



Town of Harvard
Finance Committee
Minutes for January 8, 2020

Location: Upper Town Hall Meeting Room - 13 Ayer Rd

Present: Don Ludwig (chair), John Seeley, Jennifer Finch, Siko Sikochi, Ray Marchica

Absent: Richard Fellows, Mark Buell

Others: Tim Bragan - Town Administrator, Lori Bolasevich - Finance Director

Don Ludwig (chair) called the meeting to order at 7:01pm

Minutes:

No minutes presented for approval, Jennifer to follow up, not yet approved:

Dec 4, 2019

Dec 18, 2019

Jan 4, 2020

Public Commentary: None

Town Administrator's report: Tim Bragan reports:

At the state level, the Governor's budget is expected in about 2 weeks.

Document 4: School dept budget questions.

Possible additional questions:

- Should the business manager's workload decrease after the new school project is completed, will his hours decrease as well? Should it be a stipend instead of increase in salary?
- How are we paying for the preschool teacher this year since they have already been hired and have started, but were not in the FY20 budget?

State representative Jen Benson is resigning triggering a special election on March 3rd, the same day as the State primary. There will be two ballots that day. Additional expenses expected in the \$6-7k range.

DPW snow and ice is now in deficit, approved deficit spending already

Looked into getting a generator for Town Hall, Tim K came back with a quote of \$50+, opting for rental should we need one.

Liaison Reports: John Seeley updated the committee on Capital Planning and Investment Committee's (CPIC) recommendations.

Document 5: CPIC's FY21 project ratings, presented here in ranked order:

- Police - Hybrid cruiser \$45,950.
- Schools - Ramp \$230,000 funded through CSIF, see other ramp item below.
- Fire - Fire ponds, rated high, chief has \$70k in his budget. May need to extend sunset date. Decision was delayed for more information.
- Schools - Ramp part 2: \$660,000 debt funding recommended.
 - Public restrooms, stairs, outdoor classroom, landscaped, storage. Original request was 1.1M, approved is \$990k - stairs yes, no outdoor classroom or landscaping. This is not finalized yet.
- DPW - roads funding, Chap 90 funds insufficient. \$225,000.
- DPW - Ayer Rd - on top of the \$300k last year, \$75,000.
- DPW - Light Duty truck \$79,000, replacing a 2010 truck.
- DPW - New tractor - sidewalk snowplowing and P&R \$49,000.
- Fire - Hook truck - did not approve, asked to push back at least a year. \$250,000.
- War monument - nice plan, 50% grant funding. May get ½ of \$32k back.
- DPW equipment - take it off the list of warrants and add into budget. Technically isn't capital since it's not used for one big item.
 - John moved that we move DPW small equipment \$40k into the DPW operating budget. Jennifer seconded. Unanimous (5:0).
- Planning Board - Ayer Road Market Study \$37,000.
- DPW - DPW Building design study \$40,000.
- School - Cronin Auditorium, this will finish the 3 year project. Replacing some seats, updating projection. \$50,000.
- Hapgood (old library) roof - voted 3:2 against. SelectBoard still supports. Asked for an objective review of the building. There are still other repairs that are needed. \$921,360.
 - SB may still put forward as a warrant article.
- School - Locker room study - recommended a study to use the space best. \$20,000.
- School - Air conditioning for south facing section of TBS, air circulation units were installed and AC was planned. \$150,000.
- COA - Hildreth House phase 2: voted 3:2 for. \$4.3M debt funding recommended.
 - \$500k for connector, plus \$70k for HH sprinklers.
 - Sending to CPIC Feb 10th meeting, \$4.3 and walkway may be separate warrant articles.

Additionally:

- \$300k from CSIF to pay down new school debt. Alice recalculated. Back when the vote was taken, the average median household would have 13% increase, but because of rates we went

down to 11% and use of \$600k (\$300k from CSIF and \$300k from Devens Fund) to pay down the payment, the increase drops to 8%.

- Current CSIF balance is \$4.3M, if everything is approved that would leave \$2.9M before any new certified free cash.
- The Permanent Building Committee (PBC) weighed in on Hapgood - yes, they did a study. Found other problems. Lots from clogged gutters. Doesn't address wood front, or windows. \$480k already approved, this is in additional \$921,360. Grant is being applied for, but may not be realized if the town doesn't approve.

Other business:

Document 1: Lori presented a draft debt policy for review.

Discuss on Jan 22nd meeting.

Document 2: Email from Hilltop Securities, including debt policy examples from Needham, Natick, Westford, and Wellesley, and DOR-DLS FY17-FY25 debt analysis and projection.

Email from Hilltop Securities states that since the debt service is already greater, they recommend a range 10-12% with the goal to lower below 10%. The example towns all have AAA ratings from S&P. Department of Revenue - Division of Local Services (DOR-DLS) FY17-FY25 debt analysis and projection.

Offsets should have been included in our omnibus budget. They will be from now on.

Board of Health (BOH) members Libby Levison and Tom Philippou were invited to discuss their budget.

- BOH wants to hire an enforcement and education officer for waste. This position would be (hopefully) shared across 3 towns. Our cost with all 3 towns would be approximately \$1250. Have not heard yet from Lunenburg and Townsend if they will join.
- All Recycling Dividends Program (RDP) funds go to DPW. Other towns handle this differently.
- Town wide mailing - was \$800 on a tiny postcard using bulk pricing. Missed sending out with the census this year.
- Nashoba Associated Board of Health said to anticipate a 5% increase. Will find out for sure at the end of Jan/Early Feb.

Fire Department Chief Rick Sicard was invited to discuss his budget.

- The FF/EMT has been working a ton, off the charts, technical stuff, calls to the state, building project. Position is already filled so it is not eligible for a grant. Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response (SAFER) is for staffing, Student Awareness of Fire Education (SAFE) is for student fire fighting. SAFER is to help meet standards, which is 4 FFs within 8 minutes to a location, and we are still not meeting that standard. Chief says he will look up how close we are to meeting the standard.

- Regarding DPW mechanic concerns, the Chief reports that it seems like they just don't have the time. Nothing had been done over the summer. Tower truck was out for 16 days for outside repairs/maintenance. The first year worked out great.
- Fire ponds report - Chief has been calling and calling. They have all been evaluated, just waiting on the report. There are 20 fireponds and the first contractor did not do the right assessment.

Document 3: Answers to budget questions from departments received to date.

Document 6: Median Taxpayer Debt Bill estimate through FY26.

- If everything on this list is approved we would stay under 12% debt ceiling.
 - Hapgood roof and gutters \$1.26M
 - School Ramp \$660k
 - HH phase 2 \$4.3M
 - Tower Truck \$1.55M
 - DPW Building \$2.5M
 - Fire Engine 1 \$600k

Document 7: 5-year CPIC plan by department.

Tim suggests pushing up the SCBA for the fire dept, currently at FY23.

Future agenda items:

Meeting with Agricultural Commission and Land Use on Jan 15th.

Meeting with P&R and DPW on Jan 22nd.

Answers from School Dept expected Jan 22nd.

Discuss debt policy on Jan 22nd.

Meeting with School dept on Jan 29th.

Adjournment:

Meeting adjourned at 9:23pm

Supporting documents (7 Total):

1. Draft Debt Policy from Lori Bolasevich.
2. Email from Hilltop Securities, including debt policy examples from Needham, Natick, Westford, and Wellesley, and DOR-DLS FY17-FY25 debt analysis and projection.
3. Answers to budget questions from departments received to date.
4. School dept budget questions.
5. CPIC FY21 project ratings.
6. Median Taxpayer Debt Bill estimate through FY26.
7. 5-year CPIC plan by department.

Upcoming meetings:

Jan 15, 2020 7pm Upper Town Hall Meeting Room

Jan 22, 2020 7pm Upper Town Hall Meeting Room
Jan 29, 2020 7pm Upper Town Hall Meeting Room

Respectfully submitted,
Jennifer Finch