

**Westport Finance Committee
Meeting Minutes
Virtual Meeting-Remote Participation
December 13, 2022**

Present: Karen Raus (KAR), Cindy Brown (CB) Charles "Buzzy" Baron (BB) Gary Carreiro (GC), Zachary Lebreux (ZL), Lawrence Holsworth (LH), Bob McCarthy (BM)

Absent: Hugh Morton (HM)

Also Present: Nicole Pearsall, Sue Brayton, Jim Hartnett, Chris Leonard

KAR opened the meeting at 6:33 p.m.

KAR read the following: This meeting is being held remotely in accordance with the Governor of Massachusetts *'March 12, 2020, order suspending certain provisions of the Open Meeting Law, G.L. c.30A Section 20 and on June 16, 2021 Governor Baker signed an Act relative to extending certain COVID-19 measures adopted during the state of emergency. This meeting is being recorded.*

1.Fy2024 Budget Meetings with Departments: (Kar) opened up the meeting welcoming Christopher Leonard Director of Marine Services to present his budget for FY2024.

- A. **Marine Services** Chris Leonard (CL) Director of Marine Services was in attendance to present the FY24 budget. He introduced himself he said these are things that I oversee. Harbormaster Department, Shellfish Department, the Wharfinger for all the commercial fishing boats that we have down in our town hall of the hicks-bridge boat ramp and also the EDA boat ramp.

The shellfish budget comes from the Central Fund and the Marine service budget is paid by the Enterprise Fund for waterway user fees and other things that we collect money for. Shellfish departments operating budget is submitted under accordance of FY24 municipal budget guideline provided by the town administrator of a 2.5% budget increase. Nonunion employee salaries and wage costs get a 2% increase per year. The overall FY24 shellfish budget is \$86,677. Representing an overall decrease of \$946 over the FY23 budget. We then decrease it another \$500. the overall decrease from the FY23 budget to this year's budget is. \$14,046 less than the previous budget.

(Kar) mentioned Where's the decrease coming from? Is that less hours worked? Chris Leonard said this is coming from when after the town meeting and the approval of the budget. When I put my budget in and then when the budget comes back, sometimes the numbers aren't exactly correct. And we had an overage., which Nicole mentioned there

was too much money in there. We don't have any bad numbers, especially when it comes to salaries. We don't want to have anybody overpaid or underpaid. So, the decreases are coming from that discrepancy. So that money that is the overage is just going to end up probably back to the town. (CB) asked if the salaries were trimmed. Chris said yes, the assistant department head and department head to where they needed to be. Nicole said few years ago when they were splitting between shellfish and the enterprise the salaries, there was a miscalculation done this was just correcting to make the salary 50/50 at one time it was it was like 60/40, then there was too much in the enterprise, but then we would just level fund the budget from year to year, there was actually too much money in the enterprise fund it would never catch up so could make 50/50 we did the adjustment now.

Chris Leonard presented the Marine Service budget and said accordance to FY24 initial budget guideline provided by the town administrator of a 2.5% budget increase. Nonunion employee salaries give a 2% increase per year of the overall FY24 service the overall budget is \$125,247 representing an overall decrease of \$3657 under the FY23 budget. what we're looking at here again is this decrease because the shellfish department and the marine services split salaries and in just trying to get back to our baseline. There was too much money taken out, so we're going back to where we should be, as Nicole explained earlier.

- B. **Treasurer/Collector** Sue Brayton was in attendance to present the FY24 departmental budget and said my personnel, I just put in the 2% increase as requested. The other changes there was with the sick buyback, certification, career, educational, etc. and that is because I have Stella back in my office now, she has been here for over 20 years and therefore is eligible for some of these additional things in the budget that a lot of the other girls are not. They don't have the longevity that they qualify for yet. I did try to reduce a few little areas under expenses, reduced equipment. Some of my fees I tried to keep about the same. I did allow for some increases, for example postage, printing, and things of that nature which I anticipate will be going up.

One of the concerns that I do have, and my budget is tax taking. I did increase that a bit, and that is for the actual placing the liens on the property, not for I have a revolving account for pursuing the liens once they're on. In two tax title, with the economy being the way it is and I may need additional funds.

(GC) mentioned last year I think it was, the last time we appropriated the revolving fund for pursuing the properties tax title is if you have any additional issues this year and that the budget doesn't get increased. I believe you can raise an appropriate that on the recap any additional cost that you concur to be placed on the recap for fees for taking of legal properties. Sue continued with her budget saying this year an increase in the budget for new computer software. Nicole and I are looking at new computer software for the financial suite, the program we have right now is on the server there is no room. We're looking at getting a similar program that is going to be cloud based and will be far more efficient.

Sue Brayton mentioned the debt budget she presented she said the excluded debt for this year Fy24 will be \$4274,943 FY23 was. \$4350,000 in excluded debt. Some we're paying down the Santos property and this year. We had some money allotted to make an additional pay down on the school but there was a band and so the financial advisor was not planning on paying it down we reconfigured. We were doing the roof in the school all at once. It was budgeted there. That's where you're seeing a little reduction

and that will come off with the debt going forward. For the future years even though it's excluded.

(Kar) mentioned to Sue Brayton where were you paying down some debt in various places who makes that decision on deciding to take available cash and pay down debt versus hold on to the cash that could potentially be used? For other purposes like capital or stabilization funds. Sue said she speaks with the financial advisors and make the decision with them. Sue continued on saying I did submit a request to the capital improvement for a creative request for money for stabilization.

2.Override Discussions: (KR) said to Jim Hartnett if you could give us an update on the budget if you presented the budget to the select board. Jim Hartnett said I'm scheduled to present the budget to the board selectman on Monday night, the 19th, if they approve that I'm assuming we'll go on for the next meeting, January 9th. Looking to get deadline for the budget to the finance committee mid-January. The assessors came in with a new growth number now that which was higher than expected are much higher, \$400,000 for FY23 that came in at \$847,000. That puts the initial deficit around \$600,000 on the town side down to \$350,000 to \$400,000. Some Positions mainly not filling positions, not looking at layoffs at this point on the town side. School side will be more difficult. There share was year was 54% of the net new revenue was about around \$550,000. They're negotiated salary increases to \$632,000. There are already in the hole. And when we look at that \$500,000, we need to deduct the \$300,000 that was free cash that was allocated towards them last year, so it's only a \$257,000 increase to the school budget. They have \$632,000. Negotiated salaries, School is still working on the budget, probably be working on it for a few months. The town side I think with this additional funding through the Assessor's Office, and they worked hard and have to give them credit for this. They have new software they asked for last year that looks at the properties throughout the town with the aerial photos and they can actually pick up a lot of the new build that would have otherwise been missed. They pick up a lot of the docks along the river with this. Last year we had addition new growth through covid. Last year vast number new growth of \$691,000, but that was when they changed their accessing calendar from eighteen months of their growth instead of standard twelve back to twelve months going forward. Without an override at some point. Even this year, I don't think we're going to be able to might be able to squeak by on the town side but on the school side I don't see how they can squeak by without either significant free cash or number of layoffs. School is still working on their budget.

(Kar) asked Jim if there is a possibility is to present an override at the ballot in April. When would be a deadline to be able to have to submit that for them? Jim said thirty-four days before the April election we have to get it in.

3.Committee Updates /Liaison Reports:

(CB) said she had an update on the personal board she said there was a request of which has been put on hold for reclassification of a position. And said we should have a salary assessment throughout the town.

(ZL) said he had an update from Agriculture and Open Space Committee. The Buzzards Bay Coalition acquired the property on Main Road the Petty property. The \$2 million from the land protection is kind of running towards its end, but there's still roughly \$80,000 left of that money. they will be going to the CPC to seek to see if there there's ability for funding from there that will be at next meeting be held this Thursday.

4.Minutes: The minutes for November 08, 2022, was presented for approval. (CB) motioned and (GC) seconded to approve. The roll call vote was unanimous in favor.

5.Topic for next Meeting Agenda: (Kar) said next meeting will be focusing on budget meeting which is in the first week in January.

6.Meeting Schedule: January 03, 2023

7. Correspondence: N/A

8.Topics not reasonably anticipated forty-eight (48) hours in advanced of the meeting:
N/A

Adjourn There being no further business to come before this meeting a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:48pm was made by (LH) and (CB) seconded the roll call vote in favor was unanimous.

Respectfully submitted,
Jessica McKane Recording Clerk

REFERENCE DOCUMENTS:

11-08-22 Meeting Minutes.docx

0.2022 12 13 AGENDA INDEXED.docx

Marine Services FY24 Budget Narrative.docx

Shellfish FY24 Budget Narrative (1).docx

Fy24 Debt Budget.xlsx

Fy 2024 Debt Budget narrative.docx

Capital Improvement Request Fy24.pdf

Fy24 Budget Shellfish and Marine Servces.xlsx

Fy24 Budget 147 Treasurer-Collector.xlsx

Budget Meeting FY24 (Responses)

