**Board of Finance Special Meeting**

**March 30, 2023 6 P.M.**

**Meeting held virtually**

1. **Call to order:** Board of Finance Chair Michael Imber called the meeting to order at 6:02 pm. Attendees were Vice Chair Rone Baldwin, Theresa Brasco, Jeffrey Farr, Amy Gare, Jeffrey Goldstein and Maxwell Rosenthal. Also in attendance were First Selectwoman Samantha Nestor, Finance Director Rick Darling, Town Administrator Jonathan Luiz, WPS Superintendent Lisa Barbiero, WPS Finance Director Phil Cross and BOE Chair Steve Ezzes.
2. **Discussion/Decision regarding the proposed Board of Education’s operating budget for FY 2023-24.**

Mr. Farr discussed the initiatives to move the CIL’s to full time (2.6 FTE) for next year’s budget. Mr. Farr discussed the $360,000 investment noting the potential long term impact as a result. Ms. Barbiero discussed CIL’s positions and discussed that the increase of the 2.6 FTE’s gives more availability to resources for teachers. Mr. Imber noted that the changes to FTE can be revisited next year and is not necessarily long term. Ms. Barbiero agreed and discussions continued.

The BOF also discussed AFSME negotiations. Mr. Imber asked if there was a risk that the final collective bargaining agreement could adversely impact the budget, if the requested amount is approved at tonight’s meeting. Mr. Ezzes answered “no”, stating that negotiations are continuing and the BOE is confident that they will settle with numbers budgeted. Mr. Farr asked about the $40,000 differential that was budgeted. Mr. Cross discussed that that it has to do with AFSME, plus adjustments made for next year.

Net reduction of .18% was discussed due to a decrease in utilities, an increase in paper, state pension costs increase which is mandated by the state, health insurance decrease and diesel costs decreases.

Mr. Farr asked to consider the BOE budget request in the context of the long-term view in the 10 year projections. Discussions continued and Mr. Imber asked about projections Mr. Farr was referring. Mr. Farr explained that several members of the BOF had looked at a 10 year forecast. Mr. Imber noted that no such projections had been included in any of the back-up material and had not been uniformly shared with all members of the BOF. Upon inquiry, Mr. Darling had confirmed that these were high level 10 year projections he had put together that consisted of a single line item for the BOE budget and had been shared in draft format and noted he had not historically included such a forecast in the deliberation meeting back-up materials. Upon inquiry, Mr. Cross confirmed that his own projections only extended two or three years and was not sure how his figures may have been captured in the 10 year forecast. Mr. Farr made a motion, seconded by Mr. Baldwin, to delay the budget vote until April 4th subject to a review of the 10 year projection. The motion failed with 5 “no” votes, 1 “yes” vote, and 1 abstention. Mr. Imber subsequently asked for a motion to approve the revised BOE operating budget of $57,945,055. Mr. Goldstein made the motion which was seconded by Ms. Gare. The motion was approved with 5 “yes” votes and 2 abstentions.

1. **Discussion/Decision regarding the proposed Town operating budget for FY 2023-24.** Mr. Darling reviewed the proposed budget adjustments resulting in a $70,775 net increase to the town budget due to employer pension contribution increases, OPEB contributions and payments to/from the OPEB Trust as well as retiree expense offsets. He also discussed decreases to the Fire Department and Public Works budget due to locked in prices for diesel fuel. Discussions continued. Mr. Imber asked for a motion to approve the $15,369,556 revised Town operating budget for FY 2023-24. Motion made by Mr. Goldstein, seconded by Ms. Gare. The motion was unanimously approved.
2. **Discussion/Decision regarding the proposed Town and Board of Education capital budget for FY 2023-24.** The BOF had detailed discussions on road paving recommendations from Beta Group and procurement policies for the fire truck purchase requested in the budget. Mr. Farr and Mr. Rosenthal discussed road paving recommendations from Beta Group and inquired as to why there was a deviation from the consultants recommendations. Mr. Luiz addressed prioritization and careful consideration as to the recommended schedule. Discussions continued regarding future policies and maintenance components. Mr. Farr asked Mr. Luiz if DPW had the necessary bandwidth to do the prep and maintenance on the planned five miles of roads given that the road budget is twice what it had been last year. Mr. Luiz confirmed that DPW was ready.

Mr. Goldstein described how he and Mr. Baldwin had met with Chief Pokorny to better understand the procurement process for the Rescue 5 fire truck. Chief Pokorny said that traditionally the fire department utilizes a RFP process. The specs for the truck coupled with the escalating price of the truck made the process difficult. There was a sense of urgency to get the bid in. Mr. Goldstein asked if Larry Roberts might be available to help supervise the final execution on the bidding. Mr. Imber asked if Mr. Goldstein and Mr. Baldwin were comfortable with the purchase of the truck in the absence of the RFP and how it is being financed. Neither Mr. Goldstein nor Mr. Baldwin expressed discomfort with the process.

Mr. Farr inquired about the payloader at the transfer station. Mr. Luiz discussed options for fixing the current payloader, trading it in or getting a new one. His recommendation is to purchase a new one.

Mr. Imber asked for a motion to approve the town capital expenditure budget of $2,618,138 FY 2023-24. Mr. Goldstein made such a motion which was seconded by Ms. Gare. Motion passed unanimously.

Mr. Imber asked for a motion to approve the BOE capital expenditure budget of $833,450 for FY 2023-24. Mr. Goldstein made such a motion which was seconded by Ms. Gare. Motion passed unanimously.

Mr. Darling suggested a motion to approve as a net capital budget line item totaling $3,416,996 due to a $34,000 offset. Mr. Imber clarified this motion to vote on a combination of the total capital budget reflecting the offset. Mr. Imber called for a motion to approve a net total capital budget including the town budget previously approved and the BOE budget previously approved net of capital reserve offsets, total capital budget of $3,416,996. Mr. Goldstein made such a motion which was seconded by Ms. Gare. Motion passed unanimously.

1. **Discussion/Decision regarding the proposed Town Debt Service budget for FY 2023-24.** Mr. Darling gave an overview of the debt service budget noting that the FY 22-23 debt service budget included the offset of the Fromson Strassler sale proceeds, which affects the year to year variance. Town portion and the BOE portion is $2,967,825. Mr. Imber asked for a motion to approve the Town Debt Service budget of $2,967,825 for FY 2023-24 Mr. Farr made such a motion and Ms. Brasco seconded. Motion passed unanimously.
2. **Summary remarks:** Mr. Imber stated that the sum of the FY 24 budget is $75,903,932. This represents a .39% increase in the mill rate. The impact on the mill rate subject to town approval is .13. The mill rate for FY 24 will be 33.10.

1. **Adjourn.** Motion to adjourn made by Mr. Goldstein. Ms. Gare second. Meeting adjourned at 7:27 pm.

Minutes Submitted By: Shawn Amato, Recording Secretary