

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

**Not Present:** William Brack

**Also Present:** Krishan Gupta, Finance Director; Cheryl Weinstein, Library Trustees Chair

**1. Dan Lewenberg, Chair, gave opening remarks:**

This meeting is being held via remote means through the Zoom online platform pursuant to Chapter 20 of the Acts of 2021.

**2. Library Trustees Update: Recent Appeals of Remanded ZBA Library Decision and Potential Reserve Fund Request for Legal Expenses – Cheryl Weinstein, Library Trustees Chair:**

- a. There have been two appeals filed and the project is currently on hold pending the outcome of those appeals. It is not the ZBA's responsibility to pay for appeals, it will potentially be the Trustees who will pay for the appeals. Currently the Trustees only have \$1,000 in their legal fees account. Ms. Weinstein talked to Gordon Gladstone and decided to come to the Finance Committee to potentially ask for a reserve fund transfer. Anticipated costs are no more than \$25,000
- b. Committee discussed that reserve fund transfers typically happen near the end of the fiscal year as part of the year-end reconciliation process. Committee members stated they appreciated Ms. Weinstein approaching them early as it gives them a heads up for their planning process, and that she should approach them again with the request at the end of the fiscal year.
- c. It was also noted that this expense may appropriately be considered a project expense that would be paid for using funds raised specifically for the library project and a reserve fund transfer may not be needed.

**3. Brief Preliminary Priorities Process Update and Discussion on Issues Impacting the FY23 Budget Process – Fred Turkington, Town Administrator & Krishan Gupta, Finance Director**

- a. 2.713% is the preliminary number for setting budgets for each of the three sectors
- b. There are three types of revenue – state aid, local receipts and property taxes
- c. Possibility that the Town will need to borrow another \$20 million for the high school project, but are unsure if they will need that at this point
- d. Levy base for FY23: \$73,736,939
  - a. Levy base increase for FY 23-22: \$2,851,999
- e. Available for appropriation at Town Meeting for FY23 would be: \$98,077,204
- f. The Town expects a 2.22% increase in healthcare costs this fiscal year
- g. Expect the OPEB contribution to be \$500,000
  - a. FY22 OPEB contribution was: \$400,000
- h. Total funds available for allocation to operating budget sectors: \$65,478,934
- i. Fixed costs total: \$32,598,270
- j. Total local sources: \$5,246,700, an increase of 2.44% over FY22
- k. Excess levy capacity is part of reserves, and the Town has almost \$6 million in free cash
- l. Discussed that this fiscal year will be tough financially for the schools
- m. Debt service on the High School and Library debt in FY23: \$6.3 million, up \$2.5 million over last year. Project that by 2025 or 2026 this number will start tapering off

- n. Currently paying approximately \$4.6 million yearly into the Norfolk County Retirement system. By 2030 or 2032 this should be back to a normal annual rate of \$1 million
- o. Committee members discussed that because the Town is self-insured it may be a financial issue to cover medical expenses for unvaccinated employees. Acknowledged this is a complex issue that would involve the Town Administrator, unions, etc.

**4. Liaison updates:**

- a. Schools: Ann Keitner
  - a. Notice was received from the School Committee that Dr. Greer's legal case has been settled and they expect a credit to reimburse legal costs from insurance.
  - b. School Committee Chair Tanya Lewis indicated that she would like to give a legal update to the Finance Committee in an executive session at the January 24<sup>th</sup> meeting.
- b. Standing Building Committee: Gordon Galdstone
  - a. High school project is moving along according to schedule
  - b. This past week Community Television did a walk through of the building that will be airing. Urged community members to view it on channel 22 when it airs
  - c. Still on schedule to finish on time in June and within budget.
- c. Library: Gordon Gladstone
  - a. In the midst of delays in the library project, the operating project manager (OPM), Design Technique, has decided to close his business in August of 2022 with no plan of succession. The OPM was originally chosen through ranking. Daedalus Projects was ranked second, and they had previously done the town hall, high school, and public safety building. They have since been sold to CHA, but continue as an operating Boston office. Design Technique had gotten in touch with the AG and Standing Building Committee could enter into a contract with Daedalus/CHA without having to go through an RFQ / RFP process. Had entered into discussions about this before appeals were filed. Now that they have been filed the Town is unsure of what the timeline would be for this. Currently in a holding pattern and don't know when to anticipate that building will start.
- d. Planning Board: Arnie Cohen
  - a. No update.
- e. CPC: Pat Achorn
  - a. No update. Mr. Gupta expressed concern that the CPC has not met yet given that the budget process has started.

**5. Topics not reasonably anticipated by the Chair in 48 hours: None.**

**6. Adjournment:**

**Motioned:** by Patricia-Lee Achorn, **Seconded:** Anja Bernier to adjourn. **Voted:** 9-0-0.  
Meeting adjourned at 8:32 pm.