

Marlborough Board of Finance
Marlborough Elementary School Library
And via Zoom and Speaker Phone
Special Meeting
February 15, 2023
6:00 p.m.

Call to Order

Chairman Nastri called the special meeting to order at 6:01 p.m. Present and seated were Mike Nastri, Jack Fidler, Liz Gorgoglione (via Zoom), Ken Hjulstrom, Jeff Plourde, and Robert Mirabel. Alternates Karen Pakulis Paul and Chris Barella were also present.

New Business

Board of Selectmen Operations Budget and Capital Account and Analysis/Discussion

Selectman Chair, Deb Bourbeau, presented the proposed 2023-24 budget to the BOF. The new proposed town operations total \$6,944,213. This is an increase of almost 12%. This is a best guess budget developed on the information available. At this time the audit has not been done for FYE June 30, 2022. The revenue is derived from the most recent information they have but it could change. They are anticipating \$3,538,017 in revenue from state funding, which is an increase of 2%. The Governor is capping the mill rate for cars at 32.48 mills which is less than the town's mill rate. The state is supposed to make up the difference. The debt payment has been decreasing over the past few years giving more funds for other items without increasing the budget. The Grand List is up one percent.

Some budget drivers include inflation, the increase in utilities, gas, electric, diesel and propane. They plan to outsource some technology items such as payroll and cyber security updates. A big item is a litigation settlement. The BOS feels they need to make salaries higher to remain competitive with other towns and a town manager will be hired for the first time. There has also been a part time position created for the senior center. Also increasing the budget is overdue road and culvert maintenance, equipment repairs, building maintenance and unfunded state mandates.

Peter Hughes, Director of Planning and Development, discussed the capital plan and answered the Board's questions. The library funds have been reallocated for other capital projects, in addition to \$697,000 from CNR, and \$330,000 in APR funds. The town will probably need to bond in 2024 for \$20-25 million for the fire house, roads, and the library.

Town Hall HVAC has an estimate of \$250,000. The boat launch is unsafe currently and either needs to be brought up to fully ADA compliance or be torn down. There was a question about whether any lessons have been learned in replacing the culverts. Mr. Hughes replied no because every culvert has its own circumstances, such as the watershed which effects the size of the culvert. Engineering is usually 20% of

construction costs. For the new firetruck to remain at \$800,000, they need to sign a letter of intent, along with \$67,000. The Undesignated Fund balance is about \$407,000. Overall, the proposed budget for capital items has been reduced by over \$200,000. This brings the overall proposed budget to only a 7.27% increase. When revenue is added in, the overall cost to the town is negative .28 mills.

The BOF asked about personnel salaries. They will be provided shortly for all positions in town. There was a question about the BOS disregarding the town vote regarding litigation. There was a vote to not pay up to \$250,000 to end the litigation with a previous employee and instead move to a trial. The BOS voted to look at the lawsuit in a different way by paying \$110,000 out of the current budget and requesting the rest (\$127,500) in this new proposed budget under legal fees.

In the past, there had been discussions about moving the Food Bank to Firehouse #2, using the second floor of the library for meetings and sell the house on Wilhenger Drive due to all the repairs that keep coming up each year. That cannot happen now since the second floor of the library is on hold. The food bank on Wilhenger Drive needs the driveway repaired.

Peter Hughes stated that the town is looking into getting solar panels on the roofs of various town buildings to reduce the cost of electricity. Green Bank is looking at the flat roofs to see if it is viable. The town is also considering charging stations for e-vehicles.

Public Comments

Joe Asklar, Selectman, stated that the BOS has so much more information than the Town Meeting was given and that is why they made the decision they did. It was a very difficult choice, but it is what is best for the town.

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 7:27 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Debby Rihm

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Board Clerk