

Financial Matters Sub-Committee Meeting April 8, 2020
Minutes

Members present: Christine Saulnier, Chair, James Broderick, Michael Kane, Thomas O'Connor, Mary McNally, Sara Menard, Diane Bishop, Ryan Quimby, Kathleen Hill (ex-officio, non-voting)

The meeting was held by virtual participation (Zoom) and was called to order by Chris Saulnier at 10:40am.

Chris gave an overview of the effect of COVID-19 on the Town's financial resources for the remainder of FY20 and continuing into FY21.

Mary McNally explained that she has decided to adopt a 20% furlough plan for employees in all Town offices effective April 17, 2020. This model will allow all departments to be open five days a week. (It is understood that town buildings continue to remain closed to the public). In addition, known vacancies in various departments will not be filled.

Tom asked if the June 1 date for the Council to adopt the FY21 budget was still in place. Mary explained that the Legislature has adopted a bill that relaxes budget filing dates, allows municipalities to use uncertified Free Cash for operational expenses, and allows cities and towns to proceed with a 1/12 budget (FY20 amounts) for July 1 budgeting. She noted that municipalities may continue to meet original deadlines if so inclined but cautioned about the benefits of delaying in hopes of federal relief funds being allocated. The general consensus of the committee was to take advantage of the relaxed deadlines.

Mary also noted that the matter of extending the May 1 tax bill deadline would come before the Council at its April 14 meeting. Diane Bishop noted that a high number of resident tax bills are escrowed by their lenders and will be paid on time. She recommends that all other residents be encouraged to pay their May 1 tax bills on time if at all possible.

Chris asked Mary if a Capital Planning Committee had been appointed. Mary noted that Ryan Quimby will chair the committee and other committee members will be appointed shortly to begin review of FY21 capital requests.

Chris scheduled the upcoming Finance Committee meetings to meet weekly for the time being; April 15 at 10:00am, and April 22 at 10:00am.

Mary recommended that next steps should begin with the largest budgets (DPW, schools) to look for cost savings.

Chris asked Sara Menard to provide an overview of the Stormwater Enterprise Fund for the April 15 meeting.

Kathy asked Mary if she had discussed a possible furlough of certain school department employees with Gordon. He has stated that all school employees are under various bargaining agreements and that jurisdiction falls to the School Committee. Kathy suggested that she and Mike Kane ask to be included in the School Committee's Executive Session for April 13 to discuss potential furloughing. The Committee agreed this would be a beneficial first step as a way to maintain the positive working relationship that the Council has developed with the School Committee.

Jim made a motion to adjourn (seconded Tom). The meeting adjourned at 11:35am

Respectfully submitted,

Kathleen Hill,
Ex-officio (non-voting)

