

BUDGET ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING

Wednesday April 12, 2023 – 4:00 PM – Hybrid

PRESENT: Bob Gniadek, Chair/BAC; Bob Youdelman, BAC; Pat Callahan, BAC; Eileen Martin, BAC; Roger Manzolini, Chair/Board of Selectmen; Al Hanson, Selectman; Neal Pilson (via Zoom), Selectman; Danielle Fillio, Town Administrator

Bob G. reopened the meeting at 4:05 PM.

Previous Minutes: There was a discussion of the issue of the library's new hours and a request to change references in the minutes to "the Board" to read "the Committee." Voting on approval of the Minutes was deferred.

Total Budget Review and Vote: Changes delineated in Danielle's email are reflected in the final version of the Budget. Pat raised concern about some of the cuts made in the budget that she felt left the town vulnerable to unexpected problems in the future.

That generated a discussion on how to increase available funds in the budget but keep the 4.9% increase stable. Danielle suggested allocating money for Tax Title expenses rather than creating a Revolving Fund, which she felt was too complicated. The money should be put into the Budget Account and, if it is not all used, return the remainder to Free Cash. It is permissible to put unused monies into the General Fund, rather than returning it to the line item it came out of. A Free Cash Article, allocating the funds for Tax Title Expenses, will work well.

The result would be to retain the 4.9% increase but have \$4,000 additional funds available in the budget. The decision was made to move the \$4,000 to the Town Hall Line. A discussion of how to describe the changes in Line amounts resulted in Danielle agreeing to rewrite the Article to reflect the addition of \$18,000 from FY23 due to increased costs for the new building.

Item #83 – Library Rent – This is a last time expense out of Free Cash. It will be written as an Article. That leaves \$4,000 to put somewhere else (i.e., Town Counsel - \$3,000; Town Hall - \$1,000)

The next subject of discussion was the Total Available Revenue from all sources, which was calculated to be \$8,665, 121.

A motion was made to approve the modifications made to two Line Items and two new articles: (Tax Title Expenses and Library Rent) The motion was seconded and passed by unanimous vote.

Bob G. moved to Article 4 in which he suggested the language be modified to read, "all Line Items are recommended for approval by the Finance Committee."

Roger – Article 6. Roger asked that the word "entitled" be removed from the text.

#3 increase needs to be explained as a contractual agreement.

#2 shows a decrease of \$3,700.

#10 no change for FY24

#16 no change for FY24

Tax Collector Assistant Line reduced to \$0.

#28 no change for FY24

Danielle was asked to rephrase “reflect town spending” to ‘actual town spending.’”

#21 no change for FY24

#30 Indicate a 3% increase.

#38 The \$16,600 from last year was moved to a new line, “Technical Hardware and Software – otherwise no change.”

#45 Constables – a reduction of \$750

#47 \$500 decrease to reflect actual town spending. Change the word “snares” to equipment.

#50 Fire House – Town is negotiating fire house rents.

#52 Fire Chief and EMT salaries. This is Richmond’s share of the annual salaries. Bob G. asked for language to be added to remind people of the shared service agreement with W. Stockbridge.

#54 Should be \$8,140.

#55 Building Inspector – change “Assistant” to “Alternate.”

#61 Increased costs in summer

#62 Trash Collection Increase of 4% per Contract

#76 Diesel Fuel Costs

#83 Library – Add “which includes \$6,760 of the Librarian’s salary previously in the school budget.” Library Rent – goes away becomes an article.

#85 Berkshire County Retirement. Richmond’s share paid to BCR to cover (or contribute towards) expected retirement costs of the town’s municipal employees.

Insurance and Bonding – Last sentence to read: “\$7,000 includes a factor based on the average loss percentage.”

All suggested changes will be forwarded to Danielle for her discretion as to their use.

Bob Y noted that the increase in salary for Steve Parsons is less than the original increase: 12-1/2% equals \$11.00.

School Choice Grants and Pre-School Revenue – Move its location appropriately.

Article #8 Will partially cover.

Article #10 – A second full-time Ambulance Corps Employee. Ambulance services and costs will be shared equally with West Stockbridge.

Article #14 – This will continue funding towards the OPEB.

There being no further business before the Committee, Bob G. moved to adjourn the meeting at 5:50. He was seconded by Bob Y and the motion was carried by unanimous consent.