

**BILLERICA FINANCE COMMITTEE MINUTES**  
**April 21, 2022**

A Public Meeting of the Billerica Finance Committee was held on Thursday April 21, 2022, at 7:00 p.m. in Room 210 of the Town Hall

Present: David Gagliardi, Chairman; Mary McBride, Secretary; Donald Damon, Member; Doug Fogerty, Member, Patrick Logue, Member; Rino Moriconi, Member; John Mulloy, Member; Philip Newfell, Member; Kelley Sardina, 1<sup>st</sup> Associate, Town Accountant Paul Watson, Ex-Officio; and Joyce MacMillan, Recording Clerk.

Excused: Doug Meagher, Vice Chairman and Sharon Healey, 2<sup>nd</sup> Associate

**CALL TO ORDER:**

Chairman David Gagliardi called the meeting to order at 7:04 p.m.

**PUBLIC COMMENT:**

None

**MINUTES:**

**Approve Minutes for April 7 and 12, 2022**

Mary McBride seconded by Don Damon made a motion to accept the minutes of April 7, 2022.

It was voted:

7 – In favor  
0 – Opposed  
1 – Abstained – Rino Moriconi

**WARRANT ARTICLES:**

**Article 25 - General By-Law Article XX Amendment – John Burrows**

Moved to April 26, 2022, meeting via Zoom

Patrick Logue joined the meeting at 7:07

**Article 16 – Fund Intergenerational Center Feasibility Study – John Curran**

To see if the Town would raise and appropriate from free cash the sum of \$500,000 to conduct a Feasibility Study to determine the best solution to meet the needs of the Council on Aging's current and future programs as well as the program needs of the current and future Recreation Department, potentially Veterans, and possibly some Board of Health staff by locating an Intergenerational Center at the Cider Mill property owned by the Town.

Mr. Curran gave the committee members a copy of his presentation for Article 16 stating the Capital Facilities Committee's tiers for prioritizing projects. The tiers are:

COA/Recreation; Schools & Housing; and Fire Stations. They will be studying the operational costs, the building costs, using an existing town owned buildings or building a new facility, keeping the departments separate or bring them together in one building, and so much more.

Chairman Gagliardi opened the floor to the committee for questions or concerns. What needs to be done that costs \$500,000? They will determine program needs, square footage needs, staffing and payroll needs, the costs of running the programs, maintenance of the building(s), utility costs, joining the COA and the Rec Dept or keeping them separate, utilize an existing building or build a new one, and basically the over all cost to create each scenario. It makes sense to do due diligence, so the Town knows what to expect. Is there anything major coming off the Capital projects? Debt Service is now \$9,066 million a year and with all these projects it will have to go up. There are three schools that need to be addressed as well. Some members of the committee would rather see a new COA and not an Intergenerational Center. Has there been a Capital Facilities Study since January 2021? It was formed by the Select Board in June 2020, and has met regularly since then. There was a comment that Minutes online are not current. If so, the Chairman advised the member to check with the Capital Facilities Committee. And all meetings have been on BATV so they can be found there. Is there a minimum dollar amount and are we following the process of 7C, 54A? Yes. Is this price going to go up at all? This is the price; it will not go up. So, it is looking at a wish list? Yes, it would have to be scaled down due to costs, we would not be able to afford it all. When you visited the Andover and Randolph facilities do you know if they had studies done? If so, how much was it? Randolph was completed a long time ago and not sure they ever did a study. Most likely Andover did not do a study. If you had to pick just one project, which would it be? We have the COA, not much of a Recreation Center, but the DPW is in dire need of a new facility and needs to be addressed. How much more can the Town handle in taxes? Some members of the committee would hate to see this get pushed forward before the DPW. The COA is not bad off, the Rec Center could use a new space, but the DPW should be at the top of the list. They have looked into Steel Buildings as a low cost/low maintenance alternative for the DPW and we need to address a new middle school, plus \$200 million in sewer that still needs to be completed.

Mary McBride seconded by Don Damon made a motion to recommend Article 16 to Town Meeting in the amount of \$500,000.

It was voted:

Doug Fogerty, John Molloy

3 – In favor – Dave Gagliardi,

6 – Opposed

### **Article 18 – Fund Design for DPW Facility – John Curran**

To see if the Town will vote to authorize the Treasurer, with approval of the Select Board, to borrow under Chapter 44, Section 7, the sum of \$4.5 million to pay the cost of design and bidding services for the New Public Works Facility, including the payment of all costs incidental and related thereto, and to authorize the Select Board to execute such documents and enter into such agreements as it deems in the best interest of the

Town in the furtherance of the objectives of this article. Any premium received upon sale of the bonds or note approved by this vote, less any such premium applied to the payment of the costs of issuance of such bonds or notes, may be applied to the payment of the costs approved by this vote in accordance with M.G.L. Chapter 44, Section 20, thereby reducing the amount authorized to be borrowed to pay such cost by a like amount.

Mr. Curran gave the committee members a copy of his presentation for Article 18 stating why the Town needs a new facility, the benefits of a new facility and how the DPW is part of the Town's Public Safety team. The warrant will ask to borrow \$4.5 million; it would be a bond and it would be short term. If all goes well the project could be completed by June 2025. The new DPW Facility would house DPW, DPW Admin, Engineering, and Parks & Trees

Chairman Gagliardi opened the floor to the committee for questions or concerns. When the new facility is built, who will be going in there? Engineering, DPW Admin, Highway, and Parks & Trees. What will be done with the old facility? Not sure yet. How big is the Alexander Road property? Not sure but will get that answer for you later. Currently, it houses 6 or 7 storage units and will have a new salt shed built there. Is a salt shed the best use for this property? There are already contractors and industrial uses in that area. It would not be out of line with the current usage for the area. There are special requirements for salt sheds. The proposed space is cut by 20% from the initial needs, will that create a problem down the road? No, it should not present a problem. What about the bridge height going into this proposed site, do all our town vehicles fit under it? Yes, all our vehicles can pass under the bridge. Does the Town own the Alexander Road property? Yes. The 250 Boston Road property has an intake for the water treatment facility, if we lease or sell that property, would we place an easement on it? Yes, we would have to. Can we move the intake closer to the treatment plant? No, the DEP will not allow us to move it. Does this cost cover remediation of the old facility? No, it would have to come before Town Meeting.

Mary McBride seconded by Doug Fogerty made a motion to recommend Article 18 to Town Meeting in the amount of \$4.5 million.

It was voted:

9 – In favor  
0 – Opposed

**Article 20 – Fund Installation of Sewer on Rangeway by Betterment – John Curran**

To see if the Town will vote to appropriate a sum of \$4,250,000 to pay for the cost of design and construction of sewer on Rangeway Road, including the payment of all costs incidentals and related thereto: and further this amount shall be raised by borrowing or act in relation thereto: to authorize the Select Board to acquire by gift, purchase or eminent domain any easements for sewer purposes associated with the project: to authorize the Select Board to execute any documents or instruments necessary to effect said easements: and to raise and appropriate or transfer from available funds, or

borrow a sum of money for the payment of property damages and other costs/expenses related to said easement acquisitions. This is a Betterment Project, and the 115 parcels will have the use of the Town's borrowing ability but the debt service will be paid by the entities who will benefit from the project. The Town will not be paying for it.

Mr. Curran gave the committee members a copy of his presentation for Article 20. He showed where the Assisted Living Facility put in sewer via a force main when they built the facility. Abutters are not able to tie into a force main. The whole cost of the project is \$4.25 million, the Town would issue the Bond but pay for the debt service through the Betterment which goes on their (the property owners') tax bills.

Chairman Gagliardi opened the floor to the committee for questions or concerns. Is there going to be a gravity line next to the current forced line? It will be a parallel system. You cannot interrupt a forced line. Will there be any problems running a gravity line? There should not be, they already ran the forced line and basically know what to expect in the streets there. The betterment project on Middlesex Turnpike, is it also a borrowing? Yes, it was \$750,000 bond. These projects are a good thing but a member commented that eventually it is going to affect our borrowing. The \$4.25 million is significant but we should be okay. We have a AA+/Aa2 bond rating. Yes, but it will give us less to borrow. How long will the note be for? It is about 20 years. It is like a debt exemption, once it is paid for it will drop off. Is this driven more from the residents, the ones that are having issues with septic? Yes, they are constantly having to have it pumped. When the bonding rating companies look at our numbers, something like this is going to be funded from the tax bills, would they look more favorably on that knowing there is a specific funding mechanism for it like they do with the debt exclusion? Yes, if it is an exclusive funding source, not general fund obligations, they look at that favorably.

Mary McBride seconded by Patrick Logue made a motion to recommend Article 20 to Town Meeting in the amount of \$4.25 million.

It was voted:

9 – In favor

0 – Opposed

### **Article 21 – Study/Design New Lighting at Pollard and Vining Fields – John Curran**

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate from available funds or borrow the sum of \$1.327 million or the purpose of studying, designing, and installing lights at the Pollard and Vining Athletic Fields.

Mr. Curran gave the committee members a copy of his presentation for Article 21. The lights at the Vining and the Pollard were unsafe and taken down. It is a \$1.327 million expense and depending on what happens at Town Meeting we would like to fund a portion through Free Cash. The funds from Free Cash could be as low as \$800,000 or as high as \$1.3 million and the difference we would fund through a capital account or other money that might be available.

Chairman Gagliardi opened the floor to the committee for questions or concerns. If it passes, when can we expect the lights to be up? Hopefully, this construction season or by next Spring. Where is the Pollard Field? It is over by Kids Konnection Playground near O'Connor Hardware. Is the Locke Middle School part of this? It is not part of the Article. \$800,000 in Free Cash but the Article is for \$1.327 million. Is part of the Article reduced? This one will be open ended at Town Meeting because we are not going to borrow but there is not enough Free cash to borrow the \$1.327 million and depending on what happens at Town Meeting with Article 16, there is going to either be \$800,000 left or \$1.3 million left. It would come out of the Capital Budget, or the Select Board will decide what they want to use for money in the future for it. You are looking for \$1.327 million with at least \$800,000 of it from Free Cash?

Mary McBride seconded by Rino Moriconi made a motion to recommend Article 21 to Town Meeting, not to exceed \$1.327 million.

It was voted:

9 – In favor

0 – Opposed

**Contracts**

There is a very slight possibility the paramedics (Article 5) will settle and possible they could ratify it before Town Meeting. We will withdraw all but that one Contract Article at this point.

**MISCELLANEOUS CORRESPONDENCE – not subject to discussion**

The next meeting will be Tuesday April 26, 2022, via Zoom, to hear the only remaining Article (25).

**ADJOURNMENT:**

Don Damon, seconded by Rino Moriconi made motion to adjourn.

It was voted:

9 – In favor

0 – Opposed

Chairman David Gagliardi adjourned the meeting at 9:12 pm.

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Joyce MacMillan, Recording Clerk