January 25, 2021 Minutes

Town of Sharon Finance Committee Meeting

**Present:** Daniel Lewenberg, Patricia-Lee Achorn, Anja Bernier, William Brack, Arnold Cohen, Brian Collins, Gordon Gladstone, Charles Goodman, Ann Keitner, Ira Miller, Jada Wang.

Also present: Krishan Gupta - Director of Finance, Cheryl Weinstein.

1. **Dan Lewenberg, Chair, Gave Opening Remarks**
   1. This meeting is being held through the Zoom online platform due to the State of Emergency based on the COVID-19 outbreak. Confirmed the meeting was being recorded and broadcast.
2. **FY21 Q2 Year-to-Date Financial Review – Krishan Gupta**
   1. The operating budget is currently on track with no foreseen issues.
      1. Overall operating budgets are at 43% of their appropriations:
         1. Total general fund budget excluding transfers to capital: $90,004,826, with $38,867,407 spent
      2. Overall are at 47% total funding:
         1. Total funding budgeted is $90,264,826, actual is $42, 637,834
         2. Funding sources include taxes, state aid (Cherry St.), MSBA, local receipts, ambulance reserve, free cash, etc.
      3. School department had a large furlough but that did not end up resulting in much savings. Unemployment covers Town and school employees and must be paid out. Unemployment is currently at 193% of budget. Total budgeted for unemployment is $75,000, actual is $144,525
      4. Excess of receipts over expenditures is $3,510,427
      5. At fiscal year end there is not expected to be a significant surplus or deficit for the operating budget.
   2. Balance sheet for the general fund:
      1. Cash: $11,738,510
      2. Property taxes: $42,608,057
      3. Motor vehicle excise: $96,699
      4. Other: $23,450
      5. Total assets: $54,521,395
   3. Total liabilities / deferred revenues, such as payroll-related, taxes, tax foreclosures, etc.:
      1. Total liabilities: $43,268,248
   4. Fund balances:
      1. Restricted: $4,405,508
      2. Unassigned: $6,847,639
         1. Total fund balances: $11,253,147
   5. Free cash is retained earnings or unassigned fund balances less any known obligations, overlay or deficits as of June of this year. Free cash as of June 1 last year was up $300,000 to $5.9M. Do not expect it to increase this year through the end of FY’21
   6. CVRF expenditures through December 2929 (available through 12/30/21):
      1. Spent to date: $1,642,115.38
      2. Sharon’s allocation: $1,670,161
      3. Drawn down: $1,095,571
      4. Currently in the process of drawing this down. Available to draw still: $574,590
      5. There may be costs associated with having a COVID vaccine clinic, but Mr. Gupta believes there may be funding for this. He is meeting tomorrow with the Department of Health.
      6. Jim Wright, Fire Chief, has been working with FEMA. FEMA is saying they will reimburse first responder expenses and Board of Health staff only, not schools, etc. Only a few thousand dollars was eligible for reimbursement. FEMA will soon be getting new directors so this also may change.
      7. It is a lot of work for the Town to request these monies and reimbursements. Hopefully these funds will come through but that may take months or years.
      8. Schools are looking into their own budgets to see what they can absorb, such as COVID cleaning costs.
      9. Tracking areas of concern, and have a total potential shortfall of $1,026,312:
         1. ZBA - $6,000
         2. Board of Health - $20,000
         3. CARES Act / COVID – TBD
         4. Schools revolving funds - $700,000, may have a deficit
         5. Schools COVID response - $200,000
         6. DPW snow and ice – TBD. The Committee stated it would be helpful to track this number throughout the winter. Unable to come up with an average cost per snow storm because of variables such as wind, ice, snowfall, etc.
         7. Unemployment - $100,000
         8. Lake management - $312
      10. $500,000 is available in the Reserve Fund if there are closing deficits at the end of the fiscal year
      11. Department of Public Works is budgeted to spend $3,938,997, actual currently is $1,697,954 or 43%
      12. Internal review complete for Fitch ratings, and there are no changes to the Town’s AA rating this year.
3. **Review, Discuss and Assign 2021 All Town Meeting Articles – Fred Turkington**
   1. Article A does not need to be written up
   2. Patricia-Lee Achorn – B, C, G-N (pro-forma articles)
   3. Ann Keitner – D (personnel bylaw), P (change name of Board of Selectmen to Select Board)
   4. Dan Lewenberg – E (Budget)
   5. Anja Bernier – F (Capital Outlay)
   6. William Brack – O. This relates to the Massapoag water tank projecton Briar Hill Rd. Currently a survey is being put together and an appraisal is being done as part of a conveyance of Town owned land at 18 Briar Hill Rd to an abutter.
   7. Ira Miller – Q, R. Article Q relates to the zoning at 1 School St and is a potential resolution to the current dispute over the new library project. For article R, funds for the acquisition of an abutting property on North Main Street may come from the CPC under affordable housing or from free cash. More details will be available to the public soon.
   8. Gordon Gladstone – S. Article S relates to a septic management program. Homeowners having difficulty paying for septic systems can apply for a loan and the monies come from a state program, which is then managed and distributed by the Town. Legally towns cannot make contributions to individuals per the state’s constitution, so these septic loans must be made through a program.
   9. Arnold Cohen – T (Increase number of Select Board members from 3 to 5).
4. **Liaison updates:**
   1. Schools - Bill Brack/Ann Keitner
      1. Budgets are currently being discussed. Mrs. Keitner has been appointed to the superintendent search committee and can relay any concerns the Finance Committee has to that committee
      2. Pool testing for COVID at schools has been negative so far
      3. $170,000 bequest to the schools: School Committee has approved up to $10,000 be spent on 3 beneficiaries to dissolve the trust and turn over the monies to schools to fund scholarships.
   2. Library – Charles Goodman
      1. No other updates.
   3. Planning Board – Arnold Cohen
      1. Mr. Cohen spoke to the chair of the Planning Board. Recommendation of the Master Plan is that the Town hire a planning director, and they are looking at moving forward on this. Typically the Town has the Town engineer do this work, so adding this position would be an added expense.
   4. Standing Building Committee - Gordon Gladstone
      1. Foundations are being poured and steel is going in in February. There is good information for the public regarding this project on the Town’s website.
   5. Community Preservation Committee - Patricia-Lee Achorn
      1. No updates as this committee has not met yet.
5. **Minutes to be voted: Executive Session minutes for November 16, 2020**

**Motioned:** by Patricia-Lee Achorn to approve the executive session minutes as written for November 16, 2020 **Seconded:** Ann Keitner **Voted:** 7-0-4. William Brack, Gordon Gladstone, Jada Wang and Brian Collins abstained.

**Minutes to be voted: December 22, 2020**

**Motioned:** by Anja Bernier to approve the meeting minutes as written **Seconded:** Patricia-Lee Achorn **Voted:** 6-0-5. William Brack, Gordon Gladstone, Arnold Cohen, Jada Wang and Brian Collins abstained.

1. **Topics not reasonably anticipated by the Chair in 48 hours**
   1. None.
2. **Adjournment:**

The meeting was adjourned through unanimous consent at 9:25 pm.