

BILLERICA FINANCE COMMITTEE MINUTES
March 11, 2021

A Meeting of the Billerica Finance Committee was held on Thursday March 11, 2021 at 7:00 p.m. via Zoom Video Conferencing Communication App.

Present: David Gagliardi, Chairman; Douglas Meagher, Vice Chairman; Mary McBride, Secretary; Donald Damon, Member; Rino Moriconi, Member; Cheri Gargalianos, Member; Philip Newfell, Member; John Kleschinsky, Member; Doug Fogerty, Member; John Mulloy, Member; Kelley Sardina, 1st Associate; Sharon Healey, 2nd Associate; Town Accountant Paul Watson, Ex-Officio; and Joyce MacMillan, Recording Clerk.

CALL TO ORDER:

Chairman David Gagliardi called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

Mike Rosa, Select Board Chairman – Speaking in regard to the Select Board stipend. Mr. Rosa stated that he, Selectmen Burns and Burrows all donate their stipends. He believes Selectmen Conway and Deslauria do as well. He is hoping the committee supports it and does not separate the article.

FY22 BUDGET:

Recreation Budget – David Grubb, Recreation Director

Standard budget except for the maintenance coordinator position which has been moved to the new Facilities Dept. This gives us an \$1,100 deduction in our supplies and expenses. There was a \$7,000 expense added for port a potty in contract services, this is for the addition of hand washing stations.

Chairman Gagliardi opened the floor to the committee for questions or concerns. There is a vacant position when will it be filled. The position has been vacant since last February and due to COVID there was no need to fill it right away but hoping to have it filled by this May. Seasonal help or through grants – how many non-budgeted employees. They bring in about 60 to 65 seasonal staff for the summer including instructors, camp counselors, lifeguards, etc. They so not have any permanent part time help. The funds are taken from the revolving account. Two employees got a large jump in salary, this is due to the salary study that was completed. One was the other was due to the position going from part time to full time. There was a question asking if Mr. Curran could forward a copy of the salary study to the Finance committee. Mr. Curran stated he would, and it can also be found in last year's budget book.

Cheri Gargalianos joined the meeting at 7:12 pm

Doug Meagher seconded by Don Damon made a motion to recommend the Recreation Budget in the amount of \$448,344.

A roll call vote was taken

It was voted 10-0-1:

John Kleschinsky – Aye
Cheri Gargaliano - Abstain
Rino Moriconi - Aye
Doug Meagher – Aye
Don Damon – Aye
John Mulloy – Aye
Mary McBride – Aye
Doug Fogerty – Aye
Patrick Logue - Aye
Phil Newfell - Aye
Dave Gagliardi - Aye

Council on Aging – Jean Bushnell, COA Director

Chairman Gagliardi has recused himself from this portion of the meeting. Vice Chairman Meagher will run this portion.

Jean Bushnell sent an annual budget report presentation for FY2021 to the committee prior to the meeting, it included a list of accomplishments and all the COA had to overcome due to COVID. Jean went over the budget, it has increased about \$30,000 mostly due to collective bargaining and the salary survey. She also went over how the COA reinvented itself to be sure all the Billerica senior programs were kept running. Some of the programs include Walking group, respite care program, companion program, Meals on Wheels, and many food programs, support groups, health and wellness programs, social programs, many community partnerships, the Memory Café, flu clinics, and the list goes on. There were also many staff changes back in FY 2020. Working with the Board of Health they did a soft opening of the COA building in July 2020.

Vice Chairman Meagher opened the floor to the committee for questions or concerns. About how many hours of volunteer time do you think you leverage with the small number of staff you have? Typically, there is about 400 volunteers a year that give between 3 to 5 hours a week. Over 50 % of the operational hours comes from volunteers. About how many senior citizens do we have in Billerica? There are about 10,000 that are 60 and older. About how many of them use the COA? There are about 2,000 that are utilizing a COA program at any given time. Before COVID there were about 160 people in and out of the building at any given time. The salaries that are paid by respite and grants are not listed in the budget because they are off budget items and not paid for within the budget. There have been a lot of salary increases due to the salary study, is this something we do on a rotating basis? This is the first one done in the 11 years since Mr. Curran has been here. There was one done before Mr. Curran got here. There is a regional Health collaborative to provide mental health services in the communities that our police department is part of and the COA social worker also works with.

Mary McBride seconded by Don Damon made a motion to recommend the Council on Aging Budget in the amount of \$395,667.

A roll call vote was taken

It was voted 11-0:

John Kleschinsky – Aye

Cheri Gargalianos - Aye
Rino Moriconi - Aye
Don Damon – Aye
John Mulloy – Aye
Mary McBride – Aye
Doug Fogerty – Aye
Patrick Logue - Aye
Phil Newfell – Aye
Kelley Sardina - Aye
Doug Meagher – Aye

Conservation Budget – Isabel Tourkantonis, Conservation Director

Isabel Tourkantonis sent an annual report to the committee prior to the meeting. The report covered their regulatory reviews, Coordination and collaborations, projects, and the budget. The budget shows an increase of about \$14,000 which is associated with contractual obligations and step salary increases.

Chairman Gagliardi opened the floor to the committee for questions or concerns. How is the beaver issue this year? They are working with the board of health, they are authorized by the state to issue emergency beaver permits whenever human health, safety or property is threatened. The town does have funds allocated to the yearly management of beavers.

Doug Meagher seconded by Rino Moriconi made a motion to recommend the Conservation Budget in the amount of \$248,985.

A roll call vote was taken
It was voted 11-0:

John Kleschinsky – Aye
Cheri Gargalianos - Aye
Rino Moriconi - Aye
Doug Meagher – Aye
Don Damon – Aye
John Mulloy – Aye
Mary McBride – Aye
Doug Fogerty – Aye
Patrick Logue - Aye
Phil Newfell - Aye
Dave Gagliardi - Aye

Board of Health – Kristel Bennett, BOH Director

Kristel Bennett also prepared a COVID-19 report for the committee and had sent it to them prior to the meeting. The overall BOH budget is increasing \$27,000 due to step increases, contractual obligations, town salary survey and COVID-19. Everything since last March has been pandemic driven, there were a ton of cases in the community. Many people from the school department, Library, COA and others have come together to help with contact tracing. They received over 400, possibly 500 COVID complaints, such as businesses

opening and not wearing masks, social distancing, etc. Thankfully, we are coming out of this and looking forward to a somewhat normal year ahead. They had taken a step back from food inspections to concentrate on COVID complaints. They are now getting back on track with the food inspections.

Mr. Curran wanted to say that Kristel started with the department just prior to the pandemic. She was just stepping into her position and just getting to know her coworkers. Kristel had to jump right into emergency pandemic mode. Kristel and her department along with many other departments did a wonderful job with keeping the community informed and helping to keep them safe and on top of things.

Chairman Gagliardi opened the floor to the committee for questions or concerns. How much extra money did COVID cost the BOH? There was a lot of extra funding through the federal and state government, which has helped with the public health nurse's overtime, PPE's, supplies, and for Rich Berube who had retired came back to help. So, there is barely any impact to the budget. Did the town only receive 500 doses of vaccine and then the state came back and said they would handle the vaccines? Yes, and enough to cover the 2nd doses. As far as citations, there were 20 given, how were they rectified? Most of them were from complaints of staff not wearing face coverings, the citation was issued after a 2nd warning. None of the citations were appealed. How many were repeat offenders? Only a handful really.

Doug Meagher seconded by Rino Moriconi made a motion to recommend the Board of Health Budget in the amount of \$450,065.

A roll call vote was taken

It was voted 11-0:

John Kleschinsky – Aye
Cheri Gargalianos - Aye
Rino Moriconi - Aye
Doug Meagher – Aye
Don Damon – Aye
John Mulloy – Aye
Mary McBride – Aye
Doug Fogerty – Aye
Patrick Logue - Aye
Phil Newfell - Aye
Dave Gagliardi - Aye

Building Department – Mark LaLumiere, Building Commissioner

Mark LaLumiere – With the BOH, Conservation and Building Dept. being merged has worked out well, especially considering it was during a pandemic. Currently we are at about \$1.1 million in permit fees collected. It is a little behind from the previous FY. They have conducted approximately 3700 construction related inspections. It has been a trying year, conducting many inspections using technology and not actually entering the building. The budget is level funded except for salary increases.

Chairman Gagliardi opened the floor to the committee for questions or concerns. There is one opening in the department, currently there is a shortage of licensed inspectors in the state. Hopefully, it will be filled soon. Currently Mr. LaLumiere is the Director of Permitting Services, it is a bylaw position, he is still the Building Commissioner. Anyone of the three department heads (BOH, Conservation or Building) could hold the bylaw position. Code enforcement, how do we make that work better? We would love to have a dedicated person to code enforcement but at the same time we have an obligation to meet the construction requirement and activity to keep things moving forward. The dollar amount is the same, but why is Mark listed at a step 5 on one page and step 8/9 on another? It is a typo, should be an 8/9 on both pages. Car allowances of \$29,040 for a total of five vehicles.

Doug Meagher seconded by Don Damon made a motion to recommend the Building Department Budget in the amount of \$739,324.

A roll call vote was taken
It was voted 11-0:

John Kleschinsky – Aye
Cheri Gargalianos - Aye
Rino Moriconi - Aye
Doug Meagher – Aye
Don Damon – Aye
John Mulloy – Aye
Mary McBride – Aye
Doug Fogerty – Aye
Patrick Logue - Aye
Phil Newfell - Aye
Dave Gagliardi - Aye

Capital Budget – John Curran, Town Manager

John Curran, this budget is level funded. It's 2 million, same as last year. It is split into two parts, one is for capital which is for work around Town Hall, equipment, basically items that would come off the Short-term Capital Plan. The other part is 1.5 million road work and infrastructure, items that would come off Roadway Management Plan. Mr. Curran went over other plans that have impact on this budget.

Chairman Gagliardi opened the floor to the committee for questions or concerns. About 200 parcels not getting sewer once that project was complete. Not necessarily, the Select Board may choose to include them. Were there anything delayed due to COVID? PHR was delayed and free cash will not be as strong, but things should start righting themselves by 2023. Is there a newer version of the Roadway Management Plan that will track how the adjustments will be made? This the most current plan. Is the Boston Road North construction still on schedule? There is an article in the warrant to complete the design, believe it goes out to bid next February. Are sidewalks on any state road included in the 70% to be completed? Mr. Curran believes the state roads were left out of the analysis. However, they are trying to get them done, working with the state. Wondering about the COA and the Rec dept's future capital needs, they both seem to be needing a

new building. That fits into the Capital Facilities Assessment Committee. They will determine what the Town's needs are and address long term plan to address those issues. The 19-25 last of the town to have town sewer, once we get down to that list we are pretty much done. Correct, the total cost would be around 12 million for that last group. It's going to be a difficult decision. Water distribution, are we going to get an updated plan? It will probably be updated in a year or two, but it is working well for us right now. The school will be updated first then this one. Up to this point the Town has not need to use the Stabilization Fund for general debts. Do you anticipate the Town having to use that fund in the near future? We have two big pieces of debt coming up for water and wastewater and will probably have to move some money in the fall but not for anything that is unplanned. When do the Moody and S&P ratings come out? Usually when you do a borrowing. Is there any active discussion for a new middle school? Once the old study is updated then decisions will need to be made as to which schools need to be updated first and it will most likely be one of the middle schools.

Doug Meagher seconded by Mary McBride made a motion to recommend the Capital Budget in the amount of \$2,000,000.

A roll call vote was taken
It was voted 11-0:

John Kleschinsky – Aye
Cheri Gargalianos - Aye
Rino Moriconi - Aye
Doug Meagher – Aye
Don Damon – Aye
John Mulloy – Aye
Mary McBride – Aye
Doug Fogerty – Aye
Patrick Logue - Aye
Phil Newfell - Aye
Dave Gagliardi - Aye

Town/School Shared Cost – John Curran, Town Manager

This budget is going up from last year. Building insurance is level funded, health insurance has gone up 2.5%. Town Workers Comp, Town and School Unemployment Comp, and Town and School Medicare are all level funded. County retirement went up about 6.5% and the annual OPEB contribution was made as planned at 15% higher than LY.

Chairman Gagliardi opened the floor to the committee for questions or concerns. Would love to see Employee plus one as a health care option. It has been looked into, but it does not provide any financial benefits to the Town or the insured person.

Doug Meagher seconded by Mary McBride made a motion to recommend the Town/School Shared Budget in the amount of \$35,926,983.

A roll call vote was taken

It was voted 11-0:

John Kleschinsky – Aye
Cheri Gargalianos - Aye
Rino Moriconi - Aye
Doug Meagher – Aye
Don Damon – Aye
John Mulloy – Aye
Mary McBride – Aye
Doug Fogerty – Aye
Patrick Logue - Aye
Phil Newfell - Aye
Dave Gagliardi - Aye

Review and Vote for FinCom Spring Warrant Articles

This is a carryover from the previous meeting. Chairman Gagliardi explained for those who were not in attendance last meeting, the ideas Phil Newfell had brought forward and Cheri’s idea of splitting the first warrant article. All the ideas were discussed.

Chairman Gagliardi opened the floor to the committee for questions or concerns. Why separate the article? Basically, so it can be discussed and voted on separately. This committee has had significant deliberations on this and separating it would be moving in a positive direction. There has also been deliberation on this at Town Meeting. The committee is split on this, with some that think the Select Board should not receive a stipend and some that think they should, all with various reasons. The Clerk is a ByLaw employee, and it is believed that they are on the same article because they are elected officials. Some feel it is not a lot of money others feel it not the amount of money in question because they feel it just should not be a paid position. Tonight’s vote is only to split the article, not to take or change money etc.

Doug Meagher seconded by Mary McBride made a motion to place Article 1 on the Spring Warrant to fix the compensation of the Select Board as printed, \$2,000 for the chairman and \$1,800 for the members.

A roll call vote was taken

It was voted 8-3:

John Kleschinsky – Aye
Cheri Gargalianos - Aye
Rino Moriconi - Aye
Doug Meagher – Aye
Don Damon – Nay
John Mulloy – Nay
Mary McBride – Aye
Doug Fogerty – Aye
Patrick Logue - Nay
Phil Newfell - Aye
Dave Gagliardi - Aye

Doug Meagher seconded by Mary McBride made a motion to place Article 2 on the Spring Warrant to fix the compensation of the Town Clerk as printed in the amount of \$120,307.

A roll call vote was taken
It was voted 8-3:

John Kleschinsky – Aye
Cheri Gargalianos - Aye
Rino Moriconi - Aye
Doug Meagher – Aye
Don Damon – Nay
John Mulloy – Nay
Mary McBride – Aye
Doug Fogerty – Aye
Patrick Logue - Nay
Phil Newfell - Aye
Dave Gagliardi - Aye

Doug Meagher seconded by Mary McBride made a motion to place Warrant Article 10 listed on the handout for the Spring 2021 Town Meeting.

A roll call vote was taken
It was voted 10-1:

John Kleschinsky – Aye
Cheri Gargalianos - Aye
Rino Moriconi - Aye
Doug Meagher – Aye
Don Damon – Aye
John Mulloy – Aye
Mary McBride – Aye
Doug Fogerty – Aye
Patrick Logue - Nay
Phil Newfell - Aye
Dave Gagliardi - Aye

Doug Meagher seconded by Mary McBride made a motion to place on the 2021 Spring Town Meeting Article 13 listed in the handout having to do with transferring of funds.

A roll call vote was taken
It was voted 11-0:

John Kleschinsky – Aye
Cheri Gargalianos - Aye
Rino Moriconi - Aye
Doug Meagher – Aye
Don Damon – Aye
John Mulloy – Aye
Mary McBride – Aye
Doug Fogerty – Aye
Patrick Logue - Aye
Phil Newfell - Aye

Dave Gagliardi - Aye

MISCELLANEOUS CORRESPONDENCE – not subject to discussion

Community Preservation Committee will be holding their Public Hearing on applications on March 25, 2021 at 6:00 pm

Next FinCom meeting will be March 16, 2021.

ADJOURNMENT:

Doug Meagher seconded by Patrick Logue made a motion to adjourn.

A roll call vote was taken

It was voted 11-0:

John Kleschinsky - Aye
Cheri Gargalianos–Aye
Rino Moriconi - Aye
Doug Meagher – Aye
Don Damon – Aye
John Mulloy – Aye
Mary McBride – Aye
Doug Fogerty – Aye
Patrick Logue - Aye
Phil Newfell - Aye
Dave Gagliardi - Aye

Chairman David Gagliardi adjourned the meeting at 9:50 pm.

Joyce MacMillan, Recording Clerk