

JOINT FINANCE COMMITTEE AND SELECTBOARD MEETING MINUTES
UPSTAIRS MEETING ROOM, 1 AVENUE A, TURNERS FALLS, MA
WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 29, 2020

Page 1 of 4

The Chair opened the meeting

- Meeting was opened at 6:00 PM in the Upstairs Meeting Room
- **Finance Committee members present:** Jen Audley, Fred Bowman, Greg Garrison, John Hanold, Shauna Wallace, and Francina Wisnewski.
- **Finance Committee members absent:** Chris Menegoni
- **Selectboard members present:** Chris Boutwell, and Michael Nelson
- **Selectboard members absent:** Rich Kuklewicz
- **Others present:** Town Administrator Steve Ellis, Town Accountant Carolyn Olsen, Town Planner Walter Ramsey, DPW Superintendent Tom Bergeron, Airport Manager Bryan Camden, and Airport Commissioner Gary Collins
- The Chair announced that the meeting is being recorded by MCTV and asked if anyone else was recording the meeting. The recording is available at <https://vimeo.com/388292796> (part 1) and <https://vimeo.com/388307624> (part 2). No one else was recording the meeting.

Discussion: FY21 Annual Budget Requests

176 Zoning Board of Appeals (ZBA)

Town Planner Walter Ramsey for Departments 175 Planning, 182 Montague Economic Development and Industrial Corporation (MEDIC), and 480 Charging Stations:

175 Planning

The Town Planner, Walter Ramsey, presented a budget with an overall decrease from FY20. Walter Ramsey outlined the expansion of the Cultural Coordinator's role into a proposed new position of Assistant Planner. This expansion and change in title will not decrease the activities previously provided by the cultural coordinator position in promoting cultural and art development in the community, but will facilitate regulatory processes. The shift to an Assistant Planner will establish the right capacity to leverage the work needing to be done. The expanded hours of the new position will assist Walter Ramsey in the administrative functions of the planner's office.

182 MEDIC

The Town Planner is requesting a new position for a Coordinator for the Montague Economic Development and Industrial Committee (MEDIC). This position will receive an annual stipend. The Town Planner has been handling the management and reporting responsibilities, but this is

JOINT FINANCE COMMITTEE AND SELECTBOARD MEETING MINUTES
UPSTAIRS MEETING ROOM, 1 AVENUE A, TURNERS FALLS, MA
WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 29, 2020

Page 2 of 4

outside the scope of his position. MEDIC needs support to reach its potential. MEDIC owns 38 Avenue A, and a proposal for a new building has been received, but the process requires negotiating, permitting, etc. The Coordinator will support the work of the MEDIC with development of town owned properties including the canal zone and the industrial area. This will provide the Town Planner with more time to work on development goals.

Jen Audley suggested that Walter Ramsey communicate the details of and rationales for these positions to town residents prior to town meeting.

480 Charging Stations

The town will be installing charging stations under a program administered by Eversource. Local residents and visitors will be able to charge their electric cars while they are in town, but will have to pay for the electricity that they use. John Hanold expressed a desire that the units be revenue neutral to the town. Budget line item 480 will be where the costs will be recorded for this new town activity.

420 DPW

DPW Superintendent Tom Bergeron provided an overview of the DPW operations. The current spending to date in some line items was discussed. Tom Bergeron explained that spending in those line items can fluctuate throughout the year. Large projects, repairs, and weather can all attribute to the spending rate.

Tom Bergeron provided an update on the new DPW building. The new building should be completed by June and ready to move in. Tom Bergeron and his team are currently planning the logistics of the move. There will be many benefits to the new building including an improved work environment, inside vehicle storage, quicker deployment during snow events and being able to provide maintenance services on other community vehicles like the police cruisers.

The line items for utilities and building maintenance were increased in the budget. This is to account for the increased cost of operating the new facility.

Tom Bergeron presented an update on the fleet, which is in good condition. He provided an overview of the planned replacement cycle of current vehicles and the estimated cost of those replacements.

Some discussion was had on the support the DPW provides to the town. The DPW provides support for all the departments in one way or another. The question was asked about building maintenance and how equipped the department is for building maintenance. Tom Bergeron said that they do what they can and are in contact with those department heads but he doesn't have the staffing for anything more than they are doing now. They do keep up with what they can and

JOINT FINANCE COMMITTEE AND SELECTBOARD MEETING MINUTES
UPSTAIRS MEETING ROOM, 1 AVENUE A, TURNERS FALLS, MA
WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 29, 2020

Page 3 of 4

are responsive to immediate issues. Steve Ellis stated that DPW staffing is at capacity for what it is budgeted for and no budget expansion is being considered for facilities maintenance.

482 Airport

Airport Manager Bryan Camden provided an overview of the FY 2021 budget. There is a requested two step increase for the manager's pay. This is supported by the Airport Commissioners as recognition that the Airport Manager was hired at a step that was below what was appropriate for his skill level.

Bryan Camden is scheduled for 19 hours a week but consistently works more hours than that. He also has two interns from the tech school that assist him in general maintenance. This provides him the time to work on grants, business development and airport administration.

Bryan Camden stated the Airport's budget goal is to be free from town taxation support. He has decreased the taxation support year after year and is confident this may be the last year that taxation support will be needed. The FY 21 budget is conservative with some flexibility, but unexpected maintenance or operation costs may eliminate that flexibility.

The airport will have a 25kw solar array installed through a grant. This will offset all of the facility's current electrical costs. It is expected to generate 125% of the current electrical demand.

The Airport is expecting to see revenue increases this year. This will come from a variety of sources including airport leases and fees. Airport maintenance costs will also increase. The budget presented reflects that.

Pioneer Aviation, a privately held entity, could come up for sale. Bryan Camden and the commission would like to purchase the business along with the assets. The funding for this could come from state and federal grants. If purchased, the Airport could expand its revenue through a number of additional services including fuel sales.

491 Cemeteries

There is now a full 3-member cemetery commission. The commission is looking at the possibility of a green cemetery and other projects. No budget increases are requested this year but there may be increases in FY22.

Town Administrator's report - None

JOINT FINANCE COMMITTEE AND SELECTBOARD MEETING MINUTES
UPSTAIRS MEETING ROOM, 1 AVENUE A, TURNERS FALLS, MA
WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 29, 2020

Page 4 of 4

FY21 state budget priorities to highlight in meeting with local legislators

Discussion was had regarding the meeting with our local representatives. Priorities were discussed including local infrastructure, public transportation and education funding. The meeting will be held on Monday, February 3rd.

There was discussion on providing background information on the warrant articles for STM. Steve Ellis will provide that background.

Town Accountant's report - None

Finance Committee Moved:

To ask the Town Accountant to update the affordable assessment using the Governor's state aid numbers and provide that number to the district.

Vote: 6 In Favor 0 Opposed 0 Abstained

Requests for future agendas

Topics not anticipated within the 48 hour posting requirements

Upcoming Finance Committee Meeting Dates February 5, 12, 19, 26; March 4, 11, 18, 25

Motion to Adjourn 8:10PM

List of Documents and Exhibits:

- Requests, narratives, and Q & A for departments on agenda