



## CARVER FINANCE COMMITTEE MINUTES OF MARCH 7, 2022, MEETING

Present: Chairman Alan Germain, Vice-Chairman Adam Holmes: Bill Cullum, Ron Clarke, Walter Cole, Tony Macrina, Patrick Meagher, and Elizabeth Sulger.

Capital Outlay Members Present: Chairwoman Elizabeth Sulger, Andy Cardarelli, James Hoffman, and Marie Zweigman.

Also Present: Bob Fennessy, Sue Moquin and Recording Secretary Ashley Swartz.

Mr. Germain opened the meeting at 7:04 P.M. with the Pledge of Allegiance. Mr. Germain then asked if there were any public comments and heard none.

Meeting will be recorded by Area 58

Public comment. Hearing none.

Town Administrator, Finance Director update: Mr. Fennessy -Warrant says final stage and is with KP Law right now. Said he would get it out to everyone by tomorrow and asked members not to share publicly. Mr. Germain addressed that it should say "draft" and they understand this is not the final copy. Mr. Holmes asked if the copy they receive tomorrow should have final numbers and they were told the numbers are finalized when they go to print.

Sue – DOR has the number, but it is waiting to be certified. Mr. Germain asked if the number approximated for free cash would be correct – Sue said it will be in the ballpark. Mr. Holmes asked why it was so late for the free cash to be finalized – Sue explained that the change-over of people caused some confusion in the numbers and resulting in delays. Entries necessary to finalize this budget were not made. Ms. Sulger asked if the year was closed (it is) it is just entries that need to be completed. Ms. Sulger also asked about the auditor's report that they usually receive in March. Mr. Germain noted that the Finance Committee was not invited to that meeting to go over these details. Mr. Germain noted some money that is sitting in accounts from previous years, vocalizing his frustration for that money not coming out of those years. Sue said in her past positions she would ask departments at the end of the year if money could come out of those accounts. The conversation continued regarding money sitting in accounts. Mr. Holmes asked if these are items that should have been caught in the audit. Sue explained that if everything balances it works out and they do not look at every line item. Ms. Sulger continued by saying the roll-ups are usually what is audited – not the line items. Mr. Macrina added that they are not looking at Town Policy – they are just seeing that money balances. Mr. Germain said he is not



saying anything was “missed” he thinks some of the money could be sitting in accounts on purpose and Ms. Sulger said because some accounts are round numbers – they could indicate projects that haven’t been done yet. Sue said she would be taking this money out of the budget and added to a reserve – clearly labeled – and it should be voted out of the reserve when a project comes along. The final answer was that there should be free cash.

Re consideration of COA budget at the request of the ITA Joint meeting with Capital Outlay: Mr. Fennessy noted that there are needs that haven’t been addressed – which is why they run lean. The outreach coordinator is part time and is overloaded with work. Mr. Fennessy is proposing making it a full-time position and adding \$19,993 to make it a full-time position. There is also a Shine Coordinator – that is a volunteer position – he is looking to make it a stipend position of \$7,500. \$27,493 total.

There is a program like Meals-on-Wheels – done with volunteers and he says more people are going than coming to help. These volunteers are not reimbursed for miles and with the price of gas going up it is harder to get people for this program. He is proposing \$600 a month or \$7,200 per year.

Mr. Holmes asked where the \$34,693 would come from. Sue said there is about \$31,000 that there is a delta on. With Health Insurance coming in lower (3% rather than 5%) there could be enough. Mr. Holmes asked if there were other considerations (like benefits) for the added salary. Mr. Fennessy said the only other cost would be if the employee takes the insurance (which is lower than anticipated). Mr. Holmes was concerned about adding a full-time employee (FTE) when so many departments are looking for FTE’s. Mr. Clarke noted that if you look at the COA they are half staffed compared to others. Ms. Sulger asked about the \$30,000 grant and learned it is received every year.

Ms. Sulger made a motion to recommend the additional budget (salary, stipend, and milage), seconded by Mr. Meagher, approved 7-0-1 with Mr. Clarke abstaining. Mr. Germain said he would like something to show the numbers that the increases can be handled. Sue handed out numbers to show the excess for health insurance.

Capital budget, bond discussion – Met last week and found some changes. Found more funds for the revenue that was coming in. She noted that free cash can change these numbers.

HVAC for the library – thinks this can wait another year. Sue found some ARPA funding for HVAC and Radio.

Dump truck for O&M was taken out of the budget.

Chief Weston said the **\*\*BREAKER\*\*** can be moved to FY ’24.

ARPA funding received \$615,000 – Mr. Fennessy said the Select Board talked about these funds. They suggested going slow using these funds allowing it to build up – he thinks they won’t want to use the funds for a capital project if other funds are available.

Initial targeted funds \$2.153M (not including the ARPA funds).

\$2.4 in projects – Mr. Germain pointed out that there were no totals finalized yet and said there was no firm numbers to do anything with at the present moment. He said he was confused how we were going to get the number without the bond. Ms. Sulger said they wanted to do a fund for the library, but it wouldn’t be done until the fund had enough money.

Mr. Clarke asked if there was a plan on the warrant to close out some of the accounts with money in them. Ms. Sulger explained that Plymouth used ARPA funds for HVAC and radio towers. There’s about \$1.1M that needs applications submitted for ARPA. Mr. Holmes asked



what the free cash money was going to – Sue gave a list of items. After this program there will be no free cash left. Mr. Germain asked why North Carver wasn't paying for their bills using the surplus. Ms. Sulger said she didn't feel this was final until the total numbers were finalized. Sue pointed out some duplicate line items in the report and said she can't get answers she needs. Mr. Clarke asked when the latest a warrant has to be posted – and when the budget needs to be posted. This applies to the general fund budget and can exclude the Capital budget. Mr. Clarke asked why they no longer wanted to bond the money. Ms. Sulger explained the different bond scenarios – favoring the third scenario paying less money back. She also noted that in 2027 they will no longer be paying the fire trucks. Mr. Germain asked Bob if we were all set with the general government budget. He said it was. A conversation about when the next meeting should occur in order to meet the deadlines. Mr. Clarke believed the steps still needed was to find out the accounts that have extra revenue and then finalize the free cash. It also needed to be determined what the \$615,000 was going to be used for. Mr. Hoffman said the reason this conversation came up was to have a plan B in case the bonding didn't get approved. He explained that some money is now going to be earmarked to be put towards these projects. Mr. Germain is concerned about putting projects off longer – rates could be higher, problems could get worse, etc. Bob suggested voting the budget tonight with the authorization of him presenting it. Mr. Germain said he would accept a motion of Bob presenting the budget, asking Sue to send the updated budget tomorrow.

Mr. Holmes asked what Capital budget is short – Ms. Sulger said free cash and the ARPA funds. He asked what in this plan was going to be taken out of free cash – but nothing had been taken out yet. Mr. Holmes said he would like to see a list of what the free cash is going to be spent on – we usually see this by now. A discussion continued about the gaps in the budget.

Sue reviewed the free cash line items for Capital with the debt removed. She then continued with the anticipated other line items for these funds. Mr. Germain said Capital Outlay can make their adjustments once free cash is approved. Motion to have the Town Administrator present the government side of the budget, subject to receipt and approval of the final budget made by Mr. Clarke, seconded by Ms. Sulger. Approved unanimously 8-0-0.

Motion to recommend the Capital Outlay budget made by Mr. Clarke, seconded by Mr. Holmes, approved 7-0-1 with Ms. Sulger abstaining.

Motion to recommend the Inspectional Services budget made by Ms. Sulger, seconded by Mr. Clarke, approved unanimously 8-0-0.

Mr. Macrina raised a concern about the Select Board cancelling their commitment to the Finance Committee. Mr. Germain clarified that Mr. Townsend was concerned it wouldn't be ready to present and that's why the meeting was changed.

There was a discussion about the need for meeting with the Selectboard if Bob presented the budget. There was further discussion about the by-laws related to Finance. Mr. Holmes said this should be a topic of discussion. Mr. Germain elaborated that the Finance Committee serves as an advisory board. Mr. Clarke argued that the meeting should be kept with Selectboard to discuss the article.

Mr. Macrina suggested a checks and balance/contingency plan to make sure an issue like this doesn't happen again (regarding the timetable and confusion). Bob said Sue is making sense of it – saying, “she knows her stuff” and “feels totally confident” in what she is doing. Mr. Germain commented that it was difficult for Bob and Sue to come in during budget season and they have done a good job, as well as Rob. Mr. Cardarelli suggested writing a letter to the Selectboard

about setting up new financial protocols – in the event someone leaves – so everything is not turned upside down. He said putting it in a policy with the Selectboard would ensure this gets done even if someone leaves.

**Next Meetings:** March 15<sup>th</sup> @ 6PM with the Select Board.

Additional comments

Motion to adjourn Mr. Clarke, seconded by Ms. Sulger, unanimously approved 8-0-0.  
Adjourned 9:07 PM

Minutes submitted by Ashley Swartz.

Voted & Approved