

Town of Adams Massachusetts 01220-2087

FINANCE COMMITTEE

TOWN HALL BUILDING
8 PARK STREET
ADAMS, MASS.
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Thursday, May 14, 2020 at 5:30 p.m.

Meeting Minutes

CALL TO ORDER: On the above date the Board of Selectmen and Finance Committee held a meeting on the first floor of Adams Town Hall. It was announced that Board of Selectmen Vice Chairman Bush, Members Nowak, Blanchard and Duval, Finance Committee Vice Chairman Cowie and Members Butler, Corrigan, Cushenette, Foster, Johnson, Kline, Kupiec, Meczywor, and Tomkowicz were attending the meeting remotely for COVID-19 emergency purposes under 9410 CMR 29.10(5). The meeting was called to order at 5:30 p.m. by Board of Selectmen Chairman Hoyt and Finance Committee Chairman Burdick. Present were Town Administrator Green, Library Director Jayko, Emergency Management Director Kleiner, Building Commissioner Garner, Community Development Director Cesan, and Police Chief Tarsa.

Call In Connection:

Video: <https://zoom.us/j/91902905133?pwd=Ni81VmRVbmhVQTZuMHU2SjB6MDI2UT09>,

Meeting ID: 919-0290-5133, *Password:* TOAFY21

Phone: 1-929-436-2866, *Meeting ID:* 919-0290-5133, *Password:* 740823

Chairman Hoyt advised that "pursuant to Governor Baker's March 12, 2020 *Order Suspending Certain Provisions of the Open Meeting Law, G.L. c. 30A, §18*, and the Governor's March 15, 2020 Order imposing strict limitations on the number of people that may gather in one place, this meeting of the Town of Adams Board of Selectmen is being conducted via remote participation. No in-person attendance of members of the public will be permitted, but every effort will be made to ensure that the public can adequately access the proceedings as provided for in the Order. A reminder that persons who would like to participate in this meeting while in progress may do so by calling (929) 436-2866.

FY2021 Budget Review

Library: Town Administrator Green advised that \$13,350 will be paid out of Capital Outlay for the building. Library Director Jayko advised there is an increase in the new books budget to incrementally bringing new books budget back to where it belongs. Library Trustees are paying \$5,000 to fund the Library Page position. She explained that the heating oil increase was funded prior to the pandemic, and the Library gets an amount of heating oil contracted for the year under the group purchasing program. It was explained that recent renovation did not include the boiler, which is estimated at \$200,000 to transform the oil-fired boiler to a more efficient gas boiler. Strategy on getting new books and the impact of kindle and other resources was outlined. It was suggested that since oil prices are low right now consideration should be given to level fund instead of increasing costs in the budget. Roof work done a couple years ago had one leak, and a ladder created a hole in the roof membrane, but otherwise the roof is holding up. Repairs and maintenance and the status of the boiler were discussed. Utilization of one contractor or multiple to save funds and to eliminate bidding requirements and save money on projects was clarified. It was noted that no single contractor could do all of the work and it required multiple contractors. Trust fund restrictions were explained.

The position of Library Page was noted as a fundamental need for the library and one of the benefits of the position was explained as helping the Library to get state aid. It was pointed out that there is an open position for an Adult Services Librarian which will be hired once the building reopens. Elevator Maintenance was reviewed and it was explained that the elevator is used every day.

Emergency Management: *Emergency Management Director Kleiner* was noted as receiving a stipend only. A modest increase in Operational Expenses was noted. It was reviewed that the 1975 Ford Pumper was replaced with a 1986 GMC and most of the work has been done. The increase was explained as increased maintenance as the fleet is aging, and the cost of batteries and vehicle parts and accessories cost more. It was explained that supplies for emergencies have been stocked up on and some are no longer available so there is no current request in the budget. With the pandemic, the only things to be stocked up on are face masks, and gloves to have extra for Town employees and the Fire Department. This will be looked into once they become available. An inquiry was made about communications in town, and it was noted that there are always gaps but it is overall good.

Forest Wardens: *Town Administrator Green* reviewed the Operating Expenses budget and noted there is not much of a change. *Forest Warden Kleiner* advised the increase in vehicles and maintenance is only by \$50 for fire extinguishers. Repairs and maintenance were reviewed and it was explained that the person that does them only charges for parts. Inspection fees increased because the newer truck is more than the older truck. It was clarified that Workman's Compensation Insurance covers all 22 volunteers. Town Administrator Green reviewed the decision around the Wave Parade policy and the factors involved in the decision.

Chairman Hoyt recused herself from the Board of Health Budget.

Inspection Services: *Building Commissioner Garner* reviewed the budget. Personal Services were reviewed and include Board of Health Code Enforcement Officer, the Administrative Assistant who is shared, and stipends. If staff is unavailable services are utilized from another town. The Code Enforcement Officer was noted as being a union position. It was noted that the Town of Adams is one of the only towns still issuing building permits and keeping things moving during the pandemic. Concerns were expressed about how revenues will look going forward as fees pay for services and are a revenue source for the town. It was explained that permit fees pay for training, materials and an extra inspector if needed. It was explained that the Code Enforcement Officer and Building Commissioner are making sure public safety is met and are working as a team. A safety plan is received from contractors before work commences. 364 building, plumbing, gas, and electrical permits have been issued to date annually, and funding is not far from generated funds from last year. Rental inspections were noted as having a clerical issue with some past inspections but are currently at \$12,190. It was clarified that funds stay in a revolving fund. Building permits are all done online. Nursing services are contracted with Berkshire VNA. It was clarified that the Administrative Assistant is funded part from the Building Commissioner budget and partly from Community Development. It was explained that Weights & Measures are for fuel pumps and food scales.

Board of Health: Operating Expenses showed a 2.17% increase, which are for dues going from \$55 to \$300. The budget was noted as otherwise being level funded. It was explained that dues changed for trainings and Title V inspector certification so outside agencies are not needed. Stipends were reviewed. It was explained that at times an out of town inspector is needed. It was noted that level funding is possible because some of permit fees going into the revolving account. The health department has online permitting to work with business owners. It was explained that there have been many upgrades to the health department side of the software, which had been underutilized.

Streamlining is being done to do more licensing and permitting and more upgrades in the future. It was explained that the public health nurse is required by law, and is required to track, monitor and have contact with households with contagious diseases. The Public Health Nurse contract is for \$3,000 and the Town is currently receiving daily services which have paid for it.

Community Development: *Community Development Director Cesan* explained the seven projects that are currently in various stages and are going forward despite the pandemic. She noted that the projects for the Memorial School, Crotteau Street Project, Grant Street, the Town Common, Davis Street, Jordan Street, and Route 8 projects are all happening this summer. It was noted that Personal Services showed a modest increase. Operating Expenses had a significant reduction from \$89,700 to \$30,000. Staff is mostly funded through grant work. The Administrative Assistant was noted as being shared with the Building Department, and the Grants and Programs Manager and Senior Planner are funded from the Economic Development Fund. The Grant Street Project is out to bid and was successful in obtaining \$600,000 in funding through the Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness Grant. She noted that an application for funding was submitted for Davis Street and \$300,000 from the emergency flooding funds will be used as a match for it. \$850,000 to \$900,000 will address the Lincoln, Grant and Cross Street situation. The Davis Street project final plans are being worked on and will provide expanded wingwalls and riprap. Plans are with the engineer and hopefully will move forward soon. She advised she is trying to meet with the neighbors and due to the pandemic has been unable to do that so she is relying on mailings. The Crotteau Street drainage work will be done but is mostly under the Complete Streets grant. Bids due April 30th and a notice of award was issued to Davenport Construction earlier this year. She reported that MEMA recommended a \$1.7 Million Grant for the Jordan Street Culvert, and they looked at the impact to the residential neighborhoods which helped it to become a much higher need project. She noted she is waiting to hear from FEMA and if awarded will go forward with a funding match. An inquiry was made about a clog in the culvert that crosses West Kittler and it was reported as having been cleared. It was noted that the more staff Community Development has the more grants can be received but the work also needs to be performed with the projects. She pointed out that sometimes she has to turn away certain grant programs because there is not enough staff.

Conservation Commission: The Conservation Commission budget was briefly reviewed. A legal retainer for controversial and legal issues was explained. It was pointed out that all commissions are required to have this designated account and half of *Notice of Intent* fees go into that account. The account is occasionally used for engineering from Community Development. The Marketing Promotional Line was explained as being used for downtown banners, brochures, marketing pieces, advertising for projects, and marketing the Town. It was noted that there are multi-year contracts that utilize this fund and the way the budget is done is not an accurate representation of the expenditures. The status of the Memorial School redevelopment was outlined, and there was modest interest expressed by several developers. Some concern about Town 40R program was expressed and questions were fielded about delaying the due dates of RFPs. It was explained that due to Covid-19 the RFP was suspended and it will be reissued in August or September. It is hoped that 40R will be approved by then to make the project more attractive. Some barriers with developers were noted and needed 40R for the numbers to be right. Concern was expressed that the Engineering line item was overspent by \$30,000. It was explained that it was part of FY20 and it carries over two to three years, which does not represent accurately in the budget and is not a true expenditure. It was pointed out that the amount has been consistently \$65,000 for the past three years. Concern was expressed about follow-through on grants and starting development then stopping. It was explained that Jones Block and 7 Hoosac Street are stalled and the economy is now seen as risky. The focus is on incentive

programs, 40R, and the new state PACE Program which could be very attractive to developers. Opportunity Zones was optimized when that was available. It was clarified that the Town is not spending money for private developers, and grant programs are for municipal projects. Grant funds would go into the property and does not enrich the developer. Grant focus is on façade improvements. The permitting process and its past challenges were briefly discussed. Tweaks were made to the system and assistance by Senior Planner Towle makes sure the business is assisted in the development review process and helped with finding funding opportunities. It was noted that Community Development staff are funded by the Economic Development Fund which has been impacted by the Covid-19 situation. The Roadmap to Ribbon Cutting Program was outlined as the new process for shepherding businesses through permitting. It was explained that the Assistant to the Town Administrator is the key contact for this program and will work with Inspectional Services, Land Use, and Community Development for small business owners. Information will be put on the Town website. The status of the Hoosac Valley Coal and Grain property was reviewed. It was pointed out that the Crotteau Street Project was bid at costs over what was expected, and there are added costs and staffing to complying with safe practices right now. It was explained that right now is the time to add engineering funds to the budget so the Town will be shovel-ready for projects in the future. Identification of infrastructure projects that the Town is not able to fund, such as bridges, is underway. Putting engineering money into the water project for the Greylock Glen was outlined, and it was noted that the developer is interested due to the amount of progress the Town has done to get the project ready.

Police: *Chief Tarsa* advised that after 36 years of service he will be retiring at the end of the fiscal year. An overview was given of the budget. Personal Services noted a modest increase of 1.38%. The Acting Lieutenant line item was pointed out and it was explained that Lieutenant Briggs retired in April and has been sworn in as Special Officer to assist in getting through the pandemic. Converted line items were noted because the Department must run with either a Lieutenant or a fourth Sergeant. It was explained that the department is unionized, and has a contract for holidays and other pay. Reserve Officers and special police officers were explained as not receiving detail pay, which comes directly from contractors. Overtime, clothing, benefits and shift differential were reviewed. It was noted that the Overtime assessment is well over as a result of unstable staffing within the department. The goal for FY21 is to determine the minimum number for staffing and standard shifts. It was explained that an adequate prediction of costs cannot be made until there is a year of stability without officers out on medical or other issues. Budgetary increases were pointed out as being the cost of doing business, such as the cost of vehicle parts, which increase every year. Firearms and Tasers have state requirements which increased and caused additional expenses. It was noted that Tasers alone are an additional \$400 or more. The department is not asking for cruiser as economic times are challenged and the budget is being strained. It was pointed out that the department needs to save personnel to be sure adequate staffing measures are met. It was explained that Ford redesigned the SUV and none of the existing equipment but the radio will fit so this will likely have to be addressed in the budget for next year. It was explained that the vehicles are hybrids, and the grand total for outfitting a vehicle completely with the dash radar unit is \$56,000 or more. Sedans are no longer available. It was pointed out that this is the second year not replacing cruiser to save personnel. An inquiry was made about whether retaining a Lieutenant lessened overtime costs. Overtime use was reviewed. A three-hour contractual minimum of overtime was explained. Overtime costs were not reduced as one officer was out on injury and received 100% salary compensation and caused additional backfilling of shifts at the overtime rate. Civil service grandfathering was explained and how it is paid was clarified.

Police Station: *Chief Tarsa* explained the increase in custodial and elevator expenses as contractual issues. The new elevator service was noted as having a better maintenance program. Building repairs allowed for a budgetary decrease and the building is in the process of having the roof repaired due to a leak. The funds for this were explained as having been encumbered from a previous budget.

Animal Control Officer: It was explained that this is the first year of a full time Animal/Parking Control Officer, which is 50% of each position. Operating expenses were reviewed. Slight increases were noted as being only the cost of doing business. A reduction on the Education, Travel, Conference line item was explained as state law requirements of in-service training annually to maintain standards which now have online availability. It was explained that there will be additional expenses for rabies testing of animals as there is an increase in the number of animals that had to be tested for public safety and public health concerns. It was recommended that this be a line item in the Board of Health.

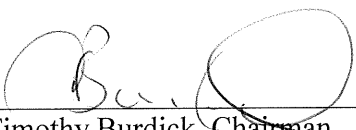
Parking Management: This budget holds 50% of the salary funding for the Animal/Parking Control Officer position. Operating expenses were reviewed. It was explained that early in the pandemic crisis the Town stopped charging for parking and this will be reviewed by the Board of Selectmen on when to restore services. Supplies for managing this during Covid-19 are being provided through the Northern Regional Emergency Management. It was pointed out that last year the number of parking meters not working on Park and Summer Streets was high. It was explained that this year the number is much lower. The DPW services them when they are found. The DPW Maintenance and Repairs budget covers the repair and service of the meters and mostly goes toward battery replacement. Both boards wished the Chief well in his upcoming retirement.

Discussion and Approval of FY2021 Budget: It was noted that the budget will be going before the Board of Selectmen next Wednesday and the Finance Committee thereafter to move forward to Town Meeting on Monday, June 22nd. It was explained that the Town is moving forward with the FY21 budget with the information currently available, and there is a plan to start cutting if need be once further information is available from the state. It was explained that if the Town approves a budget and then has to make cuts it would have to go back to Town Meeting for approval. A question was asked about the Governor's Executive Order which provided for an exception for legislative meetings, and it is being researched. It was clarified that the legislation that will control how town meeting is handled is pending in the House of Representatives. It was noted that it may be an outdoor meeting under a tent with 6 foot spacing and a public address system at the Agricultural Fairgrounds. It was pointed out that it may not be possible to have a Town Meeting. Research is being done on the 1/12 provision as well and staff would develop a monthly expenditure that would be approved by the Board of Selectmen and go to the Department of Revenue approval before it is put in place. It was explained that the Town won't be able to give any raises or spend capital. It comes with limitations and is clunky. It was explained that the Budget Sub-Committee looked at the budget and all was normal until Covid-19 appeared. Local communities are approaching budget process in different ways. It was explained that there are very tight expenditure controls on the plan for a month to month basis. Cheshire and Adams have tight budgets and are already lean. Local receipts are projected and were very conservative. There was no further discussion on the budget.

ADJOURNMENT: *Motion made by Board of Selectmen Vice Chairman Bush to adjourn the meeting, second by Member Blanchard. Roll Call Vote: Chairman Hoyt, Vice Chairman Bush, Members Blanchard, Duval and Nowak. Motion passed. Meeting adjourned at 8:27 pm*

Motion made by Finance Committee Chairman Corrigan to adjourn the meeting, second by Member Johnson. Roll Call Vote: Chairman Burdick, Vice Chairman Cowie, Members Corrigan, Foster, Johnson, Cushenette, Tomkowicz, Kupiec, Meczywor, Butler and Kline. Motion passed. Meeting adjourned at 8:27 pm

Respectfully Submitted by Deborah J. Dunlap,
Recording Secretary



Timothy Burdick, Chairman