

BILLERICA FINANCE COMMITTEE MINUTES
August 31, 2023

A meeting of the Billerica Finance Committee was held on Tuesday August 31, 2023, at 7:00 p.m. in the Conway room in the Town Hall.

Present: David Gagliardi, Chairman; John Mulloy, Vice Chairman; Mary McBride, Secretary; Donald Damon, Member; Douglas Fogerty, Member; Sharon Healey, Member; Patrick Logue, Member; Doug Meagher, Member; Larry Norman, Member; Brian Dorrington, 1st Associate; Joshua Mahoney, 2nd Associate; Paul Watson, Ex-Officio Town Accountant; and Joyce MacMillan, Recording Clerk.

Excused: Philip Newfell, Member; and Darlene Torre, Member

CALL TO ORDER:

Chairman Dave Gagliardi called the meeting to order at 7:02 p.m.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

Marlies Henderson, 31 Straight Street, Precinct 11, Billerica – Spoke regarding the Community Preservation Committee (CPC) budget. Last Spring Town Meeting she presented the CPC Article with Mr. Curran and was told that in the fall the budget would be updated to include the state tax. She also spoke about the Debt Service amount. She believes the budget amount is too low and would like the Finance Committee to be aware of it.

Kelley Sardina, 95 Gray Street, Billerica – Spoke regarding the new recording policy that was passed at the last Town Meeting. The Finance Committee is the Town's foundation and should be following the new recording policy especially for the residents that are shut ins or cannot get to the meeting.

* The referenced "recording policy" passed by Town Meeting has not yet been approved by the Attorney General's Office and is not yet a Town Bylaw.*

George Simolaris, Andover Road, Billerica – Spoke regarding the plan for the new town center. He is personally against redoing the center. He thinks the town should complete the Boston Road projects before even considering this plan. He believes it is going to ruin the town.

WARRANT ARTICLES: - Mr. Curran presented the committee with handouts for this presentation for all the articles being discussed tonight, prior to the meeting.

Article 14 Town Center borrowing – John Curran and Paul Watson

To see if the Town will vote to appropriate the sum of \$20,000,000 to pay for the construction cost for the New Town Center Plan, including the payment of all costs incidental and related thereto; and that to meet this appropriation the Treasurer, with approval of the Select Board, be authorized to borrow the sum of \$20,000,000 under and pursuant to the provisions of G.L. Chapter 44, Section 7, and or any other enabling authority; and further, to authorize the Select Board to execute such documents and enter into such agreements as it deems in the best interest of the Town in the furtherance of the objectives of this article including to repurpose a portion of the Concord Road right of way and transfer it to the Select Board for General Municipal Purposes including the Council on Aging;

Mr. Curran went over his power point presentation. One of the goals for this project is not to bond any of it, and to that end the Town Manager is working on a list of possible grants and

other funding. Parts of the presentation showed how they would like to fund the project and to make the least impact on taxes.

Chairman Gagliardi opened the floor to the committee for questions and concerns. There were questions regarding all the funding goals and where exactly the funds would come from. Questions regarding Chapter 90 money and if there might be any other infrastructure money. There was some discussion on American Rescue Plan (Covid money) funds, what the center used to look like and some of the history. Do we have an idea of what the actual borrowing amount will be? It is expected to be around \$14 million. By law funding must be in place for the entire project even when the project is spread out over a couple of years. There was talk of signage, the bike path, if the center will be more walking friendly and marking of the road. Will this project take funds away from the sewer project? No. Would not want any funds to come from any other project especially from sewer project. Some believe that some of the small businesses would be displaced, and others believe that town centers are not where people's focus is any longer. Some discussion on the pedestrian safety, lights, if there were discussions with business owners and other stakeholders in the center and what were their thoughts. Largely supportive. Also, what will happen if the project goes over \$20 million, can free cash handle it? The number they are carrying is pretty conservative. It's not a flawless plan but it is well thought out. Could CPA funds be used for this project? That might be something they look at in the future.

The committee did not vote on this article tonight, they will vote on it at a future meeting, after they have an exact figure and the Select Board votes on it.

Article 15 Town Center Funding from Available Funds – John Curran and Paul Watson

To see if the Town will vote to transfer and appropriate from available funds the sum of \$6,000,000 for construction associated with the New Town Center Plan.

Much of this was covered in the previous article.

The committee did not vote on this article tonight, they will vote on it at a future meeting, after the Select Board votes on it.

Article 16 Fund DPW Headquarters – John Curran, Paul Watson, and Fred Russell

To see if the Town will vote to appropriate the sum of \$50,000,000 to pay for the construction cost for the New Public Works Facility, including the payment of all costs incidental and related thereto; and that to meet this appropriation the Treasurer, with approval of the Select Board, be authorized to borrow the sum of \$50,000,000 under and pursuant to the provisions of M.G.L. Chapter 44, Section 7, and or any other enabling authority; and further, to authorize the Select Board to execute such documents and enter into such agreements as it deems in the best interest of the Town in the furtherance of the objectives of this article.

Mr. Curran stated the \$50,000,000 construction cost would be bonded for 27 to 30 years. This building will house All the DPW vehicles, DPW Administration, there will be a wash bay and storage.

Chairman Gagliardi opened the floor to the committee for questions and concerns. Police emergency will also be housed here. How big is the current DPW site, the land area? Not

sure. What is happening with that land, is there a possibility of selling it to help offset this \$50 million? That is something that will be decided later down the road by the Select Board and Town Meeting. What does "Owner's Soft Costs" mean? It is design money, construction oversight, and consultants. What is the Design, Management & Admin cost estimates then? Our Project Manager, Architect costs and design administration and design contingency. What is the bond rate right now? It's a little over 4. Have other plans been looked at and could they be scaled down? It has been scaled down and changed. It will also be set for solar panels.

John Mulloy, seconded by Patrick Logue made a motion to recommend Article 16 as printed in the Preliminary Warrant.

It was voted:

11 – In favor
0 – Opposed

Article 17 Fund Water Mains Glad Valley/Boston Road – John Curran and Fred Russell

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate, transfer from available funds, or borrow the sum of \$700,000 to pay the cost of water main replacement of the 12-inch main in Boston Road from the Crosby Hill standpipe to Locke Road with a new 12-inch main and the replacement of the service lines on Town property and associated work.

Mr. Russell reminded the committee that he came before them last Fall Town Meeting as part of the Lexington/Glad Valley TIP project for replacement of pipe between the two storage tanks. There is a 12 in main coming from one tank, goes into an 8 in and back up to a 12 in. They are replacing the old main with new 12 in. Now the TIP Project is being extended down to Locke Road to replace more of the old main with a new 12 inch main.

Chairman Gagliardi opened the floor to the committee for questions and concerns. There is a significant water main break along this section of road. When will the lights and the Glad Valley intersection work begin? In 2025, originally it was in 2026. What part of Boston Road/3-A does the state own? They own all of Boston Road/3-A in this project. Is there room to add to this project? Yes, and that is part of Article 29. Related to road work on 3~A from Shawsheen River to the Burlington Town Line. Trying to get as many sidewalks out of the state as we can. When will all this work start? Should be in 2025. Will Middlesex Turnpike be done by then? It is supposed to be, yes. \$700,000 is going to buy how many linear feet? Think it is about 800 feet. Does this include resurfacing the road. Yes, it is part of the TIP Project. Is this a secondary pipe? No. This is for up to \$700,000. Yes, it could be less. How much are we saving by jumping in with the state project? Not sure of the exact amount but it is hundreds of thousands of dollars. Is this a straight borrowing? Yes.

John Mulloy, seconded by Larry Norman made a motion to recommend Article 17 to see if the Town will borrow the amount of \$700,000 000 to pay the cost of water main replacement of the 12-inch main in Boston Road from the Crosby Hill standpipe to Locke Road with a new 12-inch main and the replacement of the service lines on Town property and associated work.

It was voted:

11 – In favor
0 – Opposed

Article 18 Fund Hydrant and Valve Replacements – John Curran and Fred Russell

To see if the Town will vote to transfer and appropriate the sum of \$100,000 from the Water Retained Earnings Enterprise Fund for the purchase and replacement of hydrants and valves in the Water Distribution System, including any costs incidental.

Chairman Gagliardi opened the floor to the committee for questions and concerns. How many hydrants do you have in stock? Maybe a dozen. One of the things we do now is purchase kits to replace the inner workings of the hydrant. The outer shell is good for many years longer. This saves the Town some money. The internal parts last about 10 to 15 years. It's not just hydrants, it is valves too. How many private hydrants are in Billerica, and do they have any level of maintenance? Not sure, Iron Horse Park is all private, and Tech Park, some of them have reached out to ask who they can hire to service the hydrants. Are you already buying kits and how much are they? Yes, they are about \$700 vs \$2,800 for a new hydrant. Are you still flushing hydrants? Yes. How much is in Water Retained Earnings? Not sure, it has not been certified yet.

John Mulloy, seconded by Don Damon, made a motion to recommend Article 18 as printed in the Preliminary Warrant.

It was voted:

11 – In favor
0 – Opposed

Article 19 Fund SCADA System Upgrades at Water Treatment – John Curran and Fred Russell

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate, transfer from available funds, or borrow, the sum of \$425,000 for SCADA system upgrades at the Water Treatment Plant for the development of remote operation.

Chairman Gagliardi opened the floor to the committee for questions and concerns. Will this replace the system? No, some upgrades and it will make it so it can be run remotely. Is it safe? Yes, lots of security in the system. It is self-contained. It is coming out of retained earnings. Did we do something with SCADA last year? That was was on the Wastewater side. Two different systems. It was a software upgrade. What does SCADA stand for? Supervisory control and data acquisition. Who manages it now? Woodard and Curran. Are they comfortable with opening it up to a new network? Their team has developed what we need to do so it satisfies the EPA and Security issues. Staffing issues were mentioned for the third shift, what would the annual cost be for that shift? About \$180,000 a year.

John Mulloy, seconded by Larry Norman, made a motion to recommend Article 19 as printed in the Preliminary Warrant.

It was voted:

11 – In favor
0 – Opposed

Article 20 Fund Restoration of Fournier Press Systems at WWTP – John Curran and Fred Russell

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate, transfer from available funds, or borrow, the sum of \$500,000 for the design and construction associated with the restoration of two Fournier Press Systems at the Wastewater Treatment Plant, including all costs incidental.

Chairman Gagliardi opened the floor to the committee for questions and concerns. These press systems press the sludge/solid waste to remove most of the water/liquid. Once it is pressed you can put five times more in a truck load. One press is 14 years old and the other is 6 years old. How long will it take to do repairs on each machine? Weeks for the 6-year-old one, longer for the older machine. Are they both operational all the time? No. What is the average life span? About 20 years. What about overflow, there must have been some with all the rain? There is a primary treatment and a secondary treatment and a tertiary treatment. Billerica is one of the few plants that have tertiary treatment.

John Mulloy, seconded by Patrick Logue made a motion to recommend Article 20 as printed in the Preliminary Warrant.

It was voted:

11 – In favor
0 – Opposed

MINUTES: August 8, 2023,

Mary McBride, seconded by Larry Norman, made a motion to accept the minutes of August 8, 2023, as amended.

It was voted:

8 – In favor
0 – Opposed
3 – Abstained – Logue,
Meagher, and Mulloy

Miscellaneous Correspondence:

Next Meeting possibly September 5 and 12, 2023

ADJOURNMENT:

Mary McBride, seconded by Larry Norman, made a motion to adjourn.

It was voted:

11 – In favor
0 – Opposed

Chairman David Gagliardi adjourned the meeting at 9:21 pm.

Joyce MacMillan, Recording Clerk