

BILLERICA FINANCE COMMITTEE MINUTES
September 27, 2022

A Public Hearing and Meeting of the Billerica Finance Committee was held on Tuesday September 27, 2022, at 7:00 p.m. in Room 210 of the Town Hall.

Present: David Gagliardi, Chairman; John Mulloy, Vice Chairman; Mary McBride, Secretary; Donald Damon, Member; Douglas Fogerty, Member; Patrick Logue, Member; Doug Meagher, Member; Philip Newfell, Member; Larry Norman, Member; Darlene Torre, Member; Kelley Sardina, 1st Associate; Brian Dorrington, 2nd Associate, Town Accountant Paul Watson, Ex-Officio; and Joyce MacMillan, Recording Clerk.

Excused: Sharon Healey, Member.

CALL TO ORDER:

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

PUBLIC COMMENT:

None

Chairman Gagliardi stated that the Finance Committee would like to recognize Rino Moriconi prior to opening the Public Hearing for his many years of service with the Finance Committee. Rino was presented with a gift from the committee. Rino thanked the committee and shared some lighthearted banter with them.

PUBLIC HEARING:

Mary McBride seconded by Doug Meagher made a motion to open the Public Hearing.

It was voted:

11 – In favor
0 – Opposed

WARRANT ARTICLES:

Article 30 Accept Roads as Public Ways – Rino Moriconi, Secretary of the Street Acceptance Committee

To see if the Town will vote to accept the following listed roads as public ways in accordance with the layouts adopted by the Select Board and on file with the Town Clerk; and to authorize the Select Board to acquire by gift, purchase, or eminent domain, such interest in land are necessary to provide for the use and maintenance of said ways for all purposes for which public ways are used in the Town of Billerica; and further to authorize the Select Board to execute any documents or instruments necessary to effectuate the purpose of this article.

The public ways are: Woodland Road, Plank Street, Dunham Road, Progress Road, and Enterprise Road

Mr. Moriconi briefly went over the presentation given by the Town Engineer, Kelley Conway, which took place the night before at the Select Board Meeting. He gave an update on the road's conditions and locations. DPW Director Fred Russell added a little more information regarding Woodland Road.

Chairman Gagliardi opened the floor to the committee for questions and concerns. A couple who are residents of Woodland Road attended the Select Board meeting. They believed the street acceptance for Woodland Road did not meet the legal requirements. This is just an acceptance of the road so the Town can use Chapter 90 money to fix it. The residents were worried they could lose part of his front yard but that is not the case. Has the Town seen a large increase in Chapter 90 money? Not large, we did get supplemental disbursements. There are about 228 to 230 miles of roadways in town with about 190 to 200 accepted. Does the Town maintain these unaccepted roads? The town has to plow and maintain the roads, accepted or not, for public safety. The committee did receive a letter opposing the acceptance from Annmarie Crowley and Steven James Polka, but they are all set now, they were the ones that thought they were going to lose their front yard. There was no other opposition. There are no plans for work on private property. Where is the financial impact on voting in these streets? Chapter 90 money.

John Mulloy, seconded by Dug Meagher, made a motion to recommend Article 30 to the Town Meeting.

It was voted:

9 – In favor
2 – Opposed – Logue,
Damon

Article 31 To Make Proposed Changes to the Zoning By-Laws (Delete Expired Moratoria) – Richard Colantuoni and Mark LaLumiere

To see if the Town will vote to amend the Town's Zoning By-Law by deleting expired Moratoria as found therein as Section 5.1 "Temporary Moratorium on Medical Marijuana Treatment Centers and 5.J.: Temporary Moratorium on Recreational Marijuana Establishments in their entirety, and to delete references to said sections in the Table of Contents.

Mr. Colantuoni stated he was with the Zoning By-Law Review Committee; they have been meeting over the last eight months discussing the changes that need to be made. Other committee members are the Building Commissioner, Mark LaLumiere, Chris Tribou from the Planning Board, Denise Salemme, Rich Annese, Bill Bonds, Planning Director Erica Jerram, and John Metivier, Building Commissioner in Carlisle also a developer in Town, and Mike Riley from the Select Board. Mr. Colantuoni and Mr. LaLumiere went over the changes for both Article 31 and 32.

Chairman Gagliardi opened the floor to the committee for questions and concerns. It was a preemptive temporary moratorium on things till the Town could get a handle on

how they would handle the marijuana sites. It was a placeholder to allow them to set up some regulations.

John Mulloy, seconded by Patrick Logue made a motion to recommend Article 31 to the Town Meeting.

It was voted: 11 – In favor
0 – Opposed

Article 32 To Make Proposed Changes to the Zoning By-Law (Updated Definitions) – Richard Colantuoni and Mark LaLumiere

To see if the Town will vote to amend the Town’s Zoning By-Law, Section 2.C. Definitions, including formatting standardization, as follows (see Final Warrant), with struck-through language deleted and underlined language inserted therein.

Mr. Colantuoni went over the changes to be made in Article 32.

Chairman Gagliardi opened the floor to the committee for questions and concerns. Looks like it is mostly clean up and definitions for better understanding. Went over the drive-up vs drive thru. Also went over curbside pick up and handicap parking areas. Light vs heavy manufacturing, Mr. LaLumiere explained. Home business, there should not be people coming and going, no traffic, we should not be able to tell there is a business being run from the house. Car charging stations, what will the Zoning ByLaws be on that? They will be discussing that in a future meeting. Do we know how many residents these changes will affect? Everyone, it affects the whole town. It is not retroactive, but the parking of commercial vehicles is a constant complaint. These definitions will help take care of this.

John Mulloy, seconded by Larry Norman made a motion to recommend Article 32 to the Town Meeting.

It was voted: 10 – In favor
1 – Opposed - Logue

Article 3 Budget Amendment – Paul Watson and John Curran

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the of \$339,124 to amend various budgets for Fiscal Year 2023. See Warrant for list and more information.

Mr. Curran went over this article with a Power Point presentation. The account names in the list are Town Buildings Utilities, Town Systemwide Fuel, Medicare, Town Manager Personnel and Contract Services. The natural gas contract is expiring this November and those prices will go up. Other fuel costs are subject to market prices. He went over all the costs that will be changing. Sludge removal (WasteWater Treatment Plant) will increase again also due to fuel costs rising.

Chairman Gagliardi opened the floor to the committee for questions and concerns. We see fuel pricing going down why is it going up in the budget? The prices may be coming down, but they are still much higher than they were when we originally put the budget together. Where are the funds coming from? It will come from the tax rate. About how many gallons of fuel does the town go through a year? We go through about 5,000 gallons twice a month. On the sludge removal, how much of that is fuel and how much the actual cost of doing business? The fuel cost is built into the cost of the sludge removal. There are very few places that will take the sludge. Anticipated increase due to the settlement of the school collective bargaining agreement, will we be hearing anything on that? The school department and the teacher's union and paraprofessionals have ratified their contracts. They are on the agenda for the next meeting (September 29). Medicare cost going up each year, we normally in the Fall try to adjust up from the previous year. There is an additional \$30,000 related to the school contracts and that will give us another \$25,000 for general salary increases on the town side. Is there anything we can do to lessen the amount of sludge? No, not really. The sludge comes from the sewer. Do the non-union employees get step increases? Yes, there is a 7 to 9 step depending on the group they are in. Is this a foreshadowing of what we are going to see next year as far as the increases everywhere? If inflation keeps going up, then yes. Especially energy costs. What does the company that takes the sludge, do with it? At one time it was processed and turned into fertilizer, but it was not profitable. Not sure what they do with it now.

John Mulloy, seconded by Don Damon made a motion to recommend Article 3 as printed in the warrant to Town Meeting.

It was voted:

11 – In favor
0 – Opposed

Article 4 Transfer from Debt Stabilization – Paul Watson and John Curran

To see if the Town will vote to transfer and appropriate the sum of \$2,012,618 from the Town Debt Stabilization Fund to fund the Debt Service Budget.

Mr. Curran stated he would go over Article 4 and 24 together as a consensus article since they are related. He went over the Debt Stabilization and appropriations.

Chairman Gagliardi opened the floor to the committee for questions and concerns. If we go through Town Meeting and all the monies are approved, would Article 33 (Petitioners Article) have to go away? Yes, there would only be the \$800,000 left that is being held for contract settlements.

John Mulloy, seconded by Larry Norman made a motion to recommend Article 4 as printed in the warrant to Town Meeting.

It was voted:

9 – In favor
2 – Opposed – Logue,
Damon

Article 24 Free Cash to Debt Stabilization (Administration) – Paul Watson and John Curran

To see if the Town will vote to transfer and appropriate from Free Cash the sum of \$370,000 and to transfer and appropriate from Sewer Retained Earnings the sum of \$1,430,000 to Debt Stabilization Fund.

Mr. Curran went over where the appropriations and transfers would come from.

Chairman Gagliardi opened the floor to the committee for questions and concerns. We know that a percentage was set a number of years ago, is there any plan in the future to raise the percentage due to the budget increase? It should be addressed soon. It is being monitored and the schedule that was put together is still on track.

John Mulloy, seconded by Larry Norman made a motion to recommend Article 24 as printed in the warrant to Town Meeting.

It was voted:

9 – In favor
2 – Opposed – Logue,
Damon

Article 16 Fund Town Capital Budget – Paul Watson and John Curran

To see if the Town will vote to transfer and appropriate from available funds the sum of \$4,990,000 to fund the Town and School Capital Budgets. See Warrant for list and more information.

Mr. Curran and Mr. Russell went over their portion of the article. It is the Town/School capital. It addresses some Town and School projects. New vehicles for the DPW and an ambulance, work to be done on the auditorium in the Town Hall, funds for the Katie Durand Memorial Park and for the Vining Field Lighting and on the school, side repairs to the culvert at the Dutile, replace a boiler at the Hallenborg Rink, work on the playgrounds at the elementary schools, sprinkler repair & upgrade at the Ditson and HVAC Controls hardware upgrade at the Ditson. Mr. Russell went over the DPW list, Mr. Curran went over the ambulance, Auditorium Katie Durand Memorial Park & Vining Field Lighting and **Mr. Piwovar will go over the school side on September 29 FinCom meeting.** Mr. Curran stated there were funds earmarked for the Auditorium project from Rep Lombardo's office of \$3,000 and \$90,000 from Senator Freedman's office, and \$400,000 appropriation that was approved by the Select Board.

Chairman Gagliardi opened the floor to the committee for questions and concerns. Cemetery lots, how much is in that account? About \$215,000. The signage in the cemetery is old and faded and in need of replacement. There are many that you cannot read anymore. Is there any way of getting the signs taken care of, maybe some magnetic ones for the various times of year? What is APWA and what is the benefit of APWA agreeing with the Town's policies? It is the America Public Works Association, and it is not a benefit. They have set the guidelines for Public Works for decades. It is

like the America Water Works Association, they set the guidelines for public water systems. They have evolved over the years based on efficiency and best practices. The vehicles being taken out of service, how are they disposed of? Some are traded in; some are too far gone to be traded and might have to be junked. Do you have a number for maintenance cost as opposed to buying new vehicles sooner? Past practices in other towns have seen the maintenance cost go down when they purchase vehicles sooner. Do we do in-house maintenance on the vehicles? The vast majority is done in-house but there is much that have to be sent out. Obviously, warranty work is done by dealer. Why are trading in vehicles when they have life left to them? The way things are now, it could take up to a year or more for the new vehicle to come in. The old vehicle will most likely have another year of use prior to being traded in. The longer the Town holds on to the vehicle the more it will cost in maintenance. The Town bought two Mack's last year and are still waiting for delivery. From this list, how many of the vehicles do we need immediately? All of them. Is it possible to have more measurables for the economic lifespan for the vehicles? How do we know when the optimal time to trade one in? Mr. Russell went over the measurables and there are a lot of variables, and he is working on a list of when each vehicle should be traded. It is a 10-year Capital Fleet Plan, and the committee should see that by the Spring Town Meeting. Is there a software program that could handle this? They do not know of one, they have checked and have not found anything. Out of the four current ambulances, the first two (A & B) are the newer vehicles and are the vehicles used daily. The two older vehicles (C & D) are the back up vehicles. Is it often that both primary ambulances are out of commission at the same time? It has happened, not often. The ambulances take a beating and are out of their prime once they get over 100,000 miles. Do we currently have an ambulance on order? We do, we are still waiting for it to come in. What is FFE? Furniture, Fixtures and Equipment. Do we have a breakdown of what money is coming from Free Cash for the DPW? Yes, it is in the handout that was sent to the committee, and it is broken down in the warrant as well. There are some committee members that would like to see articles like this broken up into separate articles. There are items they would vote yes on and others they would vote no.

This Article will be voted after the School items are presented by Mr. Piwowar at our September 29th meeting.

Article 2 To Hear Reports – Dave Gagliardi

To see if the Town will vote to hear and act upon the reports of Town Departments, Committees and Officers.

John Mulloy seconded by Patrick Logue made a motion to recommend Article 2 as printed in the warrant to Town Meeting.

It was voted:

11 – In favor
0 – Opposed

CLOSE PUBLIC HEARING:

John Mulloy, seconded by Doug Meagher made a motion to close the Public Hearing.

It was voted:

11 – In favor
0 – Opposed

MINUTES: September 8, 2022

Review minutes of September 8, 2022

John Mulloy, seconded by Don Damon made a motion to accept the minutes of September 8, 2022.

It was voted:

9 – In favor
0 – Opposed
2- Abstained
D. Meagher, P. Newfell

MISCELLANEOUS CORRESPONDENCE – not subject to discussion

The next meeting date, September 29, 2022

ADJOURNMENT:

John Mulloy, seconded by Mary McBride, made a motion to adjourn.

It was voted:

11 – In favor
0 – Opposed

Chairman Dave Gagliardi adjourned the meeting at 9:41 pm.

Joyce MacMillan, Recording Clerk