

**FINANCE COMMITTEE
MONDAY, JUNE 26, 2023
REGULAR MEETING: TOWN HALL
MEETING MINUTES**

Members Present: Chair Dan Campbell (DC), Tony Matteo (TM), David McCarthy (DM), Bernie Porada (BP), Gail Weiss (GW)

Members Absent: Sue Kaczinski

Others in Attendance: Town Administrator Andrea Llamas

I. CALL TO ORDER

Chair DC called the meeting to order at 6pm.

II. REVIEW SPECIAL TOWN MEETING WARRANT

a. Article 1

DC read Article 1 into the record:

To see if the Town will vote to transfer from available funds, or otherwise provide a sum or sums of money for to pay the costs of a new Emergency Services Building, including, design, engineering, project management, construction, site preparation, the acquisition and installation of furniture, fixtures and equipment, and all other incidental costs related thereto, or take any other action thereon or in relation thereto.

DC explained the request is to transfer \$312,011.80 from the Cell Tower Assessment, and \$480,000 from the Capital Stabilization Fund. This money has already been raised from taxes, so this will not affect the tax rate.

MOTION BY BP THAT THE FINANCE COMMITTEE RECOMMEND ARTICLE #1. GW SECONDED.

ROLL CALL VOTE:

DC YEA

GW YEA

DM YEA

TM YEA

BP YEA

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

b. Article 2

DC read Article 2 into the record:

To see if the Town will vote to Raise and Appropriate a sum or sums of money for to pay the costs of a new Emergency Services Building, including, design, engineering, project management, construction, site preparation, the acquisition and installation of furniture, fixtures and equipment, and all other incidental costs related thereto, or take any other action thereon or in relation thereto.

A discussion ensued on this article. Highlights included:

- This article will raise funds through tax appropriation within Fiscal Year 2024.
- This article includes \$500,000.
- The estimated tax rate, should this pass, will be approximately \$13.68, but this will likely decrease because revenues have been underestimated, and they usually come in higher.
- Adding \$500,000 to the tax appropriation will add approximately 40-cents to the tax rate; so, for a house worth \$300,000, the increase will be about \$150 for the year.
- While it is true the town is considering the property at 168 Main Street, this article specifically raises \$500,000 for the EMS Building project, not for a specific property, and this is made clear in the article.
- If Article 2 fails, Article 3 cannot be passed.
- If Article 3 fails, the town will continue the project unless voters decide to stop looking for new EMS buildings.
- Over the last several years, voters at Town Meeting have put money from taxes into the stabilization account on an incremental basis, so this article is nothing new.
- The Selectboard recommended this amount.
- A brief history of raising money for this project.
- What actions Town Meeting and the Selectboard have taken to move this project forward.
- The Finance Committee's role in this process.
- That this \$500,000 is part of the incremental process to raise money, while the town administrators assess what taxpayers will approve in any given year.
- If voters approve this article, it will allow the town to purchase 168 Main Street.

MOTION BY BP THAT THE FINANCE COMMITTEE RECOMMEND ARTICLE #2. TM SECONDED.

ROLL CALL VOTE:

DC YEA

GW YEA

DM YEA

TM YEA

BP YEA

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

b. Article 3

DC read Article 3 into the record:

To see if the Town will vote to authorize the Select Board to acquire, by purchase, gift or eminent domain, a fee simple interest in a the properties located at 168 Main Street, said properties identified as Parcel ID #17-A11A-1, and described in deeds recorded with the Franklin Registry of Deeds in Book 5402, Page 240, AND Parcel ID #17-A11B-1, as described in deeds recorded with the Franklin Registry of Deeds in Book 3174, Page 249, on such terms and conditions as the Select Board deems appropriate, with the care, custody and control of said property to be held by the Select Board for general municipal purposes, including a public safety facility, and, as funding for said acquisition, to raise and appropriate, transfer from available funds, borrow, or otherwise provide a sum or sums of money to acquire the property described herein and for all legal fees and other costs incidental and/or related thereto; and, further, to authorize the Select Board to enter into all agreements and execute any and all instruments on behalf of the Town as may be necessary or appropriate to effectuate said

acquisition, or take any other action thereon or in relation thereto.

A discussion ensued on this article. Highlights included:

- Why the articles on the warrant are in the order they are.
- The owners of 168 Main Street, Town Administrator Andrea Llamas, and the selectboard negotiated the purchase price for 168 Main Street.
- Because this is a purchase, it must receive a 2/3 vote at Town Meeting.
- Because Town Meeting voted down the prior plans to build a new emergency services building for all three entities — the EMTs, the police department, and the fire department — this proposal is no longer an option, and there are no further expenditures to be made on that particular plan.
- This is "Plan B," and will house the EMTs and the police department; a new fire station will be built at a later date.
- This plan is being presented to provide a lower-cost option than building an all-inclusive emergency services building.
- Should this article pass at Town Meeting, it is not a guaranteed sale. The project has to conform to code and not cost too much to do so, and it has to be successfully permitted for its intended use. These contingencies are included in the purchase and sale agreement.
- The timeline for determining whether the town will purchase this building depends on factors such as how long the engineers take to assess whether it can be code-compliant, and the length of time the Zoning Board of Appeals needs to make their permitting decisions.
- The EMS Building Committee has conducted two site visits to 168 Main Street, and they have determined the building can house the two emergency-service entities with one addition: three large garage bays. The interior needs minimal renovation.
- The building has adequate electrical, water, sewer, and internet infrastructure for this plan.
- The town is currently paying rent to another town to house the third ambulance because there is no garage space at the current EMT building for all three ambulances. The estimated rent to garage the ambulance is between \$2,000-\$2,500 per month.

**MOTION BY BP THAT THE FINANCE COMMITTEE WILL RECOMMEND ARTICLE #3.
DM SECONDED.**

ROLL CALL VOTE:

DC YEA

GW YEA

DM YEA

TM YEA

BP YEA

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

c. Article 4

DC read the article into the record:

"To see if the Town will vote to transfer the available remaining funds from Article 19 voted at Annual Town Meeting May 2, 2022 for the purchase of a new or used Debris Truck for the Highway Department."

A discussion ensued on this article. Highlights included:

- The debris truck will replace the chipper.
- The chipper is a dangerous piece of equipment which lead to a town worker becoming injured.
- The debris truck will make the Town Highway staff's work safer and faster.
- This article is the result from a request from the Town Highway.

MOTION BY GW THAT WE RECOMMEND THE TRANSFER OF THE REMAINING FUNDS FROM ARTICLE 19 FOR THE PURCHASE OF A NEW OR USED DEBRIS TRUCK FOR THE HIGHWAY DEPARTMENT. TM SECONDED.

ROLL CALL VOTE:

DC YEA

GW YEA

DM YEA

TM YEA

BP YEA

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

d. Article 5

DC announced that because this article had no funding attached to it, the Finance Committee does not need to make a recommendation for it.

e. Article 6

DC said this article refers to a collection of properties the town owns that will be conveyed to the Selectboard for possible sale if this article is approved. It requires no recommendation from the Finance Committee.

III. REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF MINUTES

There were no draft minutes to approve. The draft minutes from the previous meeting are still being prepared.

IV. END-OF-THE-YEAR TRANSFERS IF NEEDED

DC announced they are not complete, so this item is postponed.

V. NEXT MEETING

The next meeting is on Monday, July 10, at 6pm.

VI. OTHER ITEMS NOT ANTICIPATED 48 HOURS IN ADVANCE OF THIS MEETING

There were none.

IV. ADJOURN

MOTION BY BP TO ADJOURN. GW SECONDED.

ROLL CALL VOTE:

GW YEA

DM YEA

TM YEA

BP YEA

DC YEA

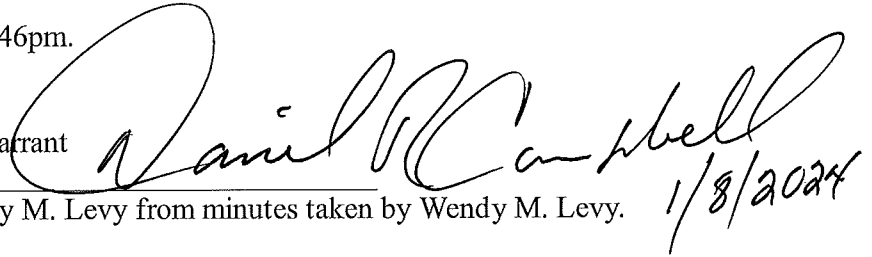
MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

The meeting was adjourned at 6:46pm.

Documents presented:

- Special Town Meeting Warrant

Respectfully submitted by Wendy M. Levy from minutes taken by Wendy M. Levy.

 Daniel Campbell
1/8/2024

