



TOWN OF SHREWSBURY

Richard D. Carney Municipal Office Building
100 Maple Avenue
Shrewsbury, Massachusetts 01545-5398

Minutes Finance Committee February 29, 2020

Present

Mark Adler, Vikram Chhabra, John Cygielnik, Erin Howard, Hannah Kane, Mark Murray, Patrick Pitney, Jordan Rubin, and Judy Vedder.

Mark Adler was not in attendance following the break for lunch.

Also Present:

Maurice DePalo, Chair Board of Selectmen, John Lebeaux, Board of Selectmen, John Samia, Board of Selectmen, Kevin J. Mizikar, Town Manager, Kristen D. Las, Assistant Town Manager, and David C. Snowdon, Assistant to the Town Manager.

Call to Order

9:00 AM - Ms. Vedder called the meeting to order.

Accept Minutes

Mr. Mizikar indicated that there was no minutes under review at this time.

Town Manager's Report

Mr. Mizikar indicated that there was no new information to report at this time.

9:01 AM - Department Budget Hearings

Upon a motion by Ms. Kane and a second by Mr. Murray, the Committee voted 9-0 to re-open the public hearing.

Board of Health - 9:01 AM

Present: Karyn Clark, Director City of Worcester Public Health Division

Mr. Mizikar provided a very welcome introduction for Ms. Clark and detailed the benefits from the Town's strong relationship with the regional health organization. Further, Mr. Mizikar indicated that the Town's regional health structure has been used as a model for in the work of the Special Commission of Regional Public Health of which both Rep. Kane and Mr. Mizkar are a part. Ms. Clark reviewed the Town's relationship with the Central Mass Regional Public Health Alliance (CMRPHA) and its activities to date.

Mr. Cygielnik inquired as to whether other surrounding towns want to join the Alliance. Ms. Clark indicated that there is a governing committee within the Alliance of which Ms. Las is the chair.

Any request to join the Alliance would be reviewed by the committee to ensure the proper fit for both the community and the Alliance was possible. The committee is always open to finding new communities, but at this time, there have been no requests. Mr. Rubin echoed his colleague's comments adding that the Town's relationship with the Alliance is a great example of leveraging economies of scale. Mr. Rubin then questioned the impact on the Alliances enforcement efforts with the passing of the plastic bag and polystyrene bans. Ms. Clark indicated that the Town of Shrewsbury has done a great job with its outreach, and there has been minimal impact on the Alliance with these bans. Additionally, by setting the enactment dates far enough out in the future, business have been able to properly plan.

Council on Aging - 9:25 AM

Present: Hollie Lucht, COA Director, Louise Russel, COA Board Chair, Shashi Menon, Vice Chair, Barbara DePalo, Cliff Gerber, Norma Giumentaro, Virginia Leonard, and Zoya Mehta

Mr. Mizikar provided a warm welcome for Hollie Lucht, COA Director, who is the second to hold this position since the Senior Center was erected. Ms. Lucht identified the COA newsletter as an area where significant savings will be realized in FY 2021 while still providing the resource to the community. Mr. Mizikar announced that the Council on Aging Boards request to increase the working hours of the Outreach Coordinator to 0.60 FTE from 0.48 FTE was funded. Ms. Russell added that the COA Board was very pleased with this increase as the work completed by the Outreach Coordinator is vital to the community.

Mr. DePalo echoed Ms. Russell's sentiments and added that the Town will need to be aware of the growing need of senior outreach in the coming years. Mr. DePalo added that the work of the Council on Aging extends so much further than the Senior Center facility. Ms. Leonard complimented the work of Ms. Lucht especially the efforts to reach out and connect with the senior population.

Mr. Chhabra inquired into the departments plan in of incorporating technology in the Senior Center. Ms. Lucht commented that efforts are currently underway to install four new public computers at the Senior Center and there are plans to enhance the IT technology to provide more resources to the seniors.

Commission on Disabilities – 9:42 AM

Present: Kristen D. Las, Assistant Town Manager

Ms. Las reviewed the level service budget request for the Commission on Disabilities. Mr. Adler noted that he has been able to notice the outreach through the awards and stated that he was proud of the Town for the work this Commission accomplishes.

Veterans Services - 9:45 AM

Present: Justin Sousa, Director – Central Mass Veterans' Service District

Mr. Sousa provided a review of the Central Mass Veterans' Service District and the four communities served while highlighting metrics specific to the Town of Shrewsbury. Mr. Sousa discussed the importance of veteran outreach and education on benefit eligibility. Mr. Adler added that most people might view Veterans' benefits, as strictly a Federal Benefit, and it is wonderful

to hear about the local work and service. Ms. Kane echoed that the Commonwealth treats Veterans the best in the nation to which Mr. Sousa added that he is grateful to work in Massachusetts, as he is able to provide more services.

9:58 AM - Review Meeting Schedule

- a) March 7, 2020 – Saturday – Budget Hearing
- b) March 19, 2020 – Thursday
- c) April 16, 2020 – Thursday – Public Hearing Town Meeting Warrant Articles
- d) April 23, 2020 – Thursday – Public Hearing Town Meeting Warrant Articles

The Committee acknowledged the upcoming schedule

Other Business - Review & Discuss Finance Committee Report and Recommendation May 2020

No action was taken at this time.

Correspondence

There were no correspondences for review.

Street Lighting - 9:59 AM

Present: Kevin Mizikar, Town Manager

Mr. Mizikar provided a review of the budget and discussed the approximately \$37,000 reduction in the budget related to LED savings. Mr. Cygielnik inquired if savings will continue to be realized to which Mr. Mizikar replied in the affirmative.

10:00 AM – The Committee agreed to take a recess.

Accounting, Pension, OPEB - 10:15 AM

Present: Mary Thompson, Town Accountant, Kevin Mizikar, Town Manager, Kristen D. Las, Assistant Town Manager.

Ms. Thompson provided an overview of the Accounting department and its activities. Two noteworthy changes have been the change to bi-weekly payroll, and the transition to a new accrual process. Mr. Pitney inquired in to the Salaries 1-2-3 increase of \$18,000. Ms. Thompson commented that the increase was allocated following the results of the new class and compensation study.

Ms. Thompson then provided an overview of the Retirement account and its activities. Mr. Cygielnik inquired into the status of the annual statement to which Ms. Thompson replied she expects a preliminary report within the next two weeks. Mr. Cygielnik then inquired into the history of the Mortality tables and if those could be made available. Ms. Thompson commented that there are new municipally focused tables that have been issued and will be recommended for 2020.

Mr. Pitney was thrilled to see an increase in the OPEB funding for 2020 and was interested to understand the difference in Pension funding approach between the Departmental Request and Fiscal Projection One. Mr. Mizikar replied the change in approach was intended to place the Town

in a better financial position when the Beal Early Childhood Center opens. Ms. Kane commented that the Town of Shrewsbury is so far ahead across the Commonwealth being one of four communities that will be full funded. The Committee then conducted a general discussion around long-term liability.

Mr. Chhabra requested clarification on the Town's funding strategy. Ms. Thompson commented that the Town is a part of the Pension Reserve Investment Trust (PRIT), a State fund that has historically benefited the Town.

10:32 AM - the Committee agreed to take a brief recess.

Library - 10:43 AM

Present: Ellen Dolan, Library Director, Clare O'Connor, Jeffrey Billingham, Nancy P. Gilbert, Dean C. Gillam, Elizabeth R. Powers, Deborah Lebeaux, and Priya Rathnam.

Ms. Dolan reviewed of the Library enhanced request as recommended by the Trustees and carefully identified how all budgeted items tie directly to the Library's strategic plan. Ms. Dolan paused to take time to thank all the work from Public Facilities, and especially Ms. Baldino who has retained pristine condition of the building. Ms. Dolan than moved the discussion to the manner by which the Library meets and serves the community through a discussion of Library relevance. Ms. Kane thanked Ms. Dolan for her years of dedicates service which no doubt played a huge factor into the Library's success. Mr. Murray mirrored the sentiment and added that relevance starts with strong and effective leadership.

Mr. Adler requested greater clarity on the pending changes regarding how materials are loanable across libraries. Ms. Dolan commented that the change would include counting museum passes, databases, and licenses as items available for loan of which the Library budgets approximately \$10,000 per year. The local concern is that these materials will be in higher demand.

In closing, Mr. Mizikar commented that the Library is the model to excellence within the Town. The Trustees and staff have been able to develop a strategic plan clearly detailing what the community needs, and how the departments funding would be prioritized to meet those needs. This work makes the Library budget hearings exceedingly meaningful and we intend to model other departments on this approach.

11:08 AM - the Committee agreed to take a brief recess.

Town Counsel - 11:17AM

Present: Stephen Madaus, Town Counsel

Mr. Madaus provided a review of Town Counsel activities and indicated that there has not been much in the sense of litigation this past year. Mr. Madaus commented that the most typical matters pertain to Open Meeting Law, Public Records Law and acquiring land. Prepared in the Town Counsel 2019 annual report is an overview of the matters that were handled in 2019.

Mr. Pitney questioned the time investment on dog hearing. Mr. Madaus commented that most of the time is invested at the hearings themselves. Others at the firm have already prepared advisory

memorandums and if it is a common matter, there is not much time required to get up to speed. Mr. Madaus added that other influences on the legal budget are matters outside of the Town's control and arise from Federal or State agencies.

11:40 AM - Lunch

Public Facilities - 12:46 PM

Present Facilities: Angela Snell, Superintendent Public Facilities, Keith Baldinger Public Facilities Division Manager.

Ms. Snell reviewed the staffing of positions, operations, and charges of the Public Buildings division. Mr. Baldinger expanded on the 09 charges seen in major building repairs, commenting that they are an integral part of the operations for the department. The HVAC systems within the Town's public buildings were identified as a large driver in maintenance for the division.

Ms. Kane took the time to commend Public Facilities on their efforts and the quality of the facilities. Ms. Snell added that she is grateful to work with such excellent staff. Mr. Murray questioned Mr. Baldinger on the rate and amount of building repairs to which Mr. Baldinger indicated that the FY 2021 proposal is inline and steady with previous years. Mr. Mizikar added that with the addition of the new Beal School the total square footage managed by Public Facilities would exceed one million square feet.

Mr. Baldinger then spoke to the success of the Green Communities grant work. As a member of Green Communities, the Town has committed to reduce its utility consumption by 20% over five years. Approximately \$183,000 in funding was received and applied to building upgrades that are anticipated to reduce utility costs by \$50,000 per year.

Parks and Recreation - 1:05 PM

Present: Angela Snell, Superintendent Public Facilities, Kevin Esposito, Parks & Recreation/ Cemetery Division Manager

Ms. Snell reviewed the staffing of positions, operations, charges of the Parks & Recreation Division, and the department request for additional staff. Mr. Murray asked as to whether the new High School turf field has added or reduced maintenance costs for the Town. Mr. Esposito commented that the majority of the maintenance work is related to labor costs, which are higher.

Mr. Chhabra inquired into the increased professional services cost to which Ms. Snell added that the increase is most directly related to the growing mowing costs over time. Ms. Vedder wondered if the department was considering bringing mowing in-house. Ms. Snell commented that the department was not in a position to bring this workload and cost in-house yet.

Cemetery - 1:12 PM

Present: Angela Snell, Superintendent Public Facilities, Kevin Esposito, Parks & Recreation/ Cemetery Division Manager

Ms. Snell reviewed the staffing of positions, operations, and charges of the Cemetery including the department request for additional staff and the increase in mowing costs. Ms. Kane inquired as to how the department will handle mowing contract if additional funding cannot be allocated.

Ms. Snell indicated that the Cemetery Perpetual Care Trust Fund might need to be drawn on for additional support. Mr. Chhabra inquired into the projection of available lots to which Ms. Snell indicated that the Cemetery Department is working on a Master plan for the plot across the street and the space remaining at the current Cemetery.

Public Works Administration - 1:19 PM

Present: Jeff Howland, DPW Director

Mr. Howland provided a brief review into in the creation of the DPW department and the work to date. Mr. Howland indicated that a number of line items throughout the DPW department have been aggregated and will be funded out of the Public Works Administration Department. Additionally, the Town's stormwater expenses will be funded through the Public Works Administration department opposed to Public Facilities.

Mr. Pitney requested that Mr. Howland speak to the challenges and efficiencies with the formation of the department. Mr. Howland commented on the challenges first adding that the DPW is still working on understanding all of the intricacies of each department; however, there is a much more cohesive administrative staff and a centralized customer service.

Ms. Kane inquired into the difference of funding for postage between the departmental request and fiscal projection one. Mr. Howland conveyed initially all DPW costs were aggregated to the Public Works Administration but with further review, it made more sense separate out the enterprises.

Highway – 1:26 PM

Present: Jeff Howland, DPW Director and Nick Repekta Highway Division Manager

Mr. Repekta provided a review of the Highway Division charge, equipment status and staffing levels. Mr. Repekta highlighted the department's difficulty in receiving bids for work previously contracted. This change has led to Highway staff performing work that was previously contracted and increasing the department's scope. Ms. Vedder inquired into the department's exposure to increased costs to which Mr. Howland and Mr. Mizikar commented that the DPW is developing a multi-year strategic plan that will encompass this concern.

Forestry – 1:43 PM

Present: Jeff Howland, DPW Director and Nick Repekta Highway Division Manager

Mr. Repekta provided an overview of the Forestry operations. Ms. Howard inquired into the legal guidelines pertaining fallen Town Trees abutting private property. Mr. Repekta indicated that the practice would be for the Town to cover the costs to clean up the fallen tree.

Weights and Measures – 1:48 PM

Present: Jeff Howland, DPW Director

Mr. Howland reviewed the level Weights and Measures budget. The formal Highway Department Manager Mr. Knipe is the Stipend employee managing the Weights and Measures operations.

Engineering – 1:50 PM

Present: Jeff Howland, DPW Director and Andrew Truman, Town Engineer

Mr. Truman reviewed the department operations and the efforts undertaken in support of other departments. Mr. Truman indicated that the budget was level funded with the exception of the professional services line item. The increase in professional services will provide a significant amount of contracted document scanning to allow for an update to the GIS program.

Stormwater - 1:52 PM

Present: Jeff Howland, DPW Director

Mr. Howland provided a brief review the history and policies leading to the creation of the Stormwater Utility and then discussed the scope of work completed in FY 2020.

Sewer - 2:06 PM

Present: Jeffery Howland, DPW Director, and Daniel Rowley, Water and Sewer Superintendent

Mr. Rowley begin his presentation speaking to efforts underway that would shift operations to a more proactive approach for Water and Sewer and provide the community with as much communication as possible.

Mr. Murray inquired into the costs related to the repair & maintenance, and salt & chemical line items. Mr. Rowley added that the repair and maintenance costs would place the Town in a much better position in the event that components of a sewer pump station failed by stocking necessary replacement parts. Additionally, the changes in the salt and chemicals line item reflects the year of data available with the new water treatment plant.

Mr. Pitney inquired into the possibility of using sodium chloride to treat the water as a more cost effective alternative. Mr. Howland added that any changes to the chemical treatment would require re-testing by the State.

Solid Waste – 2:39 PM

Present: Jeffery Howland, DPW Director

Mr. Howland provided a brief review of the FY 20 Solid Waste rollout and the improvements seen to date. Mr. Pitney inquired into the plan prior to the rate adjustments. Mr. Mizikar commented that any run on the bags will be revealed in an increase in FY 20 revenue and a subsequent decline in FY 21 revenue should match our projections.

There were no further questions.

2:45 PM – On a motion by Ms. Kane and a second by Mr. Pitney, the Committee voted to suspend the public hearing for the day and resume on Saturday, March 7, 2020 at 9AM.

Adjourn

2:45 PM - On a motion by Ms. Kane and a second by Mr. Pitney, the Committee voted 8-0 to adjourn.

Finance Committee - Agenda
February 29, 2020
Page 8 of 8

Respectfully Submitted,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "D. Snowdon". The signature is stylized and cursive.

David C. Snowdon
Assistant to the Town Manager

Referenced Materials

Town Manager FY 2021 Financial Planning – Fiscal Projection 1
Public Hearing Notice