

**Date: December 21, 2020**

**Date Minutes Approved: January 4, 2021**

TOWN CLERK

**BOARD OF SELECTMEN**

**2021 JAN -7 AM 9:40 OPEN SESSION MINUTES**

**DUXBURY, MASS.**

**Present:** Theodore J. Flynn, Chair; David J. Madigan, Vice Chair; and Amy M. MacNab, Clerk

**Staff:** René Read, Town Manager; John Q. Adams, Finance Director; and Nancy O'Connor, Executive Assistant

**Others:** Members of the Finance Committee (Betsy Sullivan, Jerry Pisani, Friend Weiler, Shannon Godden, Frank Mangione, and Fernando Guitart) – joint discussion regarding the FY22 Budget

**CONVENED IN OPEN SESSION** *(via remote participation of the Board members and staff)*

**I. CALL TO ORDER** This meeting was called to order at approximately 7:00 pm. *This Open Meeting is being conducted remotely consistent with Governor Baker's Executive Order of March 12, 2020, due to the current State of Emergency in the Commonwealth due to the outbreak of the COVID-19 Virus. In order to mitigate the transmission of the COVID-19 Virus, we have been advised and directed by the Commonwealth to suspend public gatherings, and as such, the Governor's Order suspends the requirement of the Open Meeting Law to have all meetings in a publicly accessible physical location. Further, all members of public bodies are allowed and encouraged to participate remotely. The Order, which you can find posted on our agenda, allows public bodies to meet entirely remotely so long as reasonable public access is afforded so that the public can follow along with the deliberations of the meeting. For public access – please email at [occonnor@town.duxbury.ma.us](mailto:occonnor@town.duxbury.ma.us) or call-in at 781-934-1100 x5400 for questions or comments. This meeting is convening via Zoom video conference produced and recorded by PACTV, and can be viewed live on the Duxbury Government Access Channels – Verizon 39 or Comcast 15; or for those without cable, on PACTV's Prime streaming channel at PACTV.org/LIVE. This meeting will then be available via video on-demand on PACTV's website.*

***Added Note:*** *The Finance Committee also called to order and read this meeting preamble as there was a quorum of the members in attendance.*

**II OPEN FORUM/PUBLIC COMMENTS:** No official “open forum” as these are remote meetings. No public comments via phone calls or emails were received during this meeting.

Ms. MacNab did want to add during this time a proposed discussion pertaining to a hiring freeze to be discussed out of the budget conversation.

**III. NEW BUSINESS**

***Discussions pertaining to FY22 Budget Review***

Mr. Read began the discussions reading the following FY22 Budget Narrative into the record:

*“Good evening. The FY22 operating budget I present to you this evening is balanced. Further, it has been balanced without having to resort to layoffs or through the use of Stabilization Funds and without a recommendation for using an override measure to do so. It does however, include cuts to salary and expense lines that will have an impact on the operational abilities of some departments more than others. It is certainly not a preferred spending plan but one that we believe will see us through an*

extremely challenging financial period. On September 16th, following a review by the Board of Selectmen, we issued our "Fiscal 2022 Budget Materials and Instructions" to all department heads with the objective of having returned to us budgets that were at or below level funding from the FY 2021 budget amount including a pending 2% merit for non-union personnel and to include in that level-funded amount all collective bargaining agreements. As we stated at the time, "no budget season seems to get any easier and one smack in the middle of a pandemic will require some real contemplation about programs, services, projects, and moving away from the status quo. This budget cycle has the makings of what could be one of the most challenging we've ever faced." We couldn't have been more correct. As part of the exercise, we recommended the department heads create a zero-based budget for their General Expenses meaning, starting with most recent years' actual figure (not budget), reviewing each line item and asking how will that change in FY 22 and also ask if that's a "want" or a "need." As a result, in many cases, expense reductions were required in order to meet payroll obligations unless significant turnover occurred in a given department. We made every effort this year to avoid asking for an operational override but this may not be the case next year.

### **GENERAL GOVERNMENT**

General Government consists mostly of departments that reside in Town Hall with the exception of the Municipal Services Office which is classified as Public Safety. Currently all departments have met that mandate with the following exceptions:

1. **Finance Department** - currently meets level fund but will likely have to make personnel changes to fund room for a pending 2% merit.
2. **Information Technology** – While budgeting for items identified by the IT study performed by Blum Shapiro, these items would increase the budget by \$120,708. A Community Compact grant was applied for and if received would pay a substantial portion of this increase. If these items were not included in the budget this departments would meet the mandate.

**Conclusion:** The Community Compact Grant was received for a partial offset to the IT budget amounting to \$81,415. If we offset the IT budget by the Community Compact Grant and personnel changes in the Finance Department were achieved the total General Government budget would be \$17,395 less than FY 2021 Budget or -0.47%. If monies were put back into the Finance Department to keep current staffing levels then General Government would still be less than level funded by \$10,412 or -0.28%. In this budget, the requisite amount to avoid personnel changes has been restored.

### **PUBLIC SAFETY**

Public Safety includes Fire, Police, Harbormaster, Municipal Services, Regional Dispatch, and Beach Operations. While Beach Operations may eventually be reclassified under Culture and Recreation, for comparative purposes it is best to leave here for now. Currently all departments have met the budget mandate with the following reductions/explanations:

#### **Police**

The proposed Police Department budget currently meets level fund but will likely have to make personnel changes to fund leave room for a pending 2% merit. The Police Department has level-funded their budget by identifying certain non-contractual costs for reduction/elimination and they have provided a cost by event or activity where staffing is fixed, by category based on prior years where staffing is variable.

**Event Coverage** - Any event in Town that historically received additional police officers at no cost to the organizer will now have to pay the appropriate number of officer(s) at the current detail rate. Examples of events affected include the Youth Baseball/Softball Opener, Duxbury Beach Triathlon, COA Half Marathon, 4th of July Parade, Bike-to-School Day, etc.

**School Resource Officer** - Participation in after-hours events will be eliminated and summer programs would be cancelled since the SRO is not included in summer program costs as these are costs for additional officers necessary to run the program. Examples of activities affected include Athletic Events, DARE Camp, Prom/Senior Skip Day/Grad Night/Grad and the Junior Police Academy. In this budget, the SRO After Hours events portion has been restored.

**Storms** - Predictive scheduling of shifts for storms based on forecast will be eliminated. Calls for service during a storm will be prioritized and handled by available on-shift personnel. Additional staffing needed will be handled on a detail call basis and paid for by the vendor (i.e.: Verizon, DPW) should placement of a cone or barricade not suffice.

**Specialty Units** - All specialty unit activities will be reduced or eliminated. In addition to the proactive work Specialty Units do, they also respond "on-call" to emergent situations and relieve or augment the patrol shift based on their area of expertise. For example: During a critical mental health situation, Crisis Intervention Team members respond to the scene and manage the situation, returning the dispatched patrol officer to their regular patrol duties. The budget can no longer support that overtime expenditure. In lieu of overtime, procedure will dictate that the station officer will be re-assigned to a patrol sector resulting in closure of the station to the public. In other words, the station will "go dark" at various times. During those times, calls will be prioritized as with storms and people reporting past property crimes and other non-emergencies will be directed to call the appropriate station extension and leave a message for follow-up. Examples of the teams or activities affected (including any mutual aid agreements) include Child Safety Seat Installation/Inspection, Crisis Intervention (FACTS), Civilian Fingerprinting, Drug Interdiction, Firearms Licensing, Domestic Violence Liaison, Directed Traffic Enforcement Patrols, Island Creek Development Liaison, Crash Reconstruction, etc.

**Special Police** - Beach Patrol by the Police Department will be eliminated. Calls for service at the beach will be handled the same as any other resident call; the patrol sector vehicle will be dispatched.

### **Fire**

The Fire department meets and exceeds the mandate by coming in under the FY 2021 budget by \$91,478 or -2.62%. This was able to be done by adding 3 additional Firefighters that will be paid for by a Federal Staffing Grant for the next 3 years. While the cost 3 years from now will have an impact on the General Fund, the plan is to increase ambulance revenues and save on overtime in order to substantiate and fund future costs.

### **Regional Dispatch**

The Regional Dispatch department is otherwise known as the Old Colony Regional Communications Center (ROCCC). The ROCCC performs dispatch services for Duxbury as well as member Towns yet it currently flows through the General Fund as a department because there is currently no other mechanism for more transparent treatment. The department has brought on one additional Town during FY 2021 (Hanson) providing an additional \$250K in revenue for FY 2022 that must go into supporting this department or we would be violating our intermunicipal agreements. The Regional

*Dispatch budget is up by \$128,084 but after considering the additional revenues the effect to Duxbury is a decrease of \$121,916.*

### ***Municipal Services***

*Currently this department exceeds level funding but only because of the new Public Health Nurse and the hours necessary during the pandemic. While the current budget shows an increase of \$24,064 or 3.93%, if the additional hours and become unnecessary or funding comes from additional sources this budget would meet the mandate with a \$6,929 reduction or -1.21%.*

### ***Harbormaster***

*The Harbormaster Department met the level-funding mandate and went beyond that point with reductions to their budget of over 9.8%.*

### ***Beach Operations***

*A newly created department, the Beach Operations department currently exceeds the mandate by 4.91%. As we have not had any consistency with beach operations since we started accounting for it in its own cost center, this is still a work in progress.*

***Conclusion:*** *By its nature the ROCCC budget skews the bottom-line budget numbers and they must be adjusted by the \$250K in additional revenues. A Public Safety budget showing a \$51,311 increase after adjusting for additional ROCCC revenues is in reality a reduction of \$198,689 or - 2.16%. In addition, if it is determined that the additional nursing costs in the Municipal Services department is not needed due to the possibility of a reduction in the caseload volume because of broad vaccination rollout or should there be additional funding sources for those services, there is a potential to further reduce the Public Safety budget to -2.48% or a total reduction of \$228,134.*

### **PUBLIC WORKS**

*The Public Works function consists of all the sub-departments functions performed under the Director of Public Works. In the aggregate the DPW has currently met the mandate and has come in with a budget reduction of \$86,990 or 1.86%. It is important to note that substantial cuts were made to do so. These were the bulk of the reductions made from level services to achieve the mandate:*

- 1. Aerial Lift Operator - This position was cut in the FY 2021 DPW Lands & Natural Resources budget but the department is quickly finding out that we are increasing our liability by not filling it – it only took one storm with significant tree damage to prove the point. At a cost of \$57,832 this is the DPW Director's #1 priority to restore.*
- 2. Seasonal Help in the Cemetery – Two (2) Seasonal Positions were eliminated for a total of \$24,800.*
- 3. Seasonal Help in Lands & Natural Resources – Two (2) Seasonal Positions were eliminated for a total of \$24,800.*
- 4. Fuel Depot gasoline budget reduction by \$25K may or may not be sustainable depending on future oil prices.*
- 5. Marshfield Sewer budget reduction by \$20K may or may not be sustainable depending on future costs.*

**Conclusion:** If monies were put back into Lands & Naturals to fund the Aerial Lift Operator the Department of Public Works would still be less than level funded by \$29,158 or -0.62%. In this budget, the Aerial Lift Operator position has been restored.

### **HUMAN SERVICES**

The Human Services function is comprised of the Council on Aging, Veteran's Services and the Plymouth County Cooperative Extension. In all three groups, the budget mandate has been met with the following reductions / explanations:

#### **Council on Aging**

The COA budget was lower by +/- \$12,000 as a result of retirement and a new employee being hired at a lower rate of pay, a reduction in staff hours and a small reduction in overtime hours.

#### **Veteran's Services**

Our Veteran's Agent advised us that he is currently carrying 10 veteran's cases for Chapter 115 benefits which reflects a reduction of \$15,000 in his expense line. He did point out that if there is a spike in the number of veterans who apply for benefits, this amount will need to change.

### **LIBRARY & RECREATION**

#### **Library**

The Library Department has met the objective of the budget message with reductions to their budget of 0.56%. While seemingly small, there is concern for the sustainability of these cuts in their department as they relate to the library's ability to remain certified.

#### **Recreation**

The proposed FY22 budget for the Recreation Department is primarily level funded with the exception of the proposed Beach Operations Department.

**Conclusion:** The overall result of the FY22 Budget exercise as it relates to Library and Recreation is an increase of 3.13% due to the creation of the Beach Operations Department.

### **SCHOOLS**

Over the past several months it has been made abundantly clear that a priority for this budget cycle is that "holding the line" for a level-service budget (as opposed to a level-funding budget) for the School Department is a top priority. My proposed FY22 budget mirrors that sentiment. The School Department submitted a budget that met the 0% increase exercise but that proposal would result in drastic cuts. In the proposed FY22 budget, you will see that I have added \$1,000,000 to their proposal for a total amount of \$38,498,353. The \$1M was the result of reallocating \$125K from the savings in the level funded Town Operating Budgets, \$375K from reductions to the Health Insurance line, and \$500K in increased revenue estimates.

### **TOWN & SCHOOL SHARED COSTS**

Shared costs consist mostly of employee benefits and insurances that are chosen not to be allocated to each department because it either cannot be done or can't be done efficiently or with any precision. Employee benefits in this category include Medicare, Health Insurance, Life Insurance, Retirement, and Workers Compensation. Other Shared Costs include the Town's Fire, Property, and casualty insurances and the Finance Committee's Reserve Fund. The 5-year average of these costs was originally used to help determine the Departmental Operating Budget message and strategy. Prior to

*the close of FY20, the 5-year average (2015-2019) was 5.98%. After closing the year on 2020, we have seen a very favorable changes to Health Insurance due to COVID. Since most people are avoiding elective procedures, we are seeing a downward trend in claims. While we know this will reverse itself sometime in FY 2022, we have built up substantial reserves in the Town's health insurance Trust Fund as the Town is self-insured. In consultation with our Health Insurance advisors (Cooke & Co.) it looks as though we could level-fund our Health Insurance budget. Some of this was offset by the 7.79% increase in our retirement line.*

**Conclusion:** *Due to the extraordinary health insurance savings identified the total of Shared Costs is being estimated at an increase of 3.04%. In prior years I have explained that our ability to provide services to the levels citizens expect is an ever-growing challenge - our public safety departments (Fire, Police and DPW) have been stretched for some time and their ability to deliver their services is a challenge. Dr. Antonucci has also carefully explained that the School Department is faced with a number of equally tough challenges for the upcoming year and together we believe that we will be able to meet our needs at this most basic level. As suggested, we have made the School Department and Public Safety Departments a priority. The conversations we have had this year amongst the department heads, administration and committees concerning the need for an override will certainly continue into next year. The FY22 budget year will result in a very different "feel" than prior years as the Town will face serious challenges in delivering our services to the residents the best we can. We are committed to working closely with all of our departments, Boards, Committees and the public as the conversations about funding future years continues."*

Mr. Adams also shared presentations starting with the budget perspective, analyzed all revenue sources and put together a comparison for FY22. He noted that in FY21 we used \$750,000 of stabilization, which he is not recommending for FY22. Mr. Adams also presented a 5 year budget projection; he discussed local receipts – which he also compared to the great recession during the years from 2008 through 2011 and based on a three-year projection of that average.

Mr. Madigan added that everyone has done what was asked of them – meaning providing a level funded budget, which we were then able to give the schools \$1m to help level their service budget with only a minor shortfall.

Ms. MacNab mentioned cuts to salaries as it was hard to justify the 2% merit increases. Mr. Adams responded to clarify that there are no merit increases in the budget as those fall under Article 4 of the Town Meeting warrant. Ms. MacNab then added that there needs to be a discussion regarding a hiring freeze for non-essential employees moving forward.

#### **IV. TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT**

Mr. Read stated that he only had one update regarding Covid, which acceleration rate he said was alarming as the number of cases has reached double-digits on a daily basis. He continued to say that the ages range from under one year to over 80. Mr. Read asked everyone to remain socially distant, to wear a mask and begging people to be safe and to do their part.

Ms. MacNab asked that the residents be kept informed of vaccination plans so they know we are committed and are doing what is necessary. Mr. Read added that we are currently not buying a freezer (as other towns have) because we don't know what vaccine we are getting. He confirmed that he will share information as he gets it.

**V. COMMITTEE APPOINTMENTS/RE-APPOINTMENTS/RESIGNATIONS None**

**VI ONE-DAY LIQUOR LICENSE REQUESTS - None**

**VII EVENT PERMITS - None**

**VIII MINUTES**

Ms. MacNab moved that the Board of Selectmen approves the 12/14/20 Selectmen's Open Session Minutes, as presented.

*Seconded by Mr. Madigan. Mr. Flynn-Aye; Mr. Madigan-Aye; Ms. MacNab-Aye*

**IX ANNOUNCEMENTS**

**1) Papers available for Town Election openings:**

If you wish to run for an open office seat, papers are available through the Town Clerk's office. Please call at 781-934-1100 x5450 or email at [kelley@town.duxbury.ma.us](mailto:kelley@town.duxbury.ma.us)

**2) Duxbury Senior Center – Winter Wonderland**

Drop by, Drive up, Peak inside to enjoy our Holiday Village Display from now through December 26 between the hours of 4-7pm. Please wear your mask and socially distance from other viewers.

**3) Holiday Town Hall Closures:**

The Town Hall will be closing at 12 Noon on Thursday, December 24 and will be closed all day on December 25. It will also be closing at 4 pm on Thursday, December 31 and will be closed all day on Friday, January 1.

**4) Next Scheduled Selectmen's Meeting will be on Monday, January 4, 2021 at 7pm**

**X ADJOURNMENT**

Mr. Madigan moved that at approximately 8:35 PM, the Board of Selectmen adjourn.

*Seconded by Ms. MacNab Roll Call Vote: Mr. Flynn-Aye; Mr. Madigan-Aye; and Ms. MacNab-Aye*

*Minutes submitted by Nancy O'Connor*

**LIST OF DOCUMENTS**

- 1) Agenda
- 2) FY22 Budget presentations
- 3) Minutes
- 4) Announcements

