

**Carver Select Board  
Meeting Minutes  
Carver Middle/High School Auditorium  
Joint meeting with the Finance Committee  
March 10, 2021 – 6:30pm  
(30 minute delay in starting meeting)**

In Attendance:

Select Board: Chair Sarah Hewins, Jen Bogart, Jim Hoffman, Mark Townsend, Interim Town Administrator Rick LaFond, Finance Director Meg LaMay & Assistant Town Administrator Elaine Weston.

Absent: Vice-Chair Robert Belbin

Finance Committee: Chair Alan Germain, Beth Sulger, Bill Cullum, Greg Boudreau, Tony Macrina

Via Zoom: Vice –Chair Adam Holmes, Patrick Meagher

Absent: Marie Zweigman, Patrick Kenneally, Kevin Sullivan

The Chair led the Pledge of Allegiance and Hoffman read the community prayer.

LaFond reviewed the recommended budget for FY 22. The budget recommendation is the same as the Finance Committee. This budget utilizes the full 2 ½ % levy increase. There is a \$80,000 net decrease in State Aid vs. State and County Assessment. There is a decrease in local estimated receipts. The budget reflects a level service budget & maintains full funding of the Planning & Permitting Department for transition to a full-time Building Commissioner. The FY22 budget maintains the 36.69%/30.31% split with the School Department, adds the Recreation Coordinator position to the operating budget, moves the Recreation utilities to the Operations & Maintenance budget and provides funds for on-line permitting software & \$100,000 increase in Pension Assessment.

The Free Cash one-time expenditures include: Special Education Reserve, North Carver Water District Debt, Landfill/Plymouth Street Monitoring, Health Insurance Mitigation Fund, General Stabilization Fund Restoration and Executive Consultant Contract & Recreation Expenses.

There will be a staff reduction in the Select Board office which will be a hardship. There is one vacant position in the library which is being proposed not to be funded in this budget.

Germain stated all Department Heads were met with. There was \$1,000 added to the Council on Aging budget for activities. There was also \$1,300 given to the Veteran's office for wreaths for veteran graves.

Germain challenged the school on the school bus purchase and the vote will be up to Town Meeting if they want to approve.

Bogart asked if the 2 ½ % levy amount was taken because we can and when was the last time that amount was not taken. LaFond stated inflation in insurance, benefits, etc. tend to rise significantly more than 2 ½%. LaFond stated only 62% of the revenue stream can be inflated by that amount. The rest of the amount, including State Aid, is less than that. This is a modest amount and is what the Town will survive on. He is not aware that the Town has ever spent below the levy and stated the majority of towns in the state utilize this. If you forfeit a year of raising the levy, you could be behind indefinitely and an override could be necessary in the future.

Germain stated if budgets are not increased, it is likely that departments would be going to the Finance Committee for a budget transfer to fill needs. He agrees it would be great if the Town did not need to increase the budget. Not knowing cost of commodities such as gas and oil makes it difficult to forecast some of the budget lines.

LaMay stated expenses in Snow and Ice also play a large part in effecting the budget.

Germain does not want to see any lay offs happen. LaFond stated that the overwhelming amount of what towns do in a budget is to fund legal requirements. We need to be careful that we don't get to a point where we can't meet those requirements.

Hewins stated the requirements of the town are done by people and 90% of the budget is funded for people.

Pat Meagher stated he was involved in many budget processes in Carver with the Schools, he understands what goes into the budget process and this year is very unique. He stated a phenomenal job was done by all and it is a level service budget with no reduction in force. He looks for Departments Heads that can come in and articulate their budget and he saw all that with the Department Heads.

Motion by Hoffman to recommend Warrant Article #4 Part A – Operating Budget for FY 22, second by Townsend.

Roll Call vote – affirmative: Townsend, Bogart, Hoffman & Hewins

Germain stated the Finance Committee approved to recommend the vote at a previous meeting.

Article #1 Annual Town Report: Motion to approve by Townsend, second by Hoffman.

Roll Call – Affirmative: Bogart, Hoffman, Townsend & Hewins.

Article #2 Supplemental Appropriations from Free Cash: LaMay gave an overview of the two items. The EMS vehicle has been submitted through Covid Relief funds. If that gets denied, funds are needed to purchase the vehicle. Retained Earnings of Cranberry Village will have a shortfall in their account.

Motion to recommend the article by Townsend, second by Hoffman.

Roll Call – Affirmative: Bogart, Hoffman, Townsend & Hewins.

Germain expressed concern about the deficit from the Covid Relief funding. LaMay stated we don't know what the County will accept or reject.

Finance Committee deliberated on whether or not to vote on articles.

Motion by Holmes to recommend to Town Meeting Article # 2 as written in the warrant, second by Sulger.

Roll Call: Affirmative: Holmes, Sulger, Macrina, Meagher, Cullum, Boudreau & Germain

Article #3 Allocation of Funds from Fiscal 2021 Free Cash: LaFond gave an overview of the items.

It was discussed that no recommendation will be made at this time by either Finance Committee or Select Board.

Article #4 Part B - Enterprise, Stabilization and OPEB funding:

Motion to recommend Article #4 to Annual Town Meeting by Townsend, second by Hoffman.

Roll Call – Affirmative: Bogart, Hoffman, Townsend, Hewins

Motion by Sulger to recommend to Town Meeting Article # 4 as written in the warrant, second by Holmes.

Roll Call: Affirmative: Holmes, Sulger, Macrina, Meagher, Cullum, Boudreau & Germain

Article #5 Unpaid Bills:

Bogart questioned what the invoice was for. LaMay explained that the solar panels generate credits, the town purchases the power and applies them to utility bills.

Motion to recommend Article #5 to Annual Town Meeting by Townsend, second by Hoffman.

Roll Call – Affirmative: Bogart, Hoffman, Townsend, Hewins

Motion by Holmes to recommend to Town Meeting Article #5 as written in the warrant, second by Sulger.

Roll Call: Affirmative: Holmes, Sulger, Macrina, Meagher, Cullum, Boudreau & Germain

Article #6 – Capital Improvement Items:

Germain explained that the Finance Committee has discussed these items with the Committee and wanted there to be full transparency that as the Capital Outlay Committee has not met, the Finance Committee took on these items. Germain gave an explanation of each item and the

need for them. Each of these items were vetted with the Department Head on the need. More of an explanation is needed from I.T. on the town-wide technology line item.

Holmes stated he would like to see the cost of the Plymouth Street water line put into the Capital Budget.

Germain stated that this project is a dead end water line that has no one connected to it. The amount does not reflect the tie end numbers, for example the wells would have to be decommissioned and there are just so many unknowns.

LaFond stated the cost of the tie-ins is not known and the Town is in a situation where 19 wells are being tested and only a few have tested positive. The Town does not know if those other homes will be required to be tied into the water line. It will need to be discussed how much of a buffer should be put in the warrant to tie those other homes in. We know there are 4-5 homes right now. This amount will be more than \$400,000. The debt and interest can be taken out of the debt and stabilization fund over time. It is difficult to build this into the Capital Plan when there are so many unknowns. He recommended potentially bundling in the library HVAC and improvements to Town Hall siding and painting into the bonding with the water line. The cost of the library project is unknown.

Germain stated there is not enough information on the costs to risk not borrowing the money.

Townsend stated he thinks the bonding is a good idea. There are a number of articles the Finance Committee has not voted on and would like the Select Board to table this article until they have the Finance Committee recommendations.

Hoffman asked for details on the town-wide technology amount. Superintendent Scott Knief stated that \$100,000 of that is for district-wide chrome books and also includes, leases and replacement of computers town-wide as well as access points & broadband support town-wide for servers.

Motion by Townsend to table recommendation on Article #6, second by Hoffman.

Holmes stated the goal was to discuss and analyze the issues. There is a lot of unknown in a lot of these projects and feels it would be prudent to look at where money can be saved and does not want to spend this money and bond. He would like feedback from LaMay on the best way to handle how this should be funded.

Bogart questioned Holmes that if the funds for the Capital items are spent, there will be approximately \$72,000 left in the account. He concurs with Holmes recommendation to see where money can be saved.

LaFond stated that this money is replenished directly to this account every year.

Roll Call – Affirmative: Bogart, Hoffman, Townsend, Hewins

5 Minute Break at 8:13pm

Article #7 Community Preservation Committee:

Germain stated the Finance Committee would like more information on this prior to recommending.

Motion by Townsend to table Article #7 recommendation, second by Bogart.

Roll Call – Affirmative: Bogart, Hoffman, Townsend & Hewins

Article #8 Plymouth Street Water Line Extension: LaFond stated this article needs to be updated to include bonding.

Motion to table recommendation for Article #8 by Townsend, second by Hoffman.

Roll Call – Affirmative: Bogart, Hoffman, Townsend, Hewins.

Article #9 Permit Conditions: Townsend recused himself as he may be an abutter to a property this affects.

Hewins gave overview of the article – There was a certain project that came to the attention of Hewins & Germain was specifically a solar project. From Hewins perspective this hypothetical project could pertain to a property that hypothetically could be controlled by the Redevelopment Authority. A situation where someone who owns the project on the land and then that person sells the project to a new owner and is not sure on what to do with the permits.

Germain stated the intent is to protect the land owner. Permits would be transferred in to the new owner's names and the new owners would then appear before the permitting boards so everyone can be on the same page as to what permits are on the property and what is intended of the project.

Bogart suggested tabling votes that are not finance articles.

Motion by Bogart to table Article #9, second by Hoffman

Motion by Bogart to table Article #10, second by Hoffman

Roll Call – Affirmative: Bogart, Hoffman, Hewins, Townsend

Motion by Townsend to table Article #11, second by Hoffman

Roll Call – Affirmative: Bogart, Hoffman, Hewins, Townsend

Article #12 & #13 Finance Committee & Capital Outlay Bylaw change: Germain reviewed the proposed changes. The Finance Committee is a watch dog committee and cannot spend any money other than shortfall funding approvals and grants to non-profit agencies. The Capital Outlay Committee By-law change has the Departments go through three approvals. The Capital Outlay is not an active committee at this time. A suggestion was made by a member of the Finance Committee to make the Capital Outlay a sub-committee of the Finance Committee.

He would like the transparency on the money items to be better so the taxpayers can feel good about the decisions being made.

Motion to table Article #12 & 13 by Townsend, second by Bogart.

Roll Call – Affirmative: Bogart, Townsend, Hoffman, Hewins

Motion to table Article #14 by Bogart, second by Hoffman.

Roll Call – Affirmative: Bogart, Townsend, Hoffman, Hewins

Motion to Adjourn Finance Committee at 8:51pm, second by Budreau

Holmes noted on Article #6 the Finance Committee was to take up the matter discuss it and come back to the Select Board. Germain noted that even if the Capital Outlay were to take up the matter, the Finance Committee can still make a recommendation on it. Holmes has intentionally delayed a discussion on this as he feels it is not the Finance Committee's jurisdiction to craft this article. He is looking for direction on how this should be handled.

Germain stated the Finance Committee will look at the Capital Outlay article and come back to the Select Board so it does not need to be hashed out again.

Holmes stated he does not think this is in the jurisdiction of the Finance Committee and would like direction of the Select Board on how the Finance Committee should move forward with the article.

LaFond recommended the Select Board recommend that the Finance Committee make a recommendation on the article as each item has been vetted by the Finance Committee through individual meetings with each Department Head. Hewins would like the Finance Committee's recommendation on this article. Townsend would also like the Finance Committee's recommendation on this article.

Motion by Townsend to get a recommendation on Article #6 from the Finance Committee, second by Hoffman.

Roll Call – Affirmative: Bogart, Hoffman, Townsend, Hewins.

Roll Call for adjournment of the Finance Committee at 9:00pm – Affirmative: Holmes, Meagher, Sulger, Cullum, Boudreau, Germain & Macrina

Meeting resumed at 9:15pm

Hewins gave an overview of remaining article topics.

Hewins requested that Article #18 be pulled from the warrant as this particular parcel is not owned by the Town. It is however, in the process of becoming in tax possession.

Motion to table Articles #15-#28 by Hoffman, second by Townsend.

Roll Call –Affirmative: Bogart, Hoffman, Townsend and Hewins

Motion to adjourn at 9:17pm by Townsend, second by Hoffman.

Roll call – Affirmative: Bogart, Hoffman, Townsend & Hewins