



CITY COUNCIL

MEMORIAL BUILDING – ROOM 113
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FINANCE SUBCOMMITTEE MINUTES: MARCH 10, 2020 BLUMER COMMUNITY ROOM 6:00 PM

SUBCOMMITTEE MEMBERS

ADAM C. STEINER, CHAIR | MICHAEL P. CANNON, VICE CHAIR
GEORGE P. KING, JR. | JANET LEOMBRUNO | CESAR G. STEWART-MORALES

APPROVED: AUGUST 25, 2020

Present: Adam Steiner, Chair; Michael Cannon, George King, Janet Leombruno, and Cesar Stewart-Morales

Staff Present: Mary Ellen Kelley, Chief Financial Officer; Jen Pratt, Assistant Chief Financial Officer; Dr. Robert Tremblay, Superintendent of Schools; Lincoln Lynch, Director of Administration and Finance, Framingham Public Schools; Jeanette Galliardt, Executive Assistant to the City Council

Others Present: School Committee Finance Subcommittee: Geoff Epstein, Chair; Beverly Hugo, Tiffanie Maskell, and Scott Wadland.

CALL TO ORDER

At 6:00 PM Mr. Steiner called the meeting to order and read aloud the agenda.

At 6:01 PM Mr. Epstein called to order the meeting of the School Committee Finance Subcommittee, noting that the previous joint meeting of this kind was very helpful as the discussions were valuable.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Mr. Gerry Bloomfield spoke briefly about the annual budget preparation season, encouraged the subcommittee to become acquainted with the revenues and proposed costs, costs related to the School Department, increase in student enrollment due to new apartments, illegal boarding houses, and the challenges of affording the high cost of housing.

DISCUSSIONS

Joint Meeting with School Committee Finance Subcommittee regarding FY21 Framingham Public Schools Budget Proposal

Document(s) Reviewed: FPS FY21 Budget Presentation Joint FinCom 3.10.20; Budget History_031020; Joint Finance Sub Meeting 3.10.20 (1) MEMO

Present: Lincoln Lynch, Director of Finance and Administration, Framingham Public Schools.

Mr. Lynch explained that an updated PowerPoint presentation was forwarded this afternoon, and even so, the number are continuing to change. They will continue to update the information prior to the

School Committee vote on April 1. Continuing, he noted that much of this presentation is focused on the Student Opportunity Act and observations associated with that.

Utilizing that PowerPoint presentation, Mr. Lynch began by emphasizing that the budget process is ongoing, changing on a daily basis. He reviewed the Student Opportunity Act itself as well as the resulting observations, requirements, and examples of high quality programs. He pointed out that Chapter 70 funding includes funding relative to the Student Opportunity Act, and reviewed how those funds are being allocated. Continuing with the presentation, he outlined the FY21 proposed budget increase, budget drivers and variables, new position requests, and the Rick/Offsets included in the FY21 Budget Proposal. Next he presented information on the revolving accounts, personal and contractual obligations, substitute teacher rates as they relate to the budget, and a review of utilities, supplies and equipment as they relate to maintenance of buildings. Lastly, he presented the Next Steps for moving forward with the Student Opportunity Act, and finally, the FY21 Recap on the Proposed Budget which referenced a 6.4% increase of \$8,865,948.

What is meant by "risk"? There is no guarantee that we will get that funding so we refer to it as a risk, anything outside of the operating budget. It was noted that revolving accounts, while they are often used to offset the budget, they represent "cash in hand". Another risk is for circuit breaker funding. We are never sure of families that move into the district, and those children need out-of-district services, we have to guess what our need might be. Brief discussion followed.

With regard to turnover savings, are you finding your forecasting to be close to the historical estimates? Mr. Lynch responded he was comfortable with that estimate for the moment. Every year's budget is different, based on the enrollment for that year. It's difficult to look back several years and try to compare. Sometimes the differences are found in the change in composition of the staff. Brief discussion followed on specific groups that are very fluidic in their numbers from year to year, and even throughout the school year. It was noted that, when the budget book comes out, increases in various kinds of funding will be tracked. Mr. Lynch reported that the schools are required to submit a three-year plan, and he will send it out to the Finance Subcommittee.

General discussion on building reserves, general ways surplus funding is utilized and any restrictions on use, use of free cash, and each department in the school system is represented in the budget book along with goals and achievements. Legal compliance positions are involved with students receiving special education services, and making sure that the request for a position is supported by a need. These positions make sure that the needs of the students are being met from a statutory responsibility.

Regarding transportation, are the challenges going to be resolved? Mr. Lynch responded that it is resolved as of now, noting that for five weeks there is been a driver for every bus. There is a new app for parental use, and so far 106 parents registered, and this allows them to follow the bus on its route. Mr. Wadland added that they are still working on managing student behavior on the busses, and getting support from the building principals which is not necessarily reflected in the budget. Mr. Lynch noted that the addition of another bus is in the budget. This will hopefully alleviate capacity issues.

Mr. Epstein reported that the increase in students this year is 3% as compared to 1.5% in previous years.

At 6:59 PM, Ms. Hugo made a motion to adjourn the meeting of the School Committee Finance Subcommittee; Ms. Maskell seconded. No discussion. VOTE: 4-0-0.

Mr. Steiner suspended the Finance Subcommittee meeting for a short break. He reconvened the meeting at 7:03 PM.

DPW Update on Traffic Study Budgeting

Present: William Sedewitz, City Engineer, and Chair, Traffic Commission

Mr. William Sedewitz reported that a Transportation Master Plan and Economic Development Master Plan was voted at Town Meeting in May 2016. It was noted that there would be several phases in the plan. Phase 1 of the Transportation portion was completed in 2017 noting existing conditions. Planning and Economic Development Phase 1 was completed in 2019, and now working on Phase 2 of the Transportation Master Plan. Funding for Phase 2 of the Transportation Plan was approved at Town Meeting. \$290,000 is available.

It was noted that the Traffic Commission has requested funding in the current budget but it was not approved. Brief discussion followed on who would control the existing funds that exist from prior approvals, and what would be covered. Some residual funding remains in a previous approval for traffic calming measures, and discussion is ongoing on how to handle those. It was noted that funds under DPW control would not necessarily be available to the Traffic Commission as the funds were authorized for a specific purpose. Funds allocated to the Traffic Commission would be under Traffic Commission control. Is it possible to create a list of funds that might be available to the Traffic Commission? The previous committee, Traffic and Roadway Safety Committee, had no budget, and the funds lived in DPW. Mr. Sedewitz will meet with the Traffic Commission and explain what funds might be available. Discussion continued. City-wide projects may not be under the purview of the Traffic Commission which is the regulatory body.

Ms. Leombruno made a motion to send a letter to the mayo to release \$150,000 in funds for use of the Traffic Commission authorized for Phase. Discussion followed. Ms. Leombruno withdrew her motion. **Mr. King suggested instead that the subcommittee ask for a list of funding sources (old Town Meeting Warrant Articles, capital budget, mitigation funds) that are available to the Traffic Commission; Ms. Leombruno seconded.**

A resident expressed concern for the intersection on Winthrop Street and Bethany Road which has a high accident rate. She believes the signage is inadequate.

Ms. Jessica Barnhill, District 8, reported she has emailed and phoned about these types of issues. She lives 200 yards from this intersection. Campaign promises hold no accountability. She urged the subcommittee to fund the Traffic Commission fully.

Mr. Brian Sullivan, District 4, asked if all funding should be identified, not just the funding for the Traffic Commission, every source of funding that was approved at any Town Meeting. He also expressed concern for any overlaps in efforts spearheaded by the Traffic Commission and the work proposed by a city-wide plan. Mr. King responded that the legislative intent was that the Commission be the lead, and DPW not necessarily deciding which intersections or street are done. Mr. Cannon added that there is a document posted on the February 27, 2020 meeting that shows all the outstanding funding.

Ms. Mary Kate Feeney read from the Charter the section on the Traffic Commission. She expressed concern that there are areas of the community where accidents are the norm, and they need to have studies performed to determine solutions.

Ms. Audrey Hall, District 2, acknowledged that whatever solution is determined for an intersection or roadway will be managed by the Department of Public Works. What does it take to access available funds?

Ms. Mary Ellen Kelley, Chief Financial Officer, responded that the group would take a vote to allocate the money to a particular project; the available funds are for traffic calming. Because money was left in the Traffic and Roadway Safety Committee for 2015 and 2016, money was not allocated in 2017. Based on a recommendation from the Committee, the DPW would design the solution. There is to be a Traffic and Transportation Department/Division where an accumulation of funds would live. The city-wide traffic implementation is what was funded through Town Meeting. She clarified that the budget request for FY21 was to specifically fund the Traffic Commission to institute traffic calming measures. There is \$138,000 remaining in traffic calming funds. Mr. King pointed out that he wanted to know about all the funds that currently exist. Discussion followed during which Ms. Kelley reported she had a conversation with the previous Chair of the Traffic Commission where she identified the funds available. She added that they intended to do the traffic study using those funds.

Ms. Beth Greeley, District 3, noted that there seems to be a "disconnect" between a new entity and a long-standing department accustomed to dealing with these matters. Let's hope that they find a way to work together to fix the dangerous intersections while considering how changing one intersection might impact another.

VOTE on motion to request list of funding sources: 5-0-0.

DPW and Enterprise Capital Presentation

Document(s) Reviewed: Background Materials for Finance Subcommittee (PDF)

Present: Blake Lukis, Deputy Director, DPW; William Sedewitz, City Engineer, DPW; Dan Nau, Director, Highway and Sanitation, DPW; Diane Conner, Deputy Director Administration, DPW; Mary Ellen Kelley, Chief Financial Officer.

It is noted that various staff members spoke to different sections of the PowerPoint presentation. There was brief discussion at various points during the presentation. The FY2021 Capital Improvement Budget Proposal presentation contained information on the following areas:

- 2019 Capital Construction Projects
- Public Works Capital Appropriations 1969-2020
- Recent Funding Received - 2020
- General Fund - Capital Improvement Projects
- Sewer Enterprise Fund - Capital Improvement Projects
- Water Enterprise Fund - Capital Improvement Projects
- General Fund - Capital Vehicles and Equipment Requests
- Sewer Enterprise Fund - Capital Vehicles and Equipment Requests
- Water Enterprise Fund - Capital vehicles and Equipment Requests

Referral from City Council -- Order 2020-018 -- Proposed Stormwater Ordinance

Document(s) Reviewed: 2020-02-20 Stormwater Ordinance Mayor Cover Memo; CFO Cover letter to Mayor Stormwater; Ordinance and finance package-merged; 2016 MA NPDES MS4 permit_final; Framingham Stormwater Ordinance (02-07-2020); Stormwater Presentation FSC March 10

Present: Blake Lukis, Deputy Director, DPW; William Sedewitz, City Engineer, DPW; Dan Nau, Director, Highway and Sanitation, DPW; Diane Conner, Deputy Director Administration, DPW; Mary Ellen Kelley, Chief Financial Officer.

There was discussion on whether to proceed with this agenda item given the lateness of the hour. The presentation had been made on at least one previous occasion, and members expressing concern that the ordinance is important and needs complete attention. Mr. Steiner suggested a brief review of the financial aspects now. Ms. Kelley noted that there are just a few PowerPoint slides that would be helpful in addressing the financial pieces.

At this time, **Mr. King made a motion to adjourn; Mr. Cannon seconded.** It was noted that this matter may be one of the most substantial things to come forward and should not be rushed. **Mr. King offered a motion to postpone review of the Proposed Stormwater Ordinance; Mr. Cannon seconded.** Brief discussion followed. **Mr. Steiner theorized that an additional meeting may be necessary to allow sufficient time to adequately review it. VOTE: 5-0-0 to postpone this matter.**

Update on requested new positions and substantial new expenditures in FY21 Budget

Due to the lateness of the hour, **Mr. King made a motion to postpone this item to a future agenda; Mr. Cannon seconded. VOTE: 5-0-0.**

Ms. Kelley wished to discuss the information requested by the subcommittee; **Mr. King made a motion to reconsider the previous motion to postpone; Mr. Cannon seconded. VOTE: 5-0-0.**

Brief discussion followed. Ms. Kelley asked for guidance on the information request and how to organize it so that it is the most useful to the subcommittee. She added that raw data is available now but they would like to modify the format. There is also a revenue presentation scheduled for March 24. She confirmed that information on new positions would be available at that time.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Document(s) Reviewed: Finance Subcommittee 2-11-2020 DRAFT

Mr. Stewart-Morales made a motion to approve minutes from February 11, 2020 (postponed from February 27, 2020) as presented; Ms. Leombruno seconded. No discussion. VOTE: 5-0-0.

MEMBER PREROGATIVES

Mr. Cannon asked to add the Office of the City Solicitor to the list of departments the subcommittee will meet with on budgets as it would help to understand how that office interacts with the City. Brief discussion followed.

Mr. Steiner suggested a meeting next week to review the Stormwater Ordinance. After discussion, the subcommittee settled on Monday, March 16 at 6 PM. Discussion followed on meeting dates for budget review dates including Saturday, May 9. There will be additional meetings depending on the progress of meeting with departments.

ADJOURN

At 9:40 PM Mr. King repeated his motion to adjourn; Ms. Leombruno seconded. No discussion. VOTE: 5-0-0.

*Respectfully submitted,
Jeanette Galliardt*

Refer to the Public Meeting Portal (www.FraminghamMA.gov/Meetings) for more information regarding City Council and City Council Subcommittee meetings.