

BUDGET ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING

APPROVED

Wednesday April 3, 2019 – 6:00 PM – Richmond Town Hall, 1529 State Road

PRESENT: Mr. Bob Gniadek, Chair of the Finance Cte.; Ms. Pat Callahan, Finance Cte.; Mr. John Mason, Finance Cte.; Mr. Bob Youdelman, Finance Cte.; Mr. Steve Patterson, Finance Cte.; Mr. Neal Pilson, Chair of the Board of Selectmen; Mr. Roger Manzolini, Selectman; Mr. Alan Hanson, Selectman;

ABSENT:

STAFF: Mr. Mark Pruhenski, Richmond Town Administrator; Mr. Paul Lisi, Richmond Treasurer; Mr. Steve Traver, Richmond Fire Chief; Mr. Peter Beckwith, Richmond Highway Superintendent; Mr. Brian Schultz, Richmond Ambulance

The meeting was called to order at 6:00 PM.

Ambulance Budget and Capital Requests: Mr. Paul Lisi distributed updated sheets for the Budget. The discussion began with Tab 4 – Articles – specifically the Ambulance Replacement line, which has been reduced by \$35,000 and is funded from two sources, partially from the Ambulance account and partially from Stabilization. Part of the reduction is a result of switching from a regular drive diesel to a four-wheel drive regular gas-driven vehicle. A possible trade-in of the old ambulance would further reduce the cost of the new ambulance.

There was a conversation about the impact of this kind of expense on the tax that determined that, since the funding is already in Stabilization, there should be no impact on the tax rate for 2020.

Fire Department Budget and Capital Requests: On Tab 4- Articles. Fire Chief Steve Traver and Mr. Peter Beckwith, Highway Superintendent were at the meeting to answer questions about the capital requests for their departments. The Fire Department is requesting \$5,000 for personal face masks for each firefighter, which is an OSHA requirement, and a \$25,000 request to either purchase or build a shed at the Richmond Pond to house the new rescue boat. A discussion of the priority for the boat shed resulted in leaving the item in Capital Requests for the time being.

Highway Department Budget and Capital Requests: In Tab 5 – Capital Requests. Mr. Peter Beckwith was available to answer questions about the capital requests for the Highway.

Priority one is the Engineering Services for Repair to Highway Garage. Mr. Beckwith reported that the building is deteriorating to the point where daylight is visible through one of the walls in the heated section of the garage. Mr. Beckwith said that he contacted the two companies recommended to him at the last meeting and discovered that neither one of them replace cinder blocks in cinder block buildings. He was referred to two other companies, one of which

looked at the building and said he would get back to Mr. Beckwith but never did. Mr. Beckwith spoke with Mr. Paul Green, the Building Inspector, who advised him that if he was just replacing the cement blocks, he would not need an engineer or an architect stamp. A discussion resulted in the consensus to approve the initial \$18,000 to get the repairs started. It was acknowledged that it will likely be necessary, once the true cost of the whole repair is known, to call a Special Town Meeting to appropriate the additional monies needed to complete the job. In the Capital Request Section – Tab 5, “Engineering Services for Repair to Highway Garage “will be replaced by “Commence Engineering Services and/or Repair to Building”

Priority two is a lawn mower and trailer. Currently, there is a lawn mower being stored at the school, but there is no trailer big enough to move it. If the Town purchases a new lawn mower to supplement the one that is twenty years old, a trailer would be purchased that can accommodate both mowers.

Priority three is Richmond’s share of the cost of a mini-excavator to be shared with West Stockbridge. Mr. Beckwith reported that he has heard that West Stockbridge has support for their share of the mini-excavator, which will be presented at their Town Meeting.

Tab 4 – Articles: Mr. Pruhenski pointed out the two articles that are highlighted and noted that he has received an updated Capital Request for the Heating Controls at the School from Sharon Harrison who advised that the total cost of the project will be \$92,000 and not the anticipated \$60,000. She suggested that the project be done in two phases: \$60,000 for FY’20 and the balance in FY’2021.

Mr. Pruhenski noted that since the Ambulance Replacement cost came down \$35,000, that \$35,000 could be put towards the school heating project so that it can be done as a one-time request, which will likely make it possible to get a better price by paying it at one time. There was a conversation about the request and the various aspects of how to proceed.

Minutes of the March 20, 2019 Meeting: Several questions about the wealth of detail in the minutes resulted in the decision to ask the transcriber to eliminate detail and keep the minutes to Agenda Items and Actions.

There was a request for receipt of the various census reports that were mentioned at the March 20th meeting. Mr. Pruhenski will request that information from Ms. Harrison and forward it.

Mr. Pruhenski will ask the transcriber to redo the Minutes of March 20th so that comments and conversation details can be removed.

Updates and Handouts/Q&A: Updates and handouts were distributed at the beginning of the meeting. There being no Q & A, the meeting moved to discussion.

Mr. Gniadek reiterated his concern about the amount of tax increase inherent in this budget. There was a discussion of possible uses of the funds available in the Stabilization and Free Cash balances in order to reduce the tax increase to 2.9%.

At the close of discussion, it was decided to go back through the Articles line-by-line and approve the dollar amount and the funding source for each.

The source for the following items will now be Free Cash:

Reserve Fund - \$20,000

Conservation Land Fund - \$9,500

Food & Fuel Emergency Assistance – \$5,000

Cemetery Tree Removal / Stone Repair - \$5,000

Richmond Pond Weed Treatment - \$15,000

School Heating Control - \$60,000

That gets the tax rate to 2.9% and leaves \$56,672 in Free Cash

The Finance Committee then voted on each Article:

\$20,000 for the Reserve Fund coming from Free Cash. A motion to accept the Article was made and seconded. The motion was approved by unanimous vote.

School Budget - \$3,499,554 – funded from Raise and Appropriate. A motion to accept the Article was made and seconded. The motion was approved by unanimous vote.

Article by Petition – Sewer Enterprise - \$9,600 from Free Cash. Mr. Bob Gniadek presented an analysis of the debt which generated a discussion concerning the uncertainty of the correct amount needed for debt service and the actual number of years that additional funds may be needed to satisfy the debt, as well as other considerations needing to be addressed. A motion was made to recommend the \$9,600 Article for approval. The motion was seconded and approved by unanimous vote.

Conservation Land Fund - \$9,500 from Free Cash. A motion to accept the Article was made and seconded. The motion was approved by unanimous vote.

Town Hall Repairs - \$25,000 from Free Cash. A motion to accept the Article was made and seconded. The motion was approved by unanimous vote.

Town Hall Copier - \$10,000 from Free Cash. A motion to accept the Article was made and seconded. The motion was approved by unanimous vote.

Town Clerk Elections/Voting Equipment - \$5,700 from Free Cash. A motion to accept the Article was made and seconded. The motion was approved by unanimous vote.

Food and Fuel Emergency Assistance - \$5,000 from Free Cash. A motion to accept the Article was made and seconded. The motion was approved by unanimous vote.

School Bond - \$146,200 from Raise and Appropriate. A motion to accept the Article was made and seconded. The motion was approved by unanimous vote.

Sewer Enterprise - \$225,000 from the Sewer Enterprise Fund. A motion to accept the Article was made and seconded. The motion was approved by unanimous vote.

Ambulance Expense Account - \$50,000 from Ambulance Receipts Reserve for Appropriation. A motion to accept the Article was made and seconded. The motion was approved by unanimous vote.

Ambulance Replacement - \$240,000 from two separate funding sources: \$181,500 from Ambulance Receipts Reserve for Appropriation. \$58,500 from Stabilization. A motion to accept the Article was made and seconded. The motion was approved by unanimous vote.

Ambulance Stretcher - \$15,000 from Free Cash with the understanding that if the Article above passes, this money will close back to Free Cash. A motion to accept the Article was made and seconded. The motion was approved by unanimous vote.

Fire Department SCVA Masks - \$5,000 from Free Cash. This is an OSHA requirement. A motion to accept the Article was made and seconded. The motion was approved by unanimous vote.

Fire Department Shed at Richmond Pond to House the Rescue Boat - \$25,000 from Free Cash. A motion to accept the Article was made and seconded. The motion was approved by unanimous vote.

Cemetery Tree Removal and Stone Repair - \$5,000 from Free Cash. A motion to accept the Article was made and seconded. The motion was approved by unanimous vote.

Richmond Pond Weed Treatment - \$15,000 from Free Cash. A motion to accept the Article was made and seconded. The motion was approved by unanimous vote.

Richmond Pond Goose Management - \$1,250 from Free Cash. A motion to accept the Article was made and seconded. The motion was approved by unanimous vote.

Highway Department Mini-Excavator - \$28,000 from Free Cash. A motion to accept the Article was made and seconded. The motion was approved by unanimous vote.

Highway Department Lawn Mower and Trailer - \$11,000 from Free Cash. A motion to accept the Article was made and seconded. The motion was approved by unanimous vote.

Engineering Services and/or Repairs for the Town Garage - \$18,000 from Free Cash. A motion to accept the Article was made and seconded. The motion was approved by unanimous vote.

School Heating Controls - \$92,100 from two funding sources: \$60,000 from Free Cash. \$32,100 from Stabilization. A motion to accept the Article was made and seconded. The motion was approved by unanimous vote.

Other Post-Employment Benefit Trust Fund Contribution - \$100,000 from Free Cash. A motion to accept the Article was made and seconded. The motion was approved by unanimous vote.

Prior Fiscal Year Bills - \$621 coming from Free Cash. A motion to accept the Article was made and seconded. The motion was approved by unanimous vote.

General Fund Budget: Total expenditures of General Government, Protection, Health, Highways and Unclassified totaling \$2,327.752. A motion to accept the Article was made and seconded. The motion was approved by unanimous vote.

There being no further business before the Committee, a move to adjourn the meeting was made and seconded and approved by unanimous vote.