

Town of Uxbridge, Massachusetts Finance Committee Meeting Minutes

Date: 13 February 2018

Place: Lower Town Hall
Meeting Room

Attendance: Present or Absent

Peter DeMers - Chair	P	Evelyn Marchand	P	Derek Normadin	P
Mark Andrews- Vice Chair	P	Michael Wilson	A	Joseph Eveler	P
Susan Franz- Clerk	P				

Also present: Town Manager Angie Ellison

Call to order 6:30

Welcome to the new Town Manager Angie Ellison. Committee members are invited by the chair to share their thoughts and comments on the upcoming year directly with the Town Manager.

New Action Items

- Update from the Town Manager on the status of the repayment plan for McCloskey building debt.
- Review of health insurance fees, contracts, and options.
- Update on the DPW yard waste project

Continuing Action Items

- The expense ledger report will be circulated to the committee.
- Follow-up with the Town Manager to determine a long-term capital planning process to evaluate the DOR report recommendations.
- Mark Andrews to set up a tour of the new PD server facilities, when complete.
- Members to send their budget priorities and recommendations for the Town Manager to review.
- Members to review the DOR capital report.
- The IT Director is to be invited to provide an update on IT security and account management procedures.

- Michael Wilson to request McCloskey closure cash flow and savings analysis detail from School Business Manager.
- Finance Dept. to close books for 2017 (pending).
- Finance Dept. to complete free cash certification (pending).

1. Finance Department Update

We are currently 2-3 weeks behind schedule on budget preparation tasks. The finance team will take the lead on this budget cycle due to the transition. The Town Manager was asked to review for the next meeting the plan for the McCloskey's building repayment.

Filling the Town Accountant position remains a high priority. Justin Cole will continue as a part-time Town Accountant until the end of the fiscal year at about 25 hours per week.

Department heads with concerns about feedback from accounting should bring those concerns to the Town Manager.

2. Property Assessments

Some errors were identified on property assessments. If a third party is responsible, then recovering costs should be pursued. The Town Manager will be attending a meeting with the vendor and reviewing contracts. Anyone who would like their bill reviewed is invited to come into the Assessor's office for help.

There was a concern that the communications should have been sent out earlier and that there may be a need for a more robust communication campaign.

The Town Manager is planning to create a budget committee with representation across the town boards and departments to present the budget at Town Meeting.

4) FY19 Budget (taken out of order)

The Finance Committee would like to have a more focused budget document for this year. There is strong interest in commentary on budget goals from each department to assess the needs and value provided. This could include each department's top three challenges.

There is also a need for written justifications, particularly in areas where there are large changes from the previous year's allocations. The committee will expect a narrative in the hearings or a written addendum, where budgets are already complete.

Issues for the upcoming year include revisiting legacy practices, total

compensation statements, evaluating ROI, and assessing how we use contractors and consultants.

3) Reports

a) Snow and Ice

No updated snow and ice report was available. The remaining balance before the last storm was \$50,000 and it is anticipated we will need a transfer. There is a request to the TM to review the 10-year history of the snow and ice budget.

b) Review of the Interim Town Manager Transition Report

A need was expressed for a policy to guide how staff, officials, and volunteers interact with each other and the public. It would be helpful to see coordination between agencies and departments who frequently interact with the same residents in town, including seniors and veterans.

There was a recommendation that the Town Clerk lead an annual training session. A concern was raised about the high number of direct reports the Town Manager may be supporting.

An updated policy book is absolutely necessary. If an HR position is not filled, there are HR consultancies who could assist.

The Finance Committee is very supportive of having legal counsel present at Town Meeting. Department heads should have access at a level necessary for good decision making. Historically, there was a pendulum swing to excessive use of Town Counsel. That does not reflect the current situation.

Health insurance may be a good area for an in-depth review this cycle. Issues raised included broker fees, negotiated contracts, communication of total compensation and benefits, deductible reimbursements, and long term program stability. Three potential groups were identified including non-union employees, retirees, and union employees.

Capital Planning is seeing more attention across the organization. There are proposals to change the definitions, revisit our use of stabilization, and to seek planning clarity on multi-year projects.

Preventative maintenance, facilities management, and other needs may benefit from a consolidation model similar to IT.

The Committee would like an update on the DPW yard waste project.

Options for financing the WWTF debt could include design of a new rate structure similar to those used by private utilities. There is currently a minimum usage rate and there may be a need for a floor for infrastructure. A ramped

repayment is another option to allow inflation and growth to help share the burden equitably. Another town goal is to reduce water usage, which could be supported with the rate design.

There is work proceeding on the Green Communities certification with a look at the potential for waste hauling consolidation, and more recycling.

Emergency management may need a review this year.

Host community agreements and mitigation agreements may be a revenue stream that we are not fully utilizing. Solar agreements are relatively minimal. Businesses coming in should pay their way.

Hopedale has beautification agreements with businesses. There are some towns where there are higher tax rates for business and the towns also provide additional supports.

The hire for an economic development coordinator is delayed behind the Town Meeting budget and warrants. There was a question whether there is a senior manager who could facilitate the initial tasks for the hiring process while the Town Manager works on the Spring Annual Town Meeting.

5) Liaison updates

The Board of Health is facing a large payout for a retiring employee for accrued time. Other departments are anticipating similar issues in the near future. Employment agreements need to be reviewed for appropriate accrual limits. There is need for a methodology to determine which fund will pay these costs. Exempt employees should also have a written description of their employment benefits.

The committee will look into presenting some of the Senior Center social services at Town Meeting. It may also be a good venue to talk about other services and an update on the "state of the town" and a report back to the town on the results of the IT consolidation.

A concern was raised that the school budgets may be swinging from year to year and that could result in staff layoffs if we become overextended. The initial school budget for FY2019 was .47% below FY2018 but has been increased to 3.15% above FY2018 and has an increase in personnel costs. This amount seems unexpected in light of the closing of McCloskey and needs justification.

Schools:
FY2018 \$21,445,392
FY2019 \$23,667,069

A concern was raised that we are now in February and do not have a clear plan on the \$400,000 payment due in FY2019 for McCloskey. The school's first option is loan forgiveness. In the first round, the state said no. Other potential educational uses will be presented to the state for a second petition for forgiveness.

The Committee's consensus is that it is in the school's own interest to explain budgets clearly, share future directions, and engage the wider community with programs, such as vocational and adult education. It may help the schools to bring the 75% of residents without kids into closer contact with school buildings and programs. Well-designed outreach and marketing may help the schools when it approaches the town for future funding votes.

6) Meeting minutes

Motion to accept the meeting minutes for January 24, 2018.

First: MA	Second: EM	5-0-1
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7) Old business

None

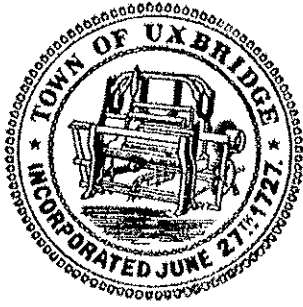
8) New Business

We will need to consider process on finalizing budgets for this cycle.

January's expense report will be sent out.

Motion to Adjourn

First: MA	Second: SF	6-0-0
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Finance Committee Approval Sheet

Date: 13 February 2018

Location: Lower Town Hall Meeting Room

Name	Signature	Date
Peter DeMers		03 APR 18
Mark Andrews		03 APR 18
Susan Franz		03 April 18
Joseph Evcler		4/3/18
Evelyn Marchand		4/3/18
Derek Normadin		4-3-18
Michael Wilson		