**Westport Finance Committee**

**Meeting Minutes**

**Virtual Meeting-Remote Participation**

**March 31, 2022**

Present: Karen Raus (KAR), Cindy Brown (CB), Tracy Priestner (TP), Hugh Morton (HM), Kevin Rioux (KR), Gary Carreiro (GC), Thomas Schmitt (TS), Bob McCarthy (BM

Absent: Charles “Buzzy” Baron (BB)

Also Present: Jim Hartnett, Sue Brayton, Nicole Pearsall, Elvio Ferreira (Superintendent of Diman), Betty Slade, Shana Shufelt, Paul Jennings ,Rene Lachapelle ,Robert Bealieu

KAR opened the meeting at 6:30 p.m.

KAR read the following: Under MGL Chapter 30A, section 20(f) – Meeting being recorded. *Pursuant to Governor Baker’s March 12, 2020, Order Suspending Certain Provisions of the Open Meeting Law, G.L. c. 30A, §18, and the Governor’s March 15, 2020, Order imposing strict limitations on the number of people that may gather in one place, this meeting of the Westport Finance Committee is being conducted via remote participation. No in-person attendance of members of the public will be permitted, but every effort will be made to ensure that the public can adequately access the proceedings as provided for in the Order.*

*A reminder that persons who would like to listen to or view this meeting while in progress may do so by following the remote links:* https:// meet. google.comhttps://meet.google.com/jph-idsb-ndc ,dial in this number dial:

**1.FY23 Municipal Budget Approval**: (Kar) mentioned some information, our budget, the Town's Budget was not balanced, the difference between the school numbers and town numbers was $663,000 off. The Finance Committee. agreed to fund the deficit of $663,000 by using $300,000 of free cash to offset that and we'd ask that the school then cut their budget for the balance. (TP) met with the school committee during their meeting tonight at the beginning of our meeting and their budget that they were voting on tonight was $20,335,369.000.

(Kar) confirmed it matched. (Kar) wanted to approve FY23 Budget (GC) motioned and (TP) seconded roll call vote was in unanimous in favor.

**3.Warrent Articles Discussion:**

**Warrant Article 6: (**Kar**)** welcomed and introduced representatives of Diman Elvio Ferreira (Superintendent of Greater Fall River Vocational School Diman) and Paul Jennings to talk about the Diman project. Elvio Ferreira presented and stated to bring everyone up to speed they are in the 60-day window for the disapproval votes going out to the 4 communities that date will expire on May 20th, the time frame we have MSBA projects to have a disapproval for our project moving forward. Some information as far as schedules, everything goes according to plan 2022. We will finish up our design process in 2023. We will start looking for contractors and bids to go out and assume start date for the project will be March of 2023. With a completion date of September of 2026, that's when the new school would be completed. When we move into that building, the 2027 school year, we would demolish the current building and finish our punch list and our athletic fields. As far as financials for Westport specifically, as we've met with the BOS, this particular project does look to carry approximately $11 per $100,000 of tax value for the town and looking at budget wise, the cost when it comes to an assessment in Westport which is right now planned for the 2024-2025 school year, the assessment to Westport would be approximately $440,000 a year assuming a 4% interest on our borrowing .We are looking to borrow in three borrowing cycles the first cycle approximately $35 million for the beginning of the project. Second cycle of borrowing of approximately $107 million as we move into major construction. A third cycle of borrowing of approximately $5 million to finish off the punch list in 2025 -2026. We were able to acquire a 79.77% reimbursement rate from the MSBA, a total project cost is approximately $293 million. That's moving us from our current 200,075 square feet. 300,095 square foot building that brings us up to code as far as recommendations from the state for average classroom and educational spaces, as well as gymnasiums, cafeteria, auditorium. We have from educational spaces as well as gymnasiums, cafeteria, auditorium, and such. We were built in the 60s or 800 students. We currently have 1400 students.

(TP) asked if one of the sending communities votes no. then there's a was a one-day vote that would get 51% that one-day vote would that be from the four communities or is that from the school committee only and not the taxpayer citizens. (Elvio Ferreira) said the referendum vote under section 16N of Massachusetts General Law Chapter 7016N would be taxpayers not for school committee. (TS) asked what percentage of that would be Town of Westport’s responsibility. Elvio Ferreira said Westport would be responsible for 5.3% of the principal and interest of the construction. (CB) asked how many from Westport attend Diman. Elvio Ferreira said 100 students currently attend from 9th to 12th.

**Warrant Article 18:** (Kar) welcomed and introduced Betty Slade from CPC Betty Slade went over the Open Space Recreation projects funding on Berry Hill Farm Conservation Restriction, WYAA Dugouts and Fencing, Community Housing, Historic Preservation Bell Schoolhouse Rehabilitation, Historic Preservation Reserves and Administrative Funds and Budgeted Reserves. (HM) mentioned the Berry Hill Farm is on a Conservation Restriction expected to be sold to an individual who will continue the Berry Farm. There's also room on the property for a house to be built if the person wishes to so. (GC) asked what the balance in the CPA would be.

Betty Slade said if we these contracts go through at the town meeting, we will still have close $1 million in reserves. (GC)thanked Betty Slade and the CPC for all the work they do.

**Warrant Article 11:** Jim Hartnett presented the Westport Point Turn Around mentioning the project started in September when Tim King pervious Town Administrator met with the neighbors down in this area and most of the businesses The main concern was safety. There is a number of businesses down there that parking has become an issue. People have been parking any way they can, and it's difficult for emergency vehicles if needed to get down the turn around. Jim presented a map to show the area in how it will be adjusted.

(Kar) mentioned after voting on the warrant articles changes are our certified free cash. I updated Article 1 for what we talked about today, removed snow and ice. We're leaving stabilization at $50,000 which leaves $62,000 as the ending balance for free cash.

**FY23 Annual Town Meeting Warrant Articles:**

**Article 1:** To appropriate a sum of money to pay prior year bills. GC motioned to recommend seconded TP seconded and the roll call vote was unanimous in favor.

**Article 2:** To transfer money from available funds to supplement the budgets of various departments for the Current fiscal year. (HM) motioned and GC seconded, and the roll call vote was unanimous in favor.

**Article 3:** To fix the salaries and compensation for elected Town officers **(**CB) motioned and (BM) seconded and the roll call vote was unanimous in favor.

**Article 4:** To appropriate a sum of money to defray the Town’s expenses for FY23 (Omnibus budget).

**Article 5:** To appropriate a sum of money to defray the Town's expenses for FY23 contingent upon passage of a Proposition 2 1/2 ballot question**.**

**Article 6:** To approve the $293,479,760 borrowing authorized by the Greater Fall River Vocational School District School Committee for new District High School. (CB) motioned and (BM) seconded the roll call was 7-1 with (GC) no.

**Article 7:** To appropriate a sum of money for the cost of various capital expenditures. (TS) motioned and (CB) seconded the roll call vote was unanimous in favor.

**Article 8:** To authorize the Treasurer to borrow from time to time in anticipation of revenue. (CB) motioned and (BM) seconded and the roll call vote was unanimous in favor.

**Article 9:** To appropriate. $60,000 to be used by the Board of Assessors to update the Revaluation program. (GC) motioned and (BM) seconded the roll call vote was unanimous in favor.

**Article 10:** To appropriate $200,000 to be used by the Board of Selectmen to fund expenses to maintain sell or reuse. the former high school building. (TS) motioned and (CB) seconded the roll call vote was unanimous in favor.

**Article 11:** Two appropriate $50,000 to be used by the Board of Selectmen to improve the turnaround and parking at the south end of Main Road and the Westport Point Town Landing.

(GC) motioned and (HM) seconded the roll call vote was unanimous in favor.

**Article 12:** To appropriate funds to operate the Marine Service Enterprise**.** (BM) motioned and (CB)seconded the roll call vote was unanimous in favor.

**Article 13:** To appropriate funds to operate the Waterline Enterprise. (BM) motioned and (TP)seconded the roll call vote was unanimous in favor.

**Article 14:** To appropriate funds to operate the Town Beaches Enterprise**. (**BM) motioned and (TP) seconded the roll call vote was unanimous and favor.

**Article 15**: To appropriate. funds to operate the Community Television budget. BM) motioned and (TP) seconded the roll call vote was unanimous and favor.

**Article 16:** To amend the Revolving Funds By-Law to add Tax Title for the Town Collectors /Treasurer for $25,000. (GC) motioned and (BM) seconded the roll call vote was unanimous in favor

**Article 17:** To reauthorize all the Revolving Funds for certain Town departments and officer for FY23. (TS) motioned and (GC) seconded the roll call vote was unanimous in favor.

**Article 18:** To appropriate funds from the Community Preserve Funds for various projects. (GC) motioned and (CB) seconded the roll call vote was unanimous in favor.

**Article 19:** Two appropriate $19,500 from Receipts Reserves for Landfill Closure for the purpose of obtaining roll -off containers at the Transfer. (GC) motioned and (CB) seconded the roll call vote was unanimous in favor.

**Article 20:** To vote to acquire a municipal light plant and to authorize such plant to construct, purchase or lease and maintain such facilities as may be necessary for the distribution or the operation of a telecommunications system for municipal use or for the use of its customers**.**

Skipped over due to presentation at next meeting

**Article 21:** To amend the Town By-Laws Articles XXXVII Non-Criminal Dispositions of Violations Sections 3702.5 and 3702.5A. (Kar) motioned to make no recommendation (GC)seconded the roll call vote was unanimous in favor.

**Article 22:** To vote to rescind the borrowing authorization of $75,000, approved under the Article 11 of the 2015 Annual Town Meeting for the purpose of high school. (GC) motioned and (TS)seconded the roll call vote was unanimous in favor.

**Article 23:** To vote to rescind the borrowing authorization of $901,665 approved under Article 15 of the 2010 Special Town Meeting for the purpose of the School Remodel. (CB) motioned and (TS)seconded the roll call vote was unanimous in favor.

**Article 24:** To amend the Zoning By-Law (TS) motioned move to not make recommendation (GC) seconded the roll call was unanimous in favor.

**Article 25:** To amend the Zoning By-Law (TS) motioned move to not make recommendation (GC) seconded the roll call was unanimous in favor.

**Article 26:** To amend the Zoning By-Law (TS) motioned move to not make recommendation (GC) seconded the roll call was unanimous in favor.

**Article 27:** To amend the Zoning By-Law (TS) motioned move to not make recommendation (GC) seconded the roll call was unanimous in favor.

**Article 28:** To amend the Zoning By-Law (TS) motioned move to not make recommendation (GC) seconded the roll call was unanimous in favor.

**Article 29:** To amend the Zoning By-Law (TS) motioned move to not make recommendation (GC) seconded the roll call was unanimous in favor.

**Article 30:** To amend the Zoning By-Law (TS) motioned move to not make recommendation (GC) seconded the roll call was unanimous in favor.

**Article 31:** To amend the Personal By-Laws, Schedule A to add the position of Community Service Officer. (HM) motioned move to not make a recommendation (TS) seconded the roll call vote was unanimous in favor.

**Article 32:** To amend the Personal By-Law Schedule A to add the position of Town Collector / Treasurer. (GC) motioned and (TS) seconded the roll call vote was unanimous in favor.

**Article 33:** To transfer a sum of money into the Stabilization Fund. (HM) motioned and (GC) seconded the roll call vote was unanimous in favor.

**5. Override Discussion**: (TS)asked for the override how it would be presented in the context of the budget, because that would supplement the budget I presume the town meeting,would vote the various elements of the budget. individually or one big number. (Kar) said I believe the article five will be set up in a similar fashion as Article 4, so there will be a spreadsheet and it will list just like the Article 4 does by department by department and then list salaries and expenses. separately it will be detailed by department.

**6.Committee Update /Liaison reports:** N/A

**7. Minutes**: The minutes for 3/22 was presented for approval. (TS) motioned (GC) seconded to approve. The roll call vote was unanimous in favor.

**8.Topic for Next Meeting Agenda**: Warrant Articles

**9. Meeting Schedule:** Next meeting will be on April 12nd,2022 at 6:30 pm remotely due to the pandemic

**10. Correspondence:** N/A

**11.Topic not anticipated forty-eight (48) hours in advance of the meeting**: N/A

**Adjourn:** There being no further business to come before this meeting, a motion to adjourn the meeting at 9:15pm by (Kar), (GC) motioned and (CB) second and the roll call vote in favor was unanimous.

Respectfully Submitted,

Jessica McKane, Recording Clerk

Reference Documents:

Annual Town Meeting Warrant