



**TOWN COUNCIL
COUNCIL CHAMBERS
Virtual Meeting
SPECIAL MEETING
APRIL 28, 2021
APPROVED MINUTES**

1) CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Trinks called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.

Present: Mayor Donald Trinks, Deputy Mayor Joe McAuliffe, Councilor Nuchette Black-Burke, Councilor Lisa Rampulla Bress, Councilor James Dobler, Councilor James Govoni, Councilor Donald Jepsen, Councilor Lenworth Walker and Councilor Kenneth Wilkos

2) PUBLIC COMMENT

Susan Miller 130 Palisado Avenue said she is hoping to push the referendum date back a week for absentee budget and to inform the public what's in the budget.

3) FINAL DELIBERATIONS AND VOTE

Town Manager Souza discussed the different options of reducing the tax increase based on expenditure reductions, revenue alterations, and increased use of opening cash.

Expenditure reduction scenarios include one-time, non-recurring capital items and items that the town staff believes they will be able to utilize federal recovery funding that is coming or use the fund balance. The different scenarios bring the tax increase from 1.81% to .76%, .48%, .24% and 0%, respectively.

Councilor Jepsen asked if Dr. Hill was contacted. Town Manager Souza said that he did speak to the superintendent and felt that cuts to the BOE budget is a Town Council policy question and the guidance he received from Monday night's meeting did not indicate asking the BOE to reduce expenditures.

Deputy Mayor McAuliffe said he thinks the .48% increase makes the most sense and is reasonable for the citizens.

Councilor Bress said that the .48% increase makes sure services are covered and the increase is manageable for citizens.

Councilor Dobler said that in the explanation, .48% increase cuts will be made up from other sources which won't affect the citizens, where the other scenarios do.

Councilor Black Burke said she agrees with .48% increase based on what other councilors mentioned.



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Councilor Jepsen said there was a shared goal of getting the tax increase to 0%. He has a concern that there is not equity in this based on the BOE not taking their share in the reduction. He also went on to say that he hopes the use of opening cash can be eliminated in the future.

Councilor Bress said there are really no cuts since they will be funded through other means. She went on to say there were no sacrifices and yet the increase is close to zero at .48%.

Councilor Walker said the numbers are low enough and palatable to residents. He said the amount of tax dollars that goes to supporting the BOE is not a true reflection of what tax payers pay due to other support they get through avenues such as capital improvements. He is concerned about making decisions on the basis of we 'may' be able to recoup funding. He would like the BOE to contribute to the reductions needed.

Councilor Jepsen said that he did propose the \$1.1 million increase in use of opening cash. The additional \$283,000 needed to bring the tax increase down is not worth fighting over. He is more worried about 3 years from now.

Mayor Trinks said the BOE is doing what they need to do for the students and their families. He went on to discuss how we are a community, even though you may not use each and every town or BOE service provided, we are here for the community. The federal money is a dice roll on what it can be used on. The cost to get to a zero percent increase is too much, and not just from a financial stand point. \$100,000 is being removed from the BOE in the .48% scenario. The .48% increase preserves the services in town.

Councilor Wilkos said he agrees on some of the things, but disagrees with the tax increase. He was hoping for a 0% tax increase and the BOE should step up to the plate and offer reductions. He asked his fellow council members if they will support Councilor Jepsen's caveat not to use opening cash in the future.

Councilor Jepsen would like to speak his opinion during the motions, where it is procedurally appropriate.

Councilor Govoni likes what Councilor Wilkos is proposing.

Deputy Mayor McAuliffe wanted clarification as to whether the republicans support scenario B, the .48%. Councilor Jepsen said they do, but with his proposals that he will discuss during motions.

Councilor Bress wanted to make clear that the town manager and staff provided exactly what was asked of them, no BOE cuts. And that there is a \$100,000 cut to the BOE budget with a .48% tax increase.

Mayor Trinks added that it is true we don't know what the federal funding can be used for, and that in scenario B, the .48% is on the town side but other funding will be able to be used. So



he doesn't see why the BOE should have to share in the reductions, because in essence, the town is not cutting anything.

Councilor Jepsen said that he agrees with what the Mayor said, but it's more about optics. The councilors spend more time arguing about small amounts of monies. He agrees with the budget and it helps to not create a hole for the future years.

Councilor Wilkos said if the federal monies will be coming, in reality we are not taking anything out of the budget, so we should be able to come to a zero percent increase easily, more so than any other year. He thinks the .48% increase is respectable.

Councilor Govoni agrees with his fellow councilors. He said it would have been nice to understand how a cut would affect the BOE, even though they may not ask for it. In the past they have discussed what cuts to their budget would mean.

Councilor Jepsen made a motion to take a 10 recess, seconded by Councilor Bress.

Motion Passed 9-0-0

EXPENDITURES

Board of Education

MOVED by Deputy Mayor McAuliffe, seconded by Councilor Jepsen to accept the proposed budget for the Board of Education of \$74,366,390.

Motion Passed 9-0-0

Town Support for Education

MOVED by Councilor Bress, seconded by Deputy Mayor McAuliffe to accept the proposed budget for Town Support for Education of \$5,485,280.

Motion Passed 9-0-0

Safety Services

MOVED by Councilor Dobler, seconded by Deputy Mayor McAuliffe to amend the proposed budget for Safety Services of \$11,632,090 by \$90,000 to \$11,542,090.

Motion Passed 9-0-0



Recreation & Leisure Services

MOVED by Councilor Black Burke, seconded by Deputy Mayor to amend the proposed budget for Recreation & Leisure Services of \$2,194,900 by \$13,000 to \$2,181,900.

Motion Passed 9-0-0

Human Services

MOVED by Councilor Govoni, seconded by Deputy Mayor McAuliffe to accept the proposed budget for Human Services of \$456,550.

Motion Passed 9-0-0

Health Services

MOVED by Councilor Jepsen, seconded by Deputy Mayor McAuliffe to accept the proposed budget for Human Services of \$558,930.

Motion Passed 9-0-0

Library Services

MOVED by Councilor Walker, seconded by Deputy Mayor McAuliffe to accept the proposed budget for Library Services of \$1,801,510.

Motion Passed 9-0-0

Development Services

MOVED by Deputy Mayor McAuliffe, seconded by Councilor Bress to accept the proposed budget for Development Services of \$1,437,150.

Motion Passed 9-0-0

Community Development

MOVED by Councilor Bress, seconded by Deputy Mayor McAuliffe to accept the proposed budget for Community Development of \$103,840.

Motion Passed 9-0-0

Public Works & Engineering

MOVED by Councilor Wilkos, seconded by Deputy Mayor McAuliffe to accept the proposed budget for Public Works & Engineering of \$6,822,340.

Motion Passed 9-0-0



Information Services

MOVED by Councilor Jepsen, seconded by Deputy Mayor McAuliffe to accept the proposed budget for Information Services of \$581,530.

Motion Passed 9-0-0

Administrative Services

MOVED by Councilor Dobler, seconded by Deputy Mayor McAuliffe to amend the proposed budget for Administrative Services of \$2,694,640 by \$60,000 to \$2,634,640.

Motion Passed 9-0-0

General Government

MOVED by Deputy Mayor McAuliffe, seconded by Councilor Bress to accept the proposed budget for General Government of \$1,098,590.

Motion Passed 9-0-0

General Services

MOVED by Councilor Govoni, seconded by Deputy Mayor McAuliffe to accept the proposed budget for General Services of \$16,836,880 by \$120,000 to \$16,716,880.

Motion Passed 9-0-0

Expenditure Totals

MOVED by Councilor Dobler, seconded by Deputy Mayor McAuliffe to amend the total proposed General Fund expenditures for the FY 2022 budget of \$126,070,620 by \$283,000 to \$125,787,620 based on the motions discussed.

Motion Passed 9-0-0

REVENUES

MOVED by Deputy Mayor McAuliffe, seconded by Councilor Bress to increase the revenue line #52752 Opening Cash under the Miscellaneous Revenues revenue category by \$1,100,000 (a change of \$900,000 to \$2,000,000).

Motion Passed 5-4-0 (Councilors Govoni, Jepsen, Walker and Wilkos against)

Councilor Jepsen made an amendment to add the following language to the above motion as follows:



RESOLVED, that the Town Manager is directed to no longer prepare future budgets with Opening Cash, which in this year's proposed budget appears on page B-4.

Councilor Jepsen went on to explain that this is an opportunity to get the opening cash to zero and discussed how the concept of saving and using cash works. He would like to instead use the savings account to balance the budget, use it for one-time expenses and emergencies, and to keep it at an amount that helps with bonding. He said this would be a step to institute discipline to live within our means.

Deputy Mayor McAuliffe said they went through these scenarios in the Finance Committee meetings, but he doesn't see the advantage of mandating the town manager and staff not to propose use of opening cash. This would tie their hands. The fund balance is past 20% and this is a good use of the overage.

Councilor Jepsen is saying don't not use it, just from a budgetary aspect, take out the use of opening cash.

Deputy Mayor McAuliffe said he feels we are living within our means and wanted to know about after use of the \$2.2 million in opening cash. Town Manager Souza said it will be a little less than 21% at the end of FY 22 based on projected use of fund balance and revenues coming in where they are budgeted.

Councilor Jepsen doesn't feel it ties anyone's hands. This is an attempt to stop the constant dipping into the savings account for day to day expenses.

Councilor Dobler said he is on board from a logistic stand point. But in reality the first budget not have use of opening cash in it, but will the council be able to instruct the town manager to add in opening cash. Councilor Jepsen said yes and that decision can be made prior to the budget process when parameters are voted on.

Councilor Bress said she doesn't think that the budget vote today is the place to vote on it. She would like to hear more about this and possibly vote on it in the future.

Mayor Trinks added that he doesn't conceptually disagree, but putting it on tonight's agenda isn't the right time. It would be better to bring it to the Finance Committee and look at the good, the bad and the ugly of it.

Councilor Jepsen said that this is not new. He proposed in the Finance Committee that he agreed to the \$2.2 million use of opening cash only if the future structure is changed.

Councilor Bress said she agreed to use of the \$2.2 million in opening cash for this year only because of the extenuating circumstances due to the pandemic, and is willing to bring the use of opening cash to a zero balance in the future.



Councilor Dobler said he is also conceptually in favor of what Councilor Jepsen is proposing but he would like more time to take a look at it and revisit it in the near future.

Councilor Walker said that this topic is not new, but it has been discussed going back to prior years. It provides a much more structured outlook and how we use taxpayer dollars. He agrees with Councilor Jepsen to get rid of the opening cash but allow future councils to put it back into the process.

Councilor Dobler would like to see this on the agenda for the June meeting to have more time to think about this and get more details. He is not proposing to kick the can down the road long term.

Motion For The Amendment

RESOLVED, that the Town Manager is directed to no longer prepare future budgets with Opening Cash, which in this year's proposed budget appears on page B-4.

Motion Failed 4-5-0 (Mayor Don Trinks, Deputy Mayor Joe McAuliffe and Councilors Black-Burke, Dobler and Rampulla Bress against)

MOVED by Deputy Mayor McAuliffe, seconded by Councilor Bress to increase the revenue line #52752 Opening Cash under the Miscellaneous Revenues revenue category by \$1,100,000 (a change of \$900,000 to \$2,000,000).

Motion Passed 5-4-0 (Councilors Govoni, Jepsen, Walker and Wilkos against)

MOVED by Deputy Mayor McAuliffe, seconded by Councilor Bress to decrease revenue line #51002 Current Levy by \$1,383,000 to balance the revenues with expenditures (Current Levy is changed from \$106,105,100 to \$104,722,100).

Motion Passed 5-4-0 (Councilors Govoni, Jepsen, Walker and Wilkos against)

MOVED by Deputy Mayor McAuliffe, seconded by Councilor Bress to amend the proposed budget for overall Revenues of \$126,070,620 by \$283,000 to \$125,787,620.

Motion Passed 5-4-0 (Councilors Govoni, Jepsen, Walker and Wilkos against)

TAX COLLECTION RATE

MOVED by Councilor Dobler, seconded by Deputy Mayor McAuliffe to accept the FY 2022 proposed tax collection rate of 98.80%.

Motion Passed 5-4-0 (Councilors Govoni, Jepsen, Walker and Wilkos against)



SENIOR TAX RELIEF

MOVED by Mayor Deputy Mayor, seconded by Councilor Bress to accept the amount FY 22 proposed for senior tax relief of \$130,000.

Motion Passed 9-0-0

ENTERPRISE FUNDS

Landfill Enterprise Fund

MOVED by Councilor Bress, seconded by Deputy Mayor McAuliffe to accept the proposed budget for the Landfill Enterprise Fund of \$2,743,170.

Motion Passed 9-0-0

Resident Transfer Station Enterprise Fund

MOVED by Councilor Govoni, seconded by Deputy Mayor McAuliffe to accept the proposed budget for the Resident Transfer Station Enterprise Fund of \$332,930.

Motion Passed 9-0-0

Caring Connection Adult Day Care Center

MOVED by Councilor Walker, seconded by Deputy Mayor McAuliffe to accept the proposed budget for the Caring Connection Adult Day Care Center of \$442,230.

Motion Passed 8-1-0 (Councilor Jepsen against)

Windsor Child Development Enterprise Fund

MOVED by Councilor Black Burke, seconded by Deputy Mayor McAuliffe to accept the proposed budget for the Windsor Child Development Enterprise Fund of \$1,299,290.

Motion Passed 9-0-0

OTHER FINAL MOTIONS

Price Guide

MOVED by Councilor Jepsen, seconded by Deputy Mayor McAuliffe to accept the Price Guide as proposed.

Motion Passed 9-0-0



4) SET DATE FOR ANNUAL VOTE ON BUDGET REFERENDUM

MOVED by Deputy Mayor McAuliffe, seconded by Councilor Bress that the annual vote on the budget be held on Tuesday, May 11, 2021 between the hours of 6:00 a.m. and 8:00 p.m. at all 7 polling places.

Councilor Bress stated that even though some residents think more time should be given, she feels there is enough time.

Councilor Jepsen agreed and added that the *Charter* states that the referendum is to be held on the second Tuesday in May.

Motion Passed 9-0-0

Mayor Trinks thanked the Town Manager, the Assistant Town Manager, the Directors and the Town Council. He looks forward to bringing this budget to the residents.

Councilor Jepsen thanked the Mayor for showing him honor and dignity and the communication. This year was no exception.

5) ADJOURNMENT

MOVED by Councilor Bress and seconded by Deputy Mayor McAuliffe to adjourn the meeting at 8:43 p.m.

Motion Passed 9-0-0

Respectfully Submitted,

Linda Collins
Recording Secretary