filed)
- Town Manager's Memo dated August 24, 2020 Regarding the Revised FY'21 Budget (attached)
- General Fund FY'21 Proposed Budget (attached)
- Water Fund FY'21 Proposed Budget (attached)
- Wastewater Fund FY'21 Proposed Budget (attached)
- Transfer Station Fund FY'21 Proposed Budget (attached)
- Original FY'21 1/12th Budget for September (attached)
- Revised FY'21 1/12th Budget for September (attached)
- Minutes to be Approved:
 - Amendment to the July 13, 2020 Minutes
 - August 10, 2020 Regular Meeting
 - April 27, 2020 Executive Session

Due to Governor Bakers recent Executive Order and state of emergency declaration with the outbreak of the Coronavirus (COVID-19), this Joint meeting was conducted remotely through Zoom Meeting. The public was notified how to join the meeting through instructions noted on the agenda.

Board of Selectmen Chair Michael Barbaro called the Board of Selectmen meeting to order at 6:30 p.m. and noted the attendance of staff members including Town Manager, Keith Hickey, Linda Daigle, Executive Assistant, Taylor Tower, Administrative Assistant and Joanne Goguen, Town Accountant.

Barbaro read the introduction to remote meeting.

*Board of Selectmen Minutes
August 24, 2020*

Tom Kane called the Finance Committee meeting to order at 6:34 p.m.

All stood for the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag of the United States.

1. SELECTMEN FINANCE COMMITTEE COMMENTS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS: Ward wished to offer condolences to the family of Robert Zbikowski. Mr. Zbikowski was a former Selectmen, was on the charter committee and was a talented civil war reenactor.

2. PUBLIC COMMENTS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS: None were heard.

3. JOINT MEETING WITH FINANCE COMMITTEE:

3.1. Review Fiscal Year 2021 Draft Budget – Hickey reviewed the revised budget with the Board and Finance Committee. He noted there were a couple of changes in the revenue, after review with Town Accountant Joanne Goguen, revenues were reduced just under \$132,000. He also noted the reduction in the proposed property tax rate from 2.5% to 1.25%, recognizing taxpayers in Town are facing difficult times. He informed the Board that Department Heads have voluntarily reduced their wage adjustments, saving the Town \$15,000. Funding of Unemployment Compensation is recommended at \$577,567.52, primarily for the School Department, from the following sources; General Fund \$250,000, CARES Act \$250,000 and the School Department \$77,567.52. Hickey has included \$323,000 from the Deficit Legislation Reserve in the Finance Committee's reserve account budget to provide a contingency for unknown expenses. Including this funding as a contingency amount in the Finance Committee budget will provide the community some financial flexibility to address currently unknown expenses. Health insurance, life insurance and Medicare in the budget have been reduced based on the School Department's proposed staffing reductions. The capital budget has been reduced from \$297,592 to \$165,032 and is now proposed to be funded by Free Cash rather than through the annual budget. Long term debt has been reduced by \$54,846 for the elimination of the proposed dump truck lease. The School Department continues to be challenged by ever changing dynamics with respect to reopening schools in some manner. Based on a number of unknown issues, Hickey has proposed the same funding amount as what was proposed earlier this year, \$13,787,063. In addition, he has proposed to fund \$250,000 of the School Department's \$500,000 anticipated unemployment costs in the town's operating budget and the remaining \$250,000 from CARES Act funding. Typically, unemployment costs associated with the School Department would be applied to the net school spending formula, reducing the school budget by \$250,000. Absorbing this cost in the town's operating budget will alleviate the school budget from that expense. If the school budget is approved as presented, the budget would be nearly \$648,000 over net school spending. This funding amount should be adequate for the upcoming school year. School transportation costs, considered a town expense, has also been level funded at \$1.347 million.

Ward sought clarification regarding the Communications Committee televised salary within the general budget, which had been increased from \$0 to \$15,000. Hickey clarified that it had previously been one line item, and it is now broken into separate line items, at the request of the Town Accountant. The actual budgeted amount has not been increased. He noted this budget pays the salaries of the individuals who tape the meetings to be broadcasted. Ward also questioned an increase into the Community Development planning agent; to which Goguen explained that it had previously been two positions, which have been combined into one full-time employee, which is the Planning & Conservation Agent.

Anderson questioned the addition of the DPW Assistant Director. Hickey clarified that it is not an entirely new position being added to the budget; rather, he is taking an existing foreman position and reclassifying it to the position of DPW Assistant Director. This will add \$4,000 - \$5,000 in the payroll budget. The intent of this new position is to better prepare the DPW for the imminent retirement of DPW Director, and best prepare the Town for a smooth transition. The Assistant Director will work under the Director and train with the expectation he will replace Mr. Gallant upon his retirement.

Finance Committee Chairman Tom Kane asked if any members had questions for the Town Manager. With none being heard, Kane commented on the Town Manager's plan to make available to the Town during the

course of the year the special reserve fund that has accumulated over the past four to five years. He thinks the idea of it, in terms of adding it to the operating budget, is to give the Town the flexibility to be prepared for the unknown. Hopefully, it will not need to be used and can go back to free cash. If not, it will require votes at the Town Meeting to be allocated. Barbaro noted one of the highlights in the presented budget was due to the Town Manager allocating unemployment to different line items in the School Department. He wanted to clarify that half the money comes from the COVID Cares grant, and the other half comes from the Town Budget, which he perceives to be a smart plan. Property tax will be reduced in an effort to assist taxpayers, especially seniors that are having a tough time and those who are currently unemployed. He thanked Hickey for his efforts.

Chairman Barbaro offered public comments at this time.

Marc Dorwart of 245 Mellen Road asked if it is standard procedure to increase payroll each time somebody retires. Hickey said no, but that the Town is fortunate that Mr. Gallant is giving enough notice of his plan to retire in fiscal year 2021. Given the importance of his position and the amount of knowledge needed to effectively manage such a vital department, it will greatly benefit the Town to allow for a training period. It is a temporary increase and the Assistant Director position will revert back to a Foreman position upon the retirement of Gallant and the hire of a new Director.

4. NEW BUSINESS:

4.1. Amend September 2020 Recommended Budget Submitted to the Department of Revenue – Goguen listed the increases which are as follows:

011222-578012	Selectmen Admin Expense	\$250.00	Compensation due for minutes
011232-542000	T.M. Office Supplies	\$500.00	Paper purchase
011552-542000	D.P. Office Supplies	\$300.00	
011562-534020	Internet Services	\$125.00	To provide for monthly costs- Comcast/Verizon/Edgewave
011922-527000	TH Copier	\$10.00	Monthly fee increase
012101-519010	Police Cert & Training	\$4,500.00	Mandated training
012101-519040	Police Uniforms	\$2,000.00	Uniform needs
012102-521200	Police Heating Fuel	\$1,200.00	
012102-524000	Police Bldg & Equip Repair	\$3,410.00	Maint. –generator/backflow
012201-511027	Fire Spare Houseman	\$2,500.00	
014222-544000	Fleet Tools & Supplies	\$100.00	
015412-548010	COA Vehicle Maint	\$300.00	
016101-511070	BML Holiday-Sick Cover	\$200.00	
016102-542000	BML Office Supplies	\$100.00	
016102-558060	BML Book Processing	\$500.00	
017102-591000	Debt Service – Princ	\$395,000.00	

Hickey noted that a large portion of the increase is due to the Department of Revenue mandating that the Town ask for more money, as it must be equal to 1/12th of the approved fiscal year 2020 budget.

Ward moved the Board of Selectmen approve the September 2020 monthly budget amendments as presented this evening, seconded by Anderson. With a roll call vote of Ward, aye, Anderson, aye, and Barbaro, aye, the motion carried.

Ward moved the Town Warrant be open from 8:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. tomorrow, Tuesday, August 25th so the two articles can be added, seconded by Anderson. With a roll call vote of Ward, aye, Anderson, aye and Barbaro, aye, the motion carried.

Dr. Maureen Ward motioned to adjourn the Finance Committee meeting at 7:08 p.m.

Dorwart interrupted to ask if any member of the Board of Selectmen or the Finance Committee is the member of any Board or Committee that will receive significant funding from this budget. Kane noted that he is on the Board of Directors for the Clark YMCA, which receives \$10,000 in funding from the Town.

Corts seconded Dr. Ward's motion to adjourn. With a roll call vote of Kent, aye, Levine, aye, Delay, aye, Ward, aye, Corts, aye and Kane, aye, the Finance Committee adjourned at 7:10 p.m.

5. OLD BUSINESS:

6. TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT: There was no Town Manager's report this evening.

7. MINUTES:

7.1 Monday, July 13, 2020 Regular Meeting Amendment – Ward asked to amend the minutes pertaining to item 13, executive session. He would like to remove the word “unanimously” because Anderson was not present at the moment of the adjournment due to technical difficulties and she did not vote.

Ward moved to approve the amendment to the Board of Selectmen minutes of Monday, July 13, 2020 as presented this evening, seconded by Anderson. With a roll call vote of Ward, aye, Anderson, aye and Barbaro, aye, the motion carried.

7.2 Monday, August 10, 2020 Regular Meeting – Ward moved to approve the Board of Selectmen minutes of **Monday, August 10, 2020 as presented this evening, seconded by Anderson. With a roll call vote of Anderson, aye, Ward, aye and Barbaro, aye, the motion carried.**

Executive Session Minutes for Release:

7.3 Monday, April 27, 2020 Executive Session – Ward said at beginning of the meeting, Hickey talked about a “significant budget gap”, but the minutes said “significant budget cap”. He would like to see this corrected as they reflect significantly different budgetary meanings.

Ward move to approve the Board of Selectmen Executive Session minutes of Monday, April 27, 2020 as presented and amended this evening, seconded by Anderson. With a roll call vote of Anderson, aye, Ward, aye and Barbaro, aye, the motion carried.

Ward moved to release the Executive Session Minutes of Monday, April 27, 2020, seconded by Anderson. By a roll call vote of all aye, the motion carried.

8. COMMUNICATIONS:

Barbaro noted that the next Board meeting is Monday, August 31st which will be a joint meeting with the Finance Committee to present a final balanced FY'21 budget and a draft Annual Town Meeting Warrant.

David Watkins of 235 Mellen Road questioned if all Board members have read their packets thoroughly to understand what they are discussing; to which each Board member answered they have and they understand.

Watkins also questioned the addition of a DPW Assistant Director. He felt that the Town needs to have the hired Assistant Director sign a contract that he will accept the Director position at the time of Mr. Gallant's retirement. Hickey answered that the only employees with contracts are the Town Manager, the Police Chief and the Fire Chief. All other employees are "at will" as is standard with common employment. After significant discussion regarding Mr. Gallant's retirement and the addition of a new replacement, the Board moved on.

9. **AGENDA ITEMS:**

10. **EXECUTIVE SESSION:** There was no Executive Session scheduled this evening.

11. **ADJOURNMENT:** Ward motioned to adjourn, seconded by Anderson. With a roll call vote of Anderson, aye, Ward, aye, and Barbaro, aye, the meeting adjourned at 7:28 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Taylor Tower
Administrative Assistant