

**Finance Committee
Town of Buckland
Minutes of Meeting
April 11, 2022**

This meeting is being conducted remotely in accordance with the provisions of the Governor's March 12, 2020, Executive Order Suspending Certain Provisions of the Open Meeting Law.

Present:

Finance Committee: Larry Langford, Paula Consolo, Dena Wilmore, Bruce Lessels

Town of Buckland: Heather Butler, Town Administrator, Barry DelCastilho, Selectboard

Others:

The meeting was called to order by Chair Langford at 4:03 pm.

Reviewed minutes of April 4, 2022 meeting. Note that those minutes contain a misunderstanding of the Arms Library budget. During the April 4 meeting, we thought the Arms Library budget was increasing 7.2% in order to allow the library to open on Sundays, but we now understand that the increase is to allow a salary increase for the director to match that of the director of the Shelburne Free Library and to increase the hours of the assistant.

Dena Wilmore moved to accept minutes of April 4, 2022 as amended. Paula Consolo second. Unanimously approved.

We discussed the 7.2% increase to Arms Library's budget. It is unclear how Buckland's portion of the library budget is calculated. We have been asking them to figure out a way to compile usage numbers, but that has proven difficult. We hope to come up with a more rational process next year. Arms is a private library. We have funded it for years, but it's an unusual arrangement. Larry Langford questioned whether we are technically allowed to fund a private library with municipal dollars, even if it's a non-profit. We will need to research this.

Capital Budget

At this time, we're not proposing putting anything into stabilization. This is the second year we've done that.

The mini excavator will require a \$17,000 trailer, which increases our hwy dept capital budget.

Heather Butler recommends spending \$75,000 from hwy stabilization and paying the rest of the \$172,000 hwy dept capital request from free cash.

Salt shed construction: Our plan is to repour the slab and build concrete walls with a fabric cover. Total cost is expected to be \$350,000, and we will use \$200,000 from stabilization and \$150,000 from free cash.

OPEB amount of \$20,000 is showing on both the capital budget and the operating budget, but it's only adding to the total for capital because at this point we're not taking it from free cash.

Pool project: We've decided to recommend using American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds for the pool project. The current shortfall is \$535,674.59 due to additional costs that we have been told of since the last accounting. At this point, we have \$1.488 million on hand for this project. Total cost will be \$2.08 million. The town received ARPA funds to compensate for pandemic-related losses, and the increase in the price of this project is directly related to the pandemic.

Larry, Dena and Paula plan to attend the selectboard meeting tomorrow night to speak in favor of using ARPA money for the pool overage.

Memo

Larry drafted the memo. Title changed to "Operating Budget Report" to match the warrant article. We changed the title to "Budget Report" to include capital as well as operating budget.

Paula suggested we find the 5 year average of COLA increases to justify where we are with salaries. This will be especially important as we share more services with Shelburne.

Article 3 - explain why salaries are down. The only change in salaries is the town clerk. Selectmen voted to lower town clerk salary.

Dena moved that the finance committee recommends Article 3. Paula second. Larry, Paula, Dena in favor, Bruce abstained.

Article 4 - total operating budget numbers are incorrect. We recalculated these numbers so that they're correct.

Paula moves that the finance committee recommends Article 4. Bruce second. Unanimously approved.

Article 5 - special line items are down 8.7% we reduced the amount we're putting in the personnel reserve fund.

Dena moves that the finance committee recommends Article 5. Larry second. Unanimously approved.

Dena moves that the finance committee recommends Article 6. Paula second. Unanimously approved.

Paula moves that we recommend Article 7. Dena second. Unanimously approved.

Bruce moves that we recommend Article 8. Dena second. Unanimously approved.

Dena moves that we recommend Article 9. Paula second. Unanimously approved

Dena moves that we recommend Article 10. Paula second. Unanimously approved.

Article 11 - salary has increased because we're adding a part time person. That cost was offset by operational services decreasing.

Paula moves that we recommend Article 11. Dena second. Unanimously approved.

Article 12 - \$78,000 is third and final payment for the sewer improvements associated with the Conway Street reconstruction project.

Paula moves that we recommend Article 12. Dena second. Unanimously approved.

Dena moves that we recommend Article 13. Paula second. Unanimously approved.

Paula moves that we recommend Article 14. Dena second. Unanimously approved.

Bruce moves that we recommend Article 15. Dena second. Unanimously approved.

Paula moves that we recommend Article 16. Dena second. Unanimously approved.

Article 17 - creating a grant match special revenue account gives us more latitude in how we manage grants.

Dena moves that we recommend Article 17. Bruce second. Unanimously approved.

Discussion of whether to weigh in on any other articles. Dena suggested we express an opinion on the article that formalizes "finance committee" as the name of this group. This came about as a result of the ad hoc group that met to review the bylaws.

Article 18 - Recycling revolving account. Solid waste district is recommending that we create this in order to put money aside for future needs.

Paula moves that we recommend Article 18. Dena second. Unanimously approved.

Dena moves that we recommend Article 19. Paula second. Unanimously approved.

Dena moves that we recommend Article 25. Bruce second. Unanimously approved.

Article 29 - discussed the pros and cons of creating a senior services district. Paula questioned the need for an additional district, and others voiced some concerns. Heather reviewed the existing districts - sewer, fire, school.

Larry said that a district, once organized, would require some financial support from the town whether or not we decide on capital projects. Shelburne presently doesn't charge the full cost for the services they provide to the senior center.

Paula is on the fence on this article because she believes we're likely to see increased costs and because she believes it is only needed to purchase a new building.

Dena moves to support Article 29. Bruce second. Paula abstained. Bruce, Dena, Larry in favor.

No members of the public were present.

Bruce moved to adjourn at 6:35 pm.. Dena second. Unanimously approved.

Next meeting Thursday, April 21 at 5 pm.