**05/12/2021 Paxton Finance Committee Meeting Minutes**

**Members Attending**: Richard Fenton (Chair), Mark Love (Vice Chair), Anthony Domineck (Clerk), Tim Linton, Seth Peters, June Herron

**Members Not Attending**: Jennifer Lennon

**Additional Attendees**: Carol Riches (Town Administrator), Peter Bogren (Select Board), Jeff Kent (Veteran’s Agent)

Virtual meeting called to order at 7:02 PM EST

* Review minutes from 4/21/21 meeting: MTA: Herron, 2nd Peters. Unanimously approved.
  + Amendment: Added June Herron to those attending
* Col. Jeff Kent: Last month distributed an article re: MA general law Sec 5 Claus 22H. Exempts family members of soldiers who died from property tax with no reimbursement from the state. Town voted take no action at town meeting. Currently 1 Gold Star Family residing in Paxton, current property assessment around $335,000. Abatement would = approximately $6800. Love: need clarification. 1 year ago, there were 2 articles, now 1. Current article speaks to parents and guardians only, what about a spouse? Kent: Town approved the spouse clause. Town is approved up to 75%. Fenton: How often do the parents rely on financial support from military children? Under the impression wife or husband were dependent on salary, but not parents or guardians as much. Kent: This is my opinion. This is more of an honor mechanism than a financial mechanism. Not concerned about people moving to Paxton to take advantage.
* Reserve transfers
  + $35 to Town Clerk (1199) from Public Building (1192) to pay for church clock maintenance. Work was needed beyond annual budgeted maintenance. MTA $35: Herron, 2nd Linton: Approved unanimously
  + $271.38 to Veteran Services (1543) from Public Building (1192) to pay for unforeseen medical expenses beyond annual budgeted amount. MTA $271.38: Herron, 2nd Linton: Approved unanimously
* Budget: WRSD budget approved reducing deficit by $64k. Need to vote on department budgets recently submitted/re-submitted. Deficit will remain, will need to explore options to reduce deficit after budgets reviewed.
* Town Admin (1123) – Car allowance and phone eliminated. MTA $94,656: Herron, 2nd Linton. Discussion: Town Admin volunteered to make these cuts to reduce deficit. Unanimous approval.
* Municipal; Assistant (1124) – Reduced by $1000. MTA $19,769: Herron, 2nd, Peters. Love: Will the reduction cause the position to be displaced? Riches: Nobody is in the position yet. Unanimous Approval.
* Legal Services (1151): Reduced purchased services line item from $22k to $15k. MTA: Herron, 2nd Linton. Discussion: Love: I like the direction we are going but thought we were opposed to reducing? Riches: Nearing end of year and based on remaining funds, should be ok assuming no unexpected litigation. Reduced amount should be sufficient if next year is standard year. MTA $23,000: Herron, 2nd: Peters. Unanimous approval
* Municipal Information Svcs (1155) – Reduced by $20k because of zeroing out of hardware equipment and software fees. Riches: We do need these items but will find other sources such as CARES ACT money for this year. Will review again in FY23. This does not affect security software. MTA $70,432: Herron, 2nd Peters. Approved (5 yes, 1 no)
* Public Building Property (1192) – Decreased by $6,000, repairs budget reduced to $8,000. MTA $17,850: Herron, 2nd: Linton. Approved – (5 yes, 1 no)
* Insurance Premiums and Bonds (1193)– Originally approved for $143,300. Increased to Property & Casualty line item by $6,600. MTA $149,900: Herron, 2nd Linton. Unanimous approval.
* Police – Revised downward. MTA $1,113,951: Herron, 2nd Peters. Love: Only item being reduced is gasoline and gasoline is going up, is that advisable. Fenton: Revised by Police Chief, his responsibility to know what he needs. Love: Also, reduction in overtime, any commentary regarding why? Approved – (5 yes, 1 no)
* Fire – Originally eliminated need for cell phone, training and supplies in emergency management budget. Fire and Emergency Management consolidated under Fire. Budget was reduced then increased with the addition of the Emergency Management Director salary. MTA $413,935: Herron, 2nd: Peters. Unanimous approval.
* Highway Dept (1421) - MTA $734,736: Herron, 2nd peters. Love: Why is rental equipment zeroed out? Riches: Supervisor said he will “make it work” and revisit next year. Love: Why was guardrail reduced. Riches: No guardrail was currently planned. Approved – (5 yes, 1 no)
* Conversation regarding ideas to reduce remaining deficit:
  + Fenton: Recreation (1630): Includes compensation plus $5k for purchase services and $2k for supplies. They do have a large amount of money available for appropriation. Suggest reducing by $7k.
  + Love: $35k budget is a shadow of real budget because they heavily utilize fees. Concerned this is too much.
  + Fenton: We have a major deficit facing the town and they do have a large amount of money available to them of $121k.
  + Love: Why don’t we ask other departments to use revolving accounts?
  + Riches: Fire, Police, etc. are from donations, not replenishable like recreation. Love: We should talk to the recreation director first.
  + Fenton: They do have a revolving account with $110k in it.
  + Riches: Suggest having recreation director attend next week, do not vote until then. Linton: Should we reach out to all departments to reduce budgets?
  + Riches: Most others do not have room for cuts.
  + Love: Let’s reach out to all departments and give them an opportunity to make their own cuts.
  + Peters: Are there other departments with revolving accounts like rec?
  + Fenton: Tree warden for example, he could voluntarily decrease it should we ask him to do that?
  + Peters: What I was saying is if others are in a situation similar to recreation, they could use revolving funds.
  + Riches: Council on Aging has funds but cannot touch them, like Fire.
  + Fenton: Will reach out to Department Heads identified by Carol to see if they can make cuts.
  + Love: Finance should reach out to all department heads Secondly, ask that special revenue funds available on the website be downloaded and brought to next meeting. Should revisit revenue side of the equation. Finally, make a final decision on COLA issue. Riches: Town meeting is in 5 weeks; we must start moving to close the gap or warrants will come out with no amounts. There is no more revenue to be found.
  + Love: Let’s have a full discussion about it.
  + Herron: Can we get a printout of upcoming articles prior to next week?
  + Fenton: Yes. Will provide hard copy of articles.

Virtual meeting adjourned 8:08 PM EST

Respectfully Submitted

Tony Domineck, Clerk