

## *Town of Adams Massachusetts 01220-2087*

### FINANCE COMMITTEE

TOWN HALL BUILDING  
8 PARK STREET

Monday, August 31, 2020 at 5:00 p.m.

### Meeting Minutes

**CALL TO ORDER:** On the above date the Finance Committee held a meeting on the first floor of Adams Town Hall. The meeting was called to order at 5:00 p.m. by Finance Committee Chairman Burdick. Present were Vice Chairman Cowie, Members Corrigan and Johnson. Also attending were Town Administrator Green, Board of Selectmen Chair Hoyt, and Board of Selectmen Member Nowak. Finance Committee Members Butler, Foster, Kline, Kupiec, Meczywor, Cushenette, Melito, Tomkowicz and Duval were attending the meeting remotely for COVID-19 emergency purposes under 9410 CMR 29.10(5). Finance Committee Member Sniezek entered the meeting remotely at 5:42 p.m. and Town Accountant Beverly entered the meeting remotely at 5:43 p.m.

### REMOTE CONNECTION:

#### Join Zoom

Meeting: <https://zoom.us/j/91329845216?pwd=WDZuT2pTUGNIMDgyTk9aczBCWIRLZz09>

Meeting ID: 913 2984 5216, Password: FINCOMM

Dial-In by Telephone: 1 (929) 436-2866, Meeting ID: 913 2984 5216, Password: 456002

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES:** The May 28, 2020 and June 4, 2020 Finance Committee meeting minutes were submitted for approval. *Motion made by Vice Chairman Cowie to approve the minutes for May 28, 2020 as submitted, second by Member Johnson. Roll Call Vote: In favor were Chairman Burdick, Vice Chairman Cowie, Members Johnson, Corrigan, Foster, Tomkowicz, Kline, Kupiec, Cushenette, Meczywor, and Butler. Abstentions by Members Duval and Melito. Motion passes. Motion made by Vice Chairman Cowie to approve the June 4, 2020 minutes as presented, second by Member Johnson. Roll Call Vote: In favor were Chairman Burdick, Vice Chairman Cowie, Members Johnson, Corrigan, Foster, Tomkowicz, Kline, Kupiec, Meczywor and Butler. Abstentions by Members Cushenette, Melito and Duval. Motion passed.*

**FY21 Budget Reduction Review and Approval:** Town Administrator Green explained the tools utilized in order to reduce the budget. (At 5:06 p.m. the Zoom Connection was lost and reconnected.) He reviewed the Cherry Sheet for FY20 received and there was a \$70,000 difference from the Fiscal Year 2021 budget that had to be reduced. He noted that the target number exceeded this amount by \$18,000, so there were \$82,000 in total reductions from the Fiscal Year 2021 budget. He advised the variety of tools used to achieve the number included attrition realization. He explained there were five retirements to the Police Department which could not be reasonably anticipated so there were changes and a decrease due to salary reduction in new staff. He advised that he took advantage of furloughing staff in the Library, Council on Aging and administrative support staff in Town Hall to help to achieve savings up front on Fiscal Year 2021. This was achieved through reduced hours and paying for anticipated hours being used mostly through the Library and Council on Aging staff but some from Town Hall also. He advised he also looked at stipends to create a reduction. He explained that

the electricity line item is annually budgeted for \$140,000 and the Town spent \$125,000 due to the solar farm achieving savings through credits to achieve a reduction of \$10,000. He advised he looked at the Council on Aging and over the last year and a half the Town hired six Van Drivers. He explained he decided to eliminate four Part Time Van Drivers, hire one Full Time Van Driver with benefits and increased the Per Diem Van Driver budget. He noted that there has been an issue with stability of Van Drivers and it is difficult to recruit Part Time Van Drivers with no benefits. He advised he did a cost benefit analysis and achieved savings doing it this way. He noted there were no other reductions or personnel cuts that had to be made but it will be reviewed again when receipts are analyzed. It was explained that the 1/12 budget was deficit spending and would be worked into the Fiscal Year 2021 Budget and blended in. Concern was expressed that the process is gone through and when the Governor reviews it in December this may impact the budget again. It was explained that the Governor has the right to make cuts and language was put in the authorization for a 90-day temporary budget that those numbers will not be cut. It was pointed out that everything is estimated and that in the worst-case scenario the Town would have to look at extra cuts and a Special Town Meeting. This budget is conservative and the Town is watching receipts.

#### **Personnel Services:**

**Selectmen:** *Town Administrator Green* advised that this change reflects a reduction in stipends. He noted it is one of the tools being used for this fiscal year but it will not necessarily stay the same for the next fiscal year. ***Motion made by Member Johnson to approve the amended Selectmen Personnel Services Budget, second by Member Corrigan.*** *Vice Chairman Cowie* reviewed the numbers and noted a mathematical issue in the percentages. *Town Administrator Green* advised there is discretionary capital overlay and he is looking to pare it down. He explained that there is non-state and federal-covered sewer work on the Commercial Street Project and took the opportunity to cut more out of there. *(At 5:22 p.m. the Zoom connection was lost and was reconnected at 5:23 p.m.)* ***Roll Call Vote: In favor were Chairman Burdick, Vice Chairman Cowie, Members Johnson, Corrigan, Foster, Tomkowicz, Kline, Kupiec, Melito, Cushenette, Meczywor and Butler. Member Duval abstained. Motion Passed.***

**Assessors:** *Town Administrator Green* reviewed the Personnel Services reductions which were explained as the Board of Assessors stipends being reduced from \$1800 to \$300. ***Motion made by Member Corrigan to approve the amended Assessors Personnel Services Budget, second by Member Johnson.*** It was explained that a Town Charter check was done. *Member Foster* requested a spelling correction from Personal Services to Personnel Services for next year. An inquiry was made as to why in 2020 unemployment insurance was listed as \$0. It was suggested that Members follow up with Town Accountant Beverly and an answer will be provided on Thursday. *Town Administrator Green* advised it was likely somewhere else in the budget. *Member Foster* inquired whether step increases have been corrected since his concern was expressed at a past meeting. It was noted that the language cited is if merit awards were awarded but the Town doesn't give those out. It will be confirmed with the Town Accountant but it was explained that the answer had been previously sent out in an email to clarify this. *Member Johnson* inquired if there will be an increase in unemployment insurance due to Covid-19 next year and it was clarified that there was no anticipated increase. Health insurance was also reported to have been level for the last three years but it is anticipated that Fiscal Year 2022 will be different. ***Roll Call Vote: In favor were Chairman Burdick, Vice Chairman Cowie, Members Johnson, Corrigan, Foster, Tomkowicz, Kline, Kupiec, Duval, Melito, Cushenette, Meczywor, and Butler. Motion Passed.***

**Registrar of Voters:** *Town Administrator Green* explained that the amendment is reflective of the reduction in stipends with the exception of the Clerk which is consistent with other boards. **Motion made to approve the amended Personnel Services Budget for the Registrar of Voters by Vice Chairman Cowie, second by Member Johnson. Roll Call Vote: In favor were Chairman Burdick, Vice Chairman Cowie, Members Johnson, Corrigan, Foster, Tomkowicz, Kline, Kupiec, Duval, Melito, Cushenette, Meczywor, and Butler. Motion Passed.**

**Inspection Services:** *Town Administrator Green* advised that the amendment to Personnel Services was reflective of the reduction of stipends and the sanitary inspector line item for Title V which were reduced. He noted that there has been an attempt to send Code Enforcement Officer Blaisdell to school for Title V and this was a tool to make reductions without affecting personnel. **Motion made by Vice Chairman Cowie to approve the amended Personnel Services Budget for the Inspection Services as presented, second by Member Johnson. Roll Call Vote: Voted in favor were Chairman Burdick, Vice Chairman Cowie, Members Johnson, Corrigan, Foster, Tomkowicz, Kline, Kupiec, Duval, Melito, Cushenette, Meczywor, and Butler. Motion Passed.**

**Police Department:** *Town Administrator Green* reviewed the numbers and options. He advised he budgeted for essentially full staff with the reductions. He advised that with proper staffing the Town will have a reduction in the amount of overtime for what is spent and budgeted. He pointed out some overtime funding is used for vacation and sick time but the department would be able to fund the majority of the shifts on straight time instead of overtime. It was explained that there were five retirements that took place, no personnel furloughs and the Town hired newer officers that came in at a lower rate. Two positions were filled and there is one more vacancy. He noted that he had considered not filling the vacant position but the Town needs a fully staffed department. He explained that some officers are working 16 hours a day and this budget would maintain four Sergeants, twelve Patrolmen and one Detective. It was pointed out that the Lieutenant position has been removed from the budget in its entirety. The staff count includes the Administrative Assistant and the Chief. **Motion made by Vice Chairman Cowie to approve the amended Personnel Services Budget of the Police Department as presented, second by Member Johnson.** Member Foster noted that last year the Police Department went over budget and asked the difference was funded. *Town Administrator Green* advised there is a provision in the law which allows municipalities to move money around in the budget and Town Accountant Beverly utilized that. He advised that she would provide the details on that. He reviewed in detail how the savings were achieved again. It was pointed out that there are no anticipated police retirements foreseen in the next three to five years. *Finance Committee Member Snizek joined the meeting at 5:42 p.m. Town Accountant Beverly joined the call at 5:43 p.m.* **Roll Call Vote: Voted in favor were Chairman Burdick, Vice Chairman Cowie, Members Johnson, Corrigan, Foster, Tomkowicz, Kline, Kupiec, Duval, Melito, Cushenette, Meczywor, and Butler. Member Snizek abstained. Motion Passed.**

**Council on Aging:** *Town Administrator Green* reviewed the change in structure. He reviewed that he eliminated four Part-Time Van Drivers. He explained that the Per Diem Van Drivers budget doubled to \$6,000 and the department intends to operate two vans when needed. **Motion made by Vice Chairman Cowie to approve the amended Council on Aging Personnel Services Budget as presented, second by Member Johnson.** Member Corrigan inquired about the restructure and it was explained that it may not work but the model has to change. The model was an on-demand service and the van operated on the caller schedule. It was explained there is a route optimizer tool that BRTA uses and there is an option for purchasing it or asking BRTA for help to optimize routes to schedule more efficiently. The Town will try out the new model and two Full Time Van Drivers are

needed it will have to go back to the part-time model. Federal Department of Transportation regulations require DOT physicals and training. It was noted that under this trial model the Town is seeing substantial savings. ***Motion made by Vice Chairman Cowie to approve the amended Council on Aging Personnel Budget as presented, second by Member Johnson.*** Member Tomkowicz inquired about how it would be worked out with Covid-19 regulations and it was explained that there is only one person being taken in the van at a time currently. She pointed out that if there is one person in the van at a time the route optimizer doesn't matter. ***Roll Call Vote: Voted in favor were Chairman Burdick, Vice Chairman Cowie, Members Johnson, Corrigan, Foster, Tomkowicz, Kline, Kupiec, Duval, Melito, Cushenette, Meczywor, and Butler. Member Sniezek abstained. Motion Passed.***

**Library:** *Town Administrator Green* advised that he had achieved savings by allocating hours. He explained that the Library has been closed for a period of time but is now open for curbside service. There were two full-time staff who were working part time and the other staffing continue to be furloughed, reflecting a savings. There was an option to eliminate the Library Page position, but in prior conversations with Director Jayko she had used book money to fund the position and the Town funded 50% to maintain staffing. Because the Town was able to achieve savings there was no need to eliminate the position. Library staffing is intact for the fiscal year and any reductions would affect state aid. ***Motion made by Member Johnson to approve the amended Personnel Services Budget for the Library, second by Vice Chairman Cowie.*** It was clarified that Director Jayko is full-time and the Adult Services Librarian and Children's Librarian have been full-time but operating part time. It was explained that the Adult Services librarian was hired just before the Library closed and was brought on part-time with no benefits with the promise that the position would go to full-time with benefits. *Member Corrigan* noted that when the Library opens again there would be a disinfecting or deep cleaning factor because people come in and they have multiple use computers. He explained that the schools were looking at running a 4-day week to deep clean on 5<sup>th</sup> day. It was explained that Director Jayko has a plan and has been working with the state, code enforcement and custodial staff. It was explained that sanitizing was one reason for continuing the furlough and also to address the building surfaces and circulation. It was noted that there is a cost to cleaning and The Cares Act reimbursement funds this. *Town Accountant Beverly* re-clarified that it is a 1/12 budget, and that the Town has been running a deficit spending budget for July, August, and September but once it passes at Town Meeting they don't exist anymore. The budget is filed with the Department of Revenue and the Schools are on the same plan. It was explained that when the Town furloughed staff in April through June unspent funds went into Free Cash which is how some of the budget was funded. *Member Foster* asked for the total amount of Free Cash and inquired if it is reconciled every month. It was explained that all accounts are reconciled and filed with the Department of Revenue. Free Cash was outlined as \$962,000 in the Budget Book. The use of Free Cash was explained and it was noted that extra money from 2020 will be on the Fiscal Year 2022 budget. *Town Administrator Green* reviewed how many Town staff are back to full hours and how many are still furloughed. It was explained that the Library building is partially open for computer access for census support, but the computer lab only. ***Roll Call Vote: Chairman Burdick, Vice Chairman Cowie, Members Johnson, Corrigan, Foster, Tomkowicz, Kline, Kupiec, Duval, Melito, Cushenette, Meczywor, and Butler. Member Sniezek abstained. Motion Passed.***

**Department of Public Works:** *Town Administrator Green* explained that this only affects Cemetery Commissioners and noted that the previous budgeted amount for stipends was reduced to treat each board and commission the same. ***Motion made by Member Johnson to approve the Personnel Services Budget of the Department of Public Works as amended, second by Member Butler. Town***



*Administrator Green* explained that the Seasonal Laborers were budgeted for 11 staff but the Town only utilized 5. Vice Chairman Cowie inquired about medical insurance and why a family plan was added. It was explained that an employee got married. It was questioned whether staff are asked to take private insurance first before taking Town insurance, and responded this does not get asked of staff. Staff insurance budgeting and strategy was reviewed briefly by Town Administrator Green. **Roll Call Vote: Chairman Burdick, Vice Chairman Cowie, Members Johnson, Corrigan, Foster, Tomkowicz, Kline, Kupiec, Duval, Melito, Cushenette, Meczywor, and Butler. Member Snizek abstained. Motion Passed.**

## **OPERATING EXPENSES**

**Public Building and Property Maintenance:** *Town Administrator Green* reviewed that the Town is reducing the electricity line item after looking at the anticipated town-wide electricity costs for the year. He explained that he looked at actual expenses and requested the appropriation be reduced by \$10,000 to give breathing room. He noted that the Town achieved savings from the solar array and applied credits to some of the heavy accounts like Wastewater Treatment Plant. **Motion made by Vice Chairman Cowie to approve the Operating Expenses of the Public Building and Property Maintenance budget as amended, second by Member Corrigan.** *Member Kupiec* inquired why the budget couldn't be cut to \$120,000 and it was explained the information was as of March 25<sup>th</sup> so there is additional data since then. *Town Administrator Green* advised he was uncomfortable cutting more in the event there was a mis-budgeted amount so he was fiscally conservative and didn't want to risk going into the red. It was further recalled that one year the electricity went high in prices and if it is a really bad solar year the Town will need the funds available to pay the electric bill. *Member Snizek* advised she thought the Town budget was playing it safe and inquired why wouldn't it be a good solar year. She suggested the Town turn off lights and computers and asked if people are even working in the buildings. Member Butler expressed concern about cutting the electric budget more because it was such a strange year and the Town cannot really know the numbers so it is better to be conservative. **Roll Call Vote: Chairman Burdick, Vice Chairman Cowie, Members Johnson, Corrigan, Foster, Tomkowicz, Kline, Kupiec, Duval, Melito, Cushenette, Meczywor, and Butler. Member Snizek abstained. Motion Passed.**

**Chairman Burdick** welcomed new Finance Committee Members Justin Duval, Stephanie Melito and Julie Snizek. It was explained that the next meeting will be Thursday to review warrant articles. A brief review was given on what to expect for warrant articles. A request was made for the Finance Committee to receive a draft prior to it going to the Board of Selectmen to give time to review them. The increase of .90 on the tax rate over the Fiscal Year 2020 was briefly discussed and it was noted that the biggest bulk is in debt service of the \$2.5 Million bond. Member Corrigan stated the Finance Committee voted on the bond 2 years ago and the Town had a list of projects to do. He noted that the Town received the \$1.2 Million budgeted in borrowed funds because the Committee was told it was needed, and he inquired how much interest has been paid since then and there is no bridge on one of the projects. *Town Administrator Green* reviewed that it was a short term borrow and Community Development found \$500,000 in grant money so the Town is trying to return \$500,000 to the bank. It was noted that is a legal issue with trying to return the money but the Town paid for a large portion through grants. It was explained that earmarked work is not done easily and engineering and other work done requires some planning. The Davis Street project was noted as taking longer because there are some cost savings with wing walls, as well as concepts and options to review. (At 6:26 p.m. Zoom connection was lost and reconnected) Member Corrigan advised he felt the Town jumped ahead and borrowed all of the money and put the cart before the horse before engineering. It was explained that

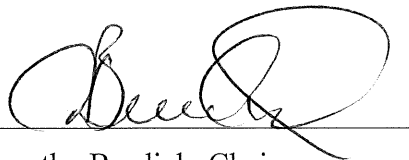
the Town only has a certain length of time to do borrowing and bond counsel at the time said it would give the Town a better rating if funds were borrowed in full. *Member Corrigan* expressed that decisions are made like this and then forgotten about and nobody knows anything about it. Town Administrator Green reviewed the capital paydown of storm borrowing, and the interest. He clarified that Employee Benefits is where Workman's Compensation Insurance is paid from. *Member Corrigan* expressed concern about brush growing up in the rip rap in the area below the Town Shed. He asked if the Town was going to maintain the flood wall and it was noted that DPW Director Tober will be asked to take a look at it but staffing is an issue and that it was being scheduled.

#### **ADJOURNMENT**

**Motion made by Finance Committee Member Johnson to adjourn the meeting, second by Vice Chairman Cowie. Roll Call Vote: Chairman Burdick, Vice Chairman Cowie, Members Johnson, Corrigan, Foster, Tomkowicz, Kline, Kupiec, Duval, Melito, Cushenette, Meczywor, Butler, and Sniezek. Motion passed.**

*Meeting adjourned at 6:38 p.m.*

Respectfully Submitted by Deborah J. Dunlap,  
Recording Secretary

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Timothy Burdick', is written over a horizontal line.

Timothy Burdick, Chairman