

Town of Hubbardston

Finance Committee – Remote Meeting Minutes March 2, 2021

Remote meeting called to order: 6:32 PM via Zoom

Members present remotely: Joshua Lerner, Susan Rayne, Charles Reed, Peter Russell, Maria Tourigny

Other remote attendees: Ryan McLane, Town Administrator

Mr. McLane facilitated the remote meeting via Zoom and introduced the meeting as being conducted remotely consistent with Governor Baker's Executive Order of March 12, 2020, due to the current State of Emergency in the Commonwealth due to the outbreak of the "COVID-19 Virus."

1) *Review and approval of minutes: 6/15/20, 7/13/20, 9/9/20, 1/19/21.* Upon motion made by Mr. Russell and seconded by Mr. Reed it was unanimously by roll call vote

VOTED: To approve as submitted the minutes of the meetings of the Committee dated June 15, 2020, July 13, 2020, September 9, 2020, and January 19, 2021.

2) *Town Administrator Report:*

a) *FY2022 Budget* – Mr. McLane presented the proposed operating and capital budgets for the Town's FY2022 fiscal year as submitted on March 1, 2021 to the Selectboard. The operating budget of 9,636,328 represents a 2.54% increase over the FY2021 operating budget and recommends a 3.39% increase in the QRSD School Assessment line item; however, after conversation with QRSD administration representatives, Mr. McLane learned that the initial estimates for the increase in the Town's assessment, based on the proposed FY2022 budget presented to the Budget Subcommittee of the QRSD School Committee on or about February 4, 2021, is 7.96%. The proposed QRSD FY2022 operating budget represents a 6.2% increase over that of FY2021.

Mr. McLane also reviewed the proposed FY2022 capital budget of \$193,000, an increase over the CIPC recommendation due to requests by the Center School for elevator repair and a new cabinet for cafeteria equipment.

Mr. McLane noted that the warrant for the June 2021 Annual Town Meeting is now open.

b) *Performance to FY2021 budget* – Mr. McLane noted that some transfers requiring Committee approval pertaining to personnel and tax title expenditures would be forthcoming, and that the Town was more or less on target in terms of revenue collection for FY2021.

c) *Other operational and capital budget, revenue, and expenses matters* – The Committee discussed with Mr. McLane the five year operating budget projections contained in his presentation and the impact that collection of a 3% impact fee from marijuana establishments in the Town could offer significant relief, but that after a five year period the Town would be required to demonstrate that these establishments continued to 'adversely impact' the Town to continue collection of this fee. For that reason, Mr. McLane suggested that those fees might be best put to use for a capital project such as the projected purchase of a new ambulance or fire truck.

Mr. McLane also noted that the repair of the Center School roof would necessitate Town borrowing, which could affect the Town's tax rate going forward.

Finally, Mr. McLane noted that the CIPC had been tasked with determining a cost to construct a new public safety building and would make a presentation proposing its construction at the June 2021 Annual Town Meeting.

- 3) *Other/new business* – Mr. McLane announced that he was being deployed by the National Guard beginning March 5, 2021 for a one year period, and that the Selectboard had voted to hire David Nixon, formerly Town Administrator of Hadley, as Interim Town Administrator during his deployment. The Committee wished Mr. McLane well, thanks him for his service, and looks forward to his safe return. Ms. Rayne stated that she would reach out to Mr. Nixon next week and begin scheduling meetings to continue the Committee's budget and warrant review in line with the public hearing scheduled for April 26, 2021.
- 4) *Adjournment*. Upon motion duly made by Mr. Reed and seconded by Ms. Tourigny, it was unanimously by roll call vote

VOTED: To adjourn.

Adjourned at 7:23 P.M.

Minutes submitted by:
Minutes approved by:

Susan Rayne, Clerk *Pro Tem*
Susan Rayne, Chair



Susan Rayne

Date: June 7, 2021