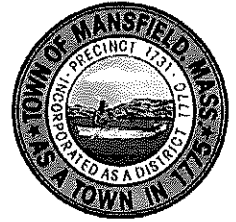


Town of Mansfield

6 Park Row, Mansfield, Massachusetts 02048

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Finance Committee

Meeting Minutes 6.16.2022

Present: Ms. Sara Walsh, Chair, Mr. Jack Cooney, Clerk, Mr. Walter Wilk, Mr. Scott Feely, Vice Chair, and Mr. Michael Flaherty

Present Virtually: Mr. Brian Eagle

Not present: Mr. Michael DeSantis

Guests: Mr. Barry LaCasse

Minutes: Ms. Sharon Varricchione

1. **Call the Meeting to order:** Ms. Sara Walsh, Chair, called the meeting to order at 7:35pm.

2. **Approval of Minutes: 5/12/2022**

Motion: To adopt the meeting minutes of 5/12/2022

Roll Call Vote: Mr. Eagle – Yes, Mr. Wilk – Yes, Mr. Feely – Yes, Ms. Walsh – Yes, Mr. Cooney – Yes, Mr. Flaherty – Yes

Passes 6:0 (Flaherty/Cooney)

3. **Review of Financial Reports and Discussion with Finance Director on Year End Projection and Impact of Inflationary Pressures**

Local Receipts:

Mr. LaCasse stated we are \$670,000 above our target which is good and we have two more weeks to go. During the last two weeks, we expect to receive quarterly taxes from the State for our cannabis tax, meal tax and hotel tax. Good to be in the positive with Free cash. Driving this is ambulance sales and hotel and meal tax which have been outperforming what we have budgeted. We budgeted very conservatively and should end up just south of a million.

Expense side:

Mr. LaCasse said it's hard to tell where we are right now, but with Schools excluded we are about 95% expended with \$2.6 million dollars available which will be going towards salaries, overtime and encumbrances.

Free Cash:

Mr. LaCasse said there is no more Free Cash and on average we would be near \$2.4-2.9 million. Mr. Feely asked about the trajectory. Mr. LaCasse said yes, it's going up, we are digging out of this and we will continue to rise and get out of this pandemic but with the interest rates going up and the recession looming we are uncertain where we are.

Mr. Wilk inquired about our low interest loans and if there's anything in the budget to spend now using the Fin Com Reserve. Mr. LaCasse stated that we used all of our Free Cash and Fin Com Reserve. There is around \$58,000 in our DPW Fuel Budget, he will speak with the interim director to find out if he will use that to fill the fuel depot.

Mr. Eagle asked did we get a list of where all the Federal Funds/ARPA money went, is there a way to see how it was broken out via Town and School side. Mr. LaCasse stated that part of the ARPA funds are injected to the general funds for as a funding source. The Bristol County ARPA money is going through the approval process via the projects we identified and they approve that money project by project. They are not done with all of our requested projects so that will be apart of a future presentation to show you what money we applied for and how that money was used. Mr. LaCasse could not speak on behalf of the schools, but mentioned they are a part of an audit so that would be another source to use to see how they funds were used.

Ms. Walsh stated that she would reach out to the schools for their breakout of the funds. Mr. Eagle mentioned he interpreted the break out of three big buckets that the funds were distributed through: Mansfield Municipal, Bristol County and the Schools.

Mr. LaCasse left 7:50pm.

4. Review of Calendar of Meetings and Planned Topics for the Year

Ms. Walsh discussed the review of the calendar proposal regarding how they can look at month to month, how they can be more predictive of when we talk about things including emergent things and ongoing things. Is there a communications plan or do we have discussions every other month? The calendar will also include to invite guests to our Finance Committee meetings. The Economic Development Director, Mr. McDermott is one of the guests we will be inviting and we can also ask boards and committees to meet with us. If we make a plan of who we want to speak with then we can invite them early enough and get them on the schedule. There's the annual part of the calendar too like: budget perimeters, articles reviews etc. Then there are focus items, big picture items and if we can plan it out enough ahead of time, folks can have the time to prepare their documents and then we can have a more thoughtful discussion on it. The calendar will make them more prepared. Mr. Flaherty inquired about meeting with different departments and Ms. Walsh stated that it was a good idea and would be great to create relationships with them as Mr. Eagle has been saying that along the way.

Mr. Feely mentioned that it is important to meet with Department Heads more frequently like the Economic Developmental Director, we should routinely be meeting with him. Mr. Eagle said they should be getting big picture information from the Department Heads, what are they thinking about in two years and three years out. We should be meeting with the DPW Interim Director, there could be a lot of education in there, get updates, see how the road program is going, what they might be worried about. Things we normally wouldn't hear about, but would if we had these updates.

Mr. Eagle asked what about year-end review to discuss feedback. Ms. Walsh was thinking about a FY23 end review, what went well and what didn't. Mr. Feely stated it would be good to look at where we are right now coming out of the pandemic and then what it's going to look like next year. What are the little things that we need to keep our eye on, the big one is how are local receipts is filling up. It's about what's happening over time.

Mr. Cooney talked about the reporting and how he likes it coming monthly. Mr. Wilk then spoke about how Fin Com is actually in a position to step back now and think verses the previous Fin Com where they needed to think about a new DPW and a Police Station etc. Mr. Feely agreed and said they have done the policies, have one Town one Budget and done the ground work to get to where they are today and that they are building upon it.

Ms. Walsh asked for the committee to email her ideas of guests they would like to meet with and said she would add the Economic Developmental Director first. Ms. Walsh also suggested to put a monthly Facebook page message of what they discussed in the meetings. Mr. Eagle suggested to update the website to include the calendar so residents would know what they are going to talk about and could inquire to Fin Com to add on other items.

5. Website/Communications Strategy/ Survey Results

Ms. Walsh worked with Ms. Zlatkova, the Town MIS Director regarding the Fin Com website contact form and now it's linked to Fin Com email addresses. She also discussed the link to the survey on the website and asked if anyone had any website ideas that they liked. Mr. Eagle said he reviewed the Town of Westborough's website and actually spoke to the service provider which created their website and they are half the price of our current provider, they are also used by dozens of some of the best towns in Massachusetts and they are on the State list. Mr. Eagle will send Ms. Walsh the things of what they liked on that site. Ms. Walsh said the new website format would be live in September and to look out for that.

Survey results:

Mr. Eagle reached out to Ms. Zlatkova for updated results and will give it to everyone when he gets them. He said it might be time for another Facebook post/outreach. The survey was not available at the town as it was not allowed because it was not directly tied to the budget.

6. Goal Review

BUDGET

1 - Initiate yearly cycle of engagement with each Town Department to understand current year objectives, future economic needs and how those influence budget planning and requests.

Ms. Walsh said they met this through the budget process. Mr. Wilk said the question is, how do we do this

ongoing.

2 - Work to understand revenue projections and forecasts to better inform long term budget planning

Mr. DeSantis did make a recommendation and we agreed to look into it after the Budget Review and make it apart of long-term goals. Mr. Feely said we will spend a lot of the year talking about projections so this is good to keep. Mr. Eagle added to keep in mind the Annual Review of Budget Process and how did we do on our current goals.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

3 - Prepare recommendations for the Select Board regarding the right metrics to measure economic development/growth to aid in determining Mansfield's financial and economic strength

Mr. Wilk stated we need to figure out how to measure it and see how other Towns measure it. Mr. Feely said he was impressed with Mr. McDermott, the Economic Developmental Director regarding how he is looking at a lot of things. Mr. Eagle said we just need metrics so we can judge year to year to see how we are doing and also mentioned that he had good ideas. Mr. Feely said we need to make sure we are not stepping on Human Resources toes and we are going to be better educated with working with Mr. McDermott as he thought of things that we didn't even think of and that we can measure. Mr. Eagle suggested an Economic Developmental report card be created.

COMMUNICATION

4 - Review financial reporting through regular (monthly) distribution of town financial reports.

This item is completed and we can move on per Ms. Walsh and the Committee.

5 - Increase communication to public around town budget and financial matters

Ms. Walsh said we can argue that we are doing this. Mr. Eagle said we should flag what we are concerned about. We need to educate the residents, we sit between the Select Board and the Residents and we owe it to them to do our job.

LONG TERM MATTERS

6 - Review and discuss town's process for disposition of town-owned property (non-personal/surplus goods). Draft recommendations for process improvement to maximize financial return and achieve other town objectives

Ms. Walsh said we reviewed their process. Mr. Eagle agreed and said the process is done we just need to follow it. Mr. Wilk discussed the surplus of lots that we are trying to sell and that we missed the height of the market. Ms. Walsh will add it as a discussion point.

7 - Recommend 1-time and ongoing state and federal funding opportunities and develop plan for considering application and disposition

Ms. Walsh said this is 25% complete. We had a conversation with Mr. LaCasse and Mr. Dumas and they had provided more context regarding federal funding opportunities. Mr. Wilk said these are the things that we need to keep an eye on it. Residents might compare and say why are you raising our taxes, other Towns got money, why didn't we get that. Mr. Cooney brings up a grant writer. Mr. Eagle mentioned Mr. Dumas said we can do better and he will provide an update on this after the budget.

8 - Request and review a capital/infrastructure (including cybersecurity) risk analysis to identify financial threats to Town finances and budget plans

Executive session is needed with Ms. Zlatkova, the Town MIS Director. Mr. Eagle said we could keep it as one project. Ms. Walsh said we will get all these goals posted.

7. Committee Assignments

The Committee agreed to keep current assignments and wait till Mr. DeSantis gets back. If you switch every year you are less effective stated Mr. Wilk. Mr. Eagle said to add that to the August agenda. The next Budget Sub-Committee meeting is at 6pm next Wednesday. The discussion will be of what worked and didn't work from the Committees perspective, discussion around the special education fund policy school changes and potential improvements to reporting and data requests. If we can get in agreement with town what we want to see annually/regularly. We need clear objectives upfront. Mr. Eagle said if we put projections up will help to what we expect. The schools never line up or align with the budget. We need realistic expectations, showing changes and incremental changes would be helpful. Mr. Wilk said it's ok to have a disagreement and to discuss. Mr. Eagle suggested to make the meetings televised to show people the process. Ms. Walsh thinks that's a good idea even if we record it.

8. Committee Updates

Downtown Committee: Update from Mr. Cooney. Fall Festival will be held on October 1st and they already have \$60,000 from sponsors and other commitments. They are looking for volunteers.

9. Questions from Community: None

No July meeting, next meeting is August, 18th at 7:30pm.

Committee Comments

Mr. Eagle was disappointed that he did not get to change his vote on the budget. He would like to discuss the budget process language regarding the Town Manager and his ability to move money. Ms. Walsh stated there is information that the Town Manager and Town Accountant want to share regarding the history and they will do this in one of the next few meetings.

10. Items not known within 48 Hours: None

11. Adjournment:

Motion: To adjourn the meeting at 8:48pm.

Roll Call Vote: Mr. Eagle – Yes, Mr. Wilk – Yes, Mr. Feely – Yes, Ms. Walsh – Yes, Mr. Cooney – Yes, Mr. Flaherty – Yes

Passes 6:0 (Feely/Wilk)



Mr. Jack Cooney, Clerk



Date