

Town of Sterling
Joint Finance & Capital Budget Committee Meeting Minutes
March 25, 2021
Zoom

Finance Committee and CBC meeting called to order by Todd Chapman at 6:06 PM

Fin Com Attendees: Todd Chapman, George Handy, Chris Paquette, Ezequiel Ayala, Mary Cliett

CBC Attendees: Todd Chapman, Ezequiel Ayala, Lynne Sheppard, Bob Brown, Mary Cliett

Also Attending Remotely: Fred Aponte, Town Accountant and Kellie Hebert, Town Administrator
Arden Sonnenberg, Selectboard, Valerie Handy, Recording Secretary for Fincom and CBC

Approval of Finance Committee and Capital Budget Committee Minutes:

A motion to approve February 25, 2021 CBC minutes was made by Bob Brown and seconded by Ezequiel Ayala. Roll call vote unanimous. A motion to approve March 11, 2021 FinCom minutes was made by Chris Paquette and seconded by George Handy. Roll call vote unanimous. A motion to approve joint Fincom and CBC March 13, 2021 minutes was made by Bob Brown and seconded by Lynne Sheppard. Roll call vote unanimously supported.

FY22 Budget Hearing Review and Discussion:

The Committee ran through the operating budget to identify items needing further discussion:

Agriculture – no outstanding questions

Animal Control – 2% increase - no outstanding questions

Assessor – 1.95% increase - no outstanding questions

Audit – no outstanding questions

Board of Health – 1.82% increase -no outstanding questions

Conservation – 1.63% increase (\$33K) - no outstanding questions

Council of Aging – 5.4% increase (\$258K) - no outstanding questions

Cultural Council – no material change - no outstanding questions

Department of Public Works – 3.39% increase - no outstanding questions

Facilities - \$33K to \$58 K increase in Facilities Wages + Salary lines from fy20 to fy21, due to hiring of a Facilities Manager in fy21. 2.7% total department increase requested (to \$159K requested for fy22)

Finance Board – no change - no outstanding questions

Fire & EMT – 12.56% increase to \$1.16 M for FY22. This includes a new firefighter, and additional personnel costs. Fire wages in FY20 were \$571,490 (actual); FY21 were \$691,000 (budgeted) and FY22 \$797,087. The represents a 39.5% increase in over three years. Finance Committee will review the detail further.

Ambulance wages showed an increase of \$4.92%. In FY20 they were \$300K (actual), FY21 \$441K (budgeted) and FY22 \$464K.

Legal Services - \$62K of which \$6,100 has been used. Fred Aponte will gather more information on this.

Library - - no outstanding questions

Memorial Day/Veteran’s Day – unchanged- no outstanding questions

Moderator - \$625.00 request - no outstanding questions

Open Space – unchanged - no outstanding questions

Planning Board - \$2.83% increase at \$27K. Committee is interested in discussing the Town Plan further at a future meeting.

Police – 3.01% increase at \$1.72M. Police dispatch 6.82% increase at \$411K. 20% increase due to new console and radio

Recreation – 6.46% increase; \$140K budget request; \$64k placeholder for salary of pending new hire for director position.

Select Board – no outstanding questions

Town Administrator – 3.49% increase for \$390K FY22 no outstanding questions.

Town Clerk – 3.11% decrease due to election wages and expense will be reduced in fy22 due to fewer elections, town clerk wages line to be revised if needed.

Treasurer –no outstanding questions

Veteran’s 20% decrease–no outstanding questions

Zoning Board of Appeals – –no outstanding questions

Capital Items

Kellie Hebert is drafting a funding plan and will present at next meeting

The committee referenced the 5 Year Capital Plan Handout for the following items:

Facilities: Unused Butterick Oil tank will cost \$20K to remove, Butterick roof \$90k placeholder amount, quotes being obtained, \$81k remains from prior authorized funds.

Library – of \$50K previously authorized; \$29.5K spent on architects to develop solution for elevator and inclusive access. \$300K placeholder for actual construction of elevator and access. Capital committee is requesting the request wording be changed. It should be more accurate and representative of the project scope to resolve ADA related access issues.

Council of Aging- The committee questioned whether this should be considered a capital item due to the small amount.

1835 - \$67.8K

Historical Commission - \$8K to repair headstones; \$30K for school building currently being used as the Historical Commission office

Playground - \$130K. The Finance committee has already approved this item. Need to validate if this quote is still accurate.

Outstanding Issues for Operating Budget and Capital Requests

Omnibus Budget Outstanding Issues

1. Question: Ambulance Wages: Finance Committee request further detail on the fy20 to fy22 growth in the Ambulance Wages line.
2. Question: Confirm that a warrant article is not required to create a new FTE firefighter position.

Capital Items Outstanding Issues

1. Question: Update of Butterick roof repair cost.

Answer: Contractor was scheduled to look at on 3/26/21. There is \$81K remaining from prior funding.

2. Question: Can we get a list of vehicles owned by the town

Capital Items Outstanding Issues cont.

3. Question: DPW equipment: more information on the items requested by DPW needed; also do they have the staffing to operate the equipment?

4. Question: DPW storage building: need more info on proposed uses and updated cost (\$125K from several years ago)

5. Question: History of Capital Fund balances and expenditures.

Answer: Bob Brown and Todd Chapman are working on this.

6. Question: Depreciation value for town capital stock, our financial policies reference this for target value of Capital Fund.

Answer: Fred Aponte is working on this.

Kellie Hebert gave an overview of the process leading up the Town Meeting vote. . At Town Meeting the Department heads would be available to answer questions specific to their departments. The Finance Committee and Capital committee's role is to make recommendations on the request. Their recommendations go to the Select Board. Kellie Hebert will work in conjunction with Select Board, Finance Committee, Town Moderator, and others, to communicate request details to town residents prior to town meeting.

Next Financial Committee Meeting Date: April 1, 2021 6:00PM

Next Joint FinCom and CBC Meeting Date: April 8, 2021 6:00PM -- Tentative

Adjourn Finance Committee Meeting: George Handy moved to adjourn and Chris Paquette seconded. Roll call unanimously supported. Meeting adjourned at 8:13pm.

Adjourn CBC Meeting: Lynne Sheppard moved to adjourn and Bob Brown seconded the motion. Roll call unanimously supported. Meeting adjourned at 8:14pm.