

BILLERICA FINANCE COMMITTEE MINUTES
March 2, 2021

A Meeting of the Billerica Finance Committee was held on Tuesday March 2, 2021 at 7:00 p.m. via Zoom Video Conferencing Communication App.

Present: David Gagliardi, Chairman; Douglas Meagher, Vice Chairman; Mary McBride, Secretary; Donald Damon, Member; Rino Moriconi, Member; Cheri Gargalianos, Member; Philip Newfell, Member; John Kleschinsky, Member; John Mulloy, Member; Doug Fogerty, Member; Kelley Sardina, 1st Associate; Sharon Healey, 2nd Associate; Town Accountant Paul Watson, Ex-Officio; and Joyce MacMillan, Recording Clerk.

CALL TO ORDER:

Chairman David Gagliardi called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

No one came forward.

PRESENTATION OF FY22 BUDGET:

Presentation by John Curran, Town Manager: The committee was given a copy of the Proposed Operating Budget FY 2022 prior to the meeting.

Mr. Curran started off with noting the first screen was a proposed picture of the PHR project that is going before the CPC this week and was supported by the Select Board last week. The budget has gone up 2.23% in total since last year, totaling \$180,118,667. Mr. Curran went through the proposed budget highlights via a detailed PowerPoint presentation.

Chairman Gagliardi opened the floor to the committee for questions or concerns; he went around the table to each member. There were some questions regarding water and the levy. A question regarding lottery funds/revenue, what is the amount based on? How many people have been added to the budget? The full time and part time number has not changed. When will the marijuana dispensary come online and when will the town see revenue from it? Questions regarding the comparisons to surrounding towns. COVID-19, an unbudgeted pandemic, did the town receive funds from the government or are we holding on to receipts waiting for payment. The town received over a million from the government towards the pandemic invoices. The towns collections have been very good, the town had extended deadlines which helped. OPEB, what is the outstanding liability? The town is due for a reassessment on OPEB. Healthcare cost, are they up or down?

Parks and Trees – Michael Haines, Superintendent

John Curran, the budget has gone down a little since last year. Salary wise it went up about 3% and the capital outlays went down.

Chairman Gagliardi opened the floor to the committee for questions or concerns. Question regarding purchasing fertilizer and the equipment to spread it will save the town money

versus farming the job out to another company. IF PHR project passes will the town need to hire more people? The already maintains those fields so no new hires needed but may need some new equipment. There were some questions regarding overtime. Any vacancies or is there a full crew? Brush disposal drop off site at the DPW after storms.

Doug Meagher seconded by Mary McBride made a motion to recommend the Parks and Trees Budget in the amount of \$965,976.

A roll call vote was taken
It was voted 11-0:

John Kleschinsky - Aye
Cheri Gargalianos – Aye
Rino Moriconi - Aye
Doug Meagher – Aye
John Mulloy – Aye
Kelley Sardina – Aye
Mary McBride – Aye
Doug Fogerty – Aye
Patrick Logue – Aye
Phil Newfell - Aye
Dave Gagliardi - Aye

Don Damon lost power and internet connection approximately 8 pm

Cemetery – Everett (Bud) Crotty, Superintendent

John Curran and Abdul Alkhatib stated there is not much that has changed in the budget. It is level funded; salary increases are impacted by contract.

Chairman Gagliardi opened the floor to the committee for questions or concerns. There was some question regarding revenue from lot sales and perpetual care.

Doug Meagher seconded by John Mulloy made a motion to recommend the Cemetery Budget in the amount of \$430,977.

A roll call vote was taken
It was voted 11-0:

John Kleschinsky - Aye
Cheri Gargalianos – Aye
Rino Moriconi - Aye
Doug Meagher – Aye
John Mulloy – Aye
Kelley Sardina – Aye
Mary McBride – Aye
Doug Fogerty – Aye
Patrick Logue – Aye
Phil Newfell - Aye
Dave Gagliardi - Aye

Engineering – Kelley Conway, Town Engineer

Kelley Conway stated the main changes are to the engineer positions, they changed unions which changed the salaries, the sick leave incentives, longevity, and licenses have all changed and they no longer have over time. There is also an increase in Contract Services and On Call.

Chairman Gagliardi opened the floor to the committee for questions or concerns. There was some question regarding the increase in Consulting Services under Contract Services? The increase has to do with the storm water inspection requirements and annual maintenance. The increase in the On Call Consulting is for additional pavement management assistance. Looks like a couple of engineers got a 20% increase in their salaries, is that due to switching unions? It was a reclass study enhancements to the job descriptions, they no longer have over time and clothing allowance. It is a change the employees have been requesting for several years now to be more competitive with surrounding towns.

Doug Meagher seconded by Rino Moriconi made a motion to recommend the Engineering Budget in the amount of \$937,997.

A roll call vote was taken
It was voted 11-0:

John Kleschinsky - Aye
Cheri Gargalianos – Aye
Rino Moriconi - Aye
Doug Meagher – Aye
John Mulloy – Aye
Kelley Sardina – Aye
Mary McBride – Aye
Doug Fogerty – Aye
Patrick Logue – Aye
Phil Newfell - Aye
Dave Gagliardi - Aye

Don Damon rejoined the meeting at 8:30 pm

Highway – Ed Tierney, Superintendent

Abdul Alkhatib stated the Highway Department is level funded including snow and Ice. Brush cutting position is still vacant, looking for a qualified licensed applicant.

Chairman Gagliardi opened the floor to the committee for questions or concerns. Potholes and snow and ice removal. Roadway Improvement Plan, there are so many roads needing attention. There was a comprehensive reevaluation of the roadway management plan, it was looked at as “what is the best way to treat some of the roads” and “how to stretch your dollar to get the most for your money”. The gets about a million for roads through chapter 90 funds and budget another million and a half for roads. In order to go up a grade we need to probably add another million to the budget. It is something the town is working towards to improve the 260 miles of roads.

Doug Meagher seconded by Mary McBride made a motion to recommend the Highway Budget in the amount of \$2,419,912.

A roll call vote was taken
It was voted 10-0-1:

John Kleschinsky - Aye
Cheri Gargalianos – Aye
Rino Moriconi - Aye
Doug Meagher – Aye
John Mulloy – Aye
Don Damon – Abstained
Mary McBride – Aye
Doug Fogerty – Aye
Patrick Logue – Aye
Phil Newfell - Aye
Dave Gagliardi - Aye

Wastewater Enterprise – Jeff Kalmes, Superintendent

John Curran stated that the salaries were part of the reclassification study. Jeff Kalmes stated the biggest change is in sludge hauling, it went up 10%. It was \$90 per tone now it is \$100 per ton. Sludge cost are escalating. Chemicals are also increasing about a 5 to 10 % increase in chemicals. There is a \$5,000 increase in uniforms.

Due to some discrepancies, this budget is being tabled. It will be discussed at the March 9th meeting.

Water Enterprise – John McGovern, Superintendent

Abdul Alkhatib highlighted the changes in the budget. One of the biggest changes in in the chemicals. Similar to the Wastewater, the chemical prices are adjusted annually. Some go up some go down.

Chairman Gagliardi opened the floor to the committee for questions or concerns. There was some question regarding chemicals went down \$26,000? Due to COVID the chemicals went up. Overall increase and the On Call increase were discussed. The plant opened May 18, 2006 and is now 15 years old, there will be some equipment beginning to break down probably in the next 5 years. That will be something to keep in mind and begin to look at. May see items in the next few budgets.

Doug Meagher seconded by Rino Moriconi made a motion to recommend the Water Enterprise Fund Budget in the amount of \$6,693,286.

A roll call vote was taken
It was voted 11-0:

John Kleschinsky - Aye
Cheri Gargalianos – Aye
Rino Moriconi - Aye
Doug Meagher – Aye
Don Damon – Aye

John Mulloy – Aye
Mary McBride – Aye
Doug Fogerty – Aye
Patrick Logue – Aye
Phil Newfell - Aye
Dave Gagliardi – Aye

DPW Administration – Abdul Alkhatib, Director of Public Works

Abdul Alkhatib stated there is only one change. It is a level Funded budget.

Chairman Gagliardi opened the floor to the committee for questions or concerns. There was some question regarding a discrepancy in someone’s salary and it was due to it not being correct in last year’s budget.

Doug Meagher seconded by Mary McBride made a motion to recommend the Administration Budget in the amount of \$1,019,262.

A roll call vote was taken
It was voted 11-0:

John Kleschinsky - Aye
Cheri Gargalianos – Aye
Rino Moriconi - Aye
Doug Meagher – Aye
Don Damon – Aye
John Mulloy – Aye
Mary McBride – Aye
Doug Fogerty – Aye
Patrick Logue – Aye
Phil Newfell - Aye
Dave Gagliardi – Aye

Solid Waste – Abdul Alkhatib, Director of Public Works

Abdul Alkhatib stated there is about a 10% increase and were able to absorb that cost in the \$80,000 that was budgeted for recycling contamination. Due to COVID and people working out of their homes, the recycling amount was increased to 750 tons. The cost of disposal has also gone up.

Chairman Gagliardi opened the floor to the committee for questions or concerns. What is the cost of a Code Red? This cost used to be completely paid by the police dept, but since so many Code Red calls are for Trash & Recycling, there is a charge to the Solid Waste budget beginning this year. The contamination percent has gone down. We were at about 42% and it has gone down about 30%. Has the issue we had in years past with residents using plastic bags for recycling been corrected? Yes, there are fewer and thus fewer times machines have to close down because plastic bags get caught in the machinery. When does the contract expire? What is the statewide contamination rate? Cost will continue to go up, Is there any kind of savings with food waste collection? It was

made available to the residents online. They have the option of checking into the companies on their own.

Doug Meagher seconded by Mary McBride made a motion to recommend the Solid Waste Budget in the amount of \$3,472,055.

A roll call vote was taken

It was voted 11-0:

John Kleschinsky - Aye
Cheri Gargalianos – Aye
Rino Moriconi - Aye
Doug Meagher – Aye
Don Damon – Aye
John Mulloy – Aye
Mary McBride – Aye
Doug Fogerty – Aye
Patrick Logue – Aye
Phil Newfell - Aye
Dave Gagliardi – Aye

Snow and Ice update

Abdul Alkhatib had forwarded a spreadsheet to the committee prior to the meeting. Barring no more storms/snow over the next 10 days or so we should be in good shape. It was a tough winter, mostly February.

Review of September 24, 2020 Minutes:

A correction to be made on page 6, second paragraph, change what to how and on page 1, last paragraph the word are should be area.

Doug Meagher, seconded by Don Damon made a motion to accept the September 24, 2020 minutes as amended.

A roll call vote was taken

It was voted 11-0:

John Kleschinsky - Aye
Cheri Gargalianos – Aye
Rino Moriconi - Aye
Doug Meagher – Aye
John Mulloy – Aye
Kelley Sardina – Aye
Mary McBride – Aye
Doug Fogerty – Aye
Patrick Logue – Aye
Phil Newfell - Aye
Dave Gagliardi - Aye

MISCELLANEOUS CORRESPONDENCE – not subject to discussion

Doug Meagher mentioned that the CPC would be meeting Thursday night March 4, 2021 at 6 pm before the FinCom Meeting. They will be listening to the applications for the Katie

Durand Park, the Masonic Hall and PHR project for any of those that might be interested in attending.

ADJOURNMENT:

Doug Meagher seconded by Don Damon made a motion to adjourn.

A roll call vote was taken

It was voted 11-0:

John Kleschinsky - Aye
Cheri Gargalianos – Aye
Rino Moriconi - Aye
Doug Meagher – Aye
Don Damon – Aye
John Mulloy – Aye
Mary McBride – Aye
Doug Fogerty – Aye
Patrick Logue – Aye
Phil Newfell - Aye
Dave Gagliardi – Aye

Chairman David Gagliardi adjourned the meeting at 9:32 pm.

Joyce MacMillan, Recording Clerk