**05/20/2021 Paxton Finance Committee Meeting Minutes**

**Members Attending**: Richard Fenton (Chair), Mark Love (Vice Chair), Jennifer Lennon, Seth Peters, June Herron

**Members Not Attending**: Tim Linton, Tony Domineck

**Additional Attendees**: Carol Riches (Town Administrator), Peter Bogren (Select Board liaison)

Virtual meeting called to order at 7:00 PM

The meeting began with a moment of silence to honor the loss of 13 year old Tyler Trudell this past week.

1. Minutes of the meeting of May 12 are not available at this time.

2. Consider a within budget transfer from Highway Compensation #1421-5103 to Highway Superintendent Salary #1421-5102 for $6,273.92. To compensate for change in salary due to retirement of previous Superintendent (including paying vacation time) and hiring of new Director. Ms. Riches expanded on the process. Moved by Ms. Herron, seconded by Ms. Lennon. Approved unanimously.

3. CONTINUE DISCUSSION OF THE BUDGET. Mr. Fenton presented budgets that were re-submitted in response to the budget deficit that existed at the present time. It was emphasized that the Department of Revenue has strongly recommended to the towns that they exhibit conservative spending actions because it is not known how the pandemic is going to affect revenue availability next fiscal year. It was further indicated that the Reserve Fund is available to all departments that have unexpected revenue requirements in the coming year.

1. Police Department #1210. The previously approved budget was revised and resubmitted. Funding for overtime, specialized training, gasoline and training equipment was restored/partially restored and funding for part time window help was eliminated. Mr. Love: Was this budget submitted by Chief Savasta and how is he covering for Window help after zeroing out that budget. Mr. Fenton: Money can be moved between line items within each subaccount, so where there is a surplus, this can be moved to Window Help when needed. Ms. Riches: The Police Chief was comfortable with this budget and no one is displaced. Motion for $1,113,952 made by Ms. Herron, seconded by Ms. Lennon. Unanimously approved.

2. Emergency Management #1291. Because this budget was incorporated into the Fire Budget, we are essentially voting to close this account. Motion for $0 made by Ms. Herron, seconded by Mr. Peters. Unanimously approved.

3. Emergency Medical Services #1232. Motion for $705,621 made by Ms. Herron, seconded by Ms. Lennon. Unanimously approved. Mr. Love: Was this budget submitted by Chief Pingitore? Mr. Fenton: Yes.

4. Library #1610. Because of the pandemic, CW Mars reduced their assessment to the Library. Funding for computer repairs and maintenance was reduced. Because the amount appropriated for books is a percentage of the non-book budget, this line item went down as well. The director will be retiring by July 1, so there will be a new director and the line-item for salary is not known at this time. Motion for $194,257 made by Mr. Peters, seconded by Ms. Lennon. Unanimously approved.

5. Recreation #1630. A new budget was submitted as approved by the Recreation Committee shortly before this meeting. Purchased services and supplies were reduced to zero. Compensation line items were retained. Motion for $28,681 made by Ms. Herron, seconded by Ms. Lennon. Unanimously approved.

These actions resulted in a balanced budget after a $10,000 increase in the estimate for New Construction used to calculate the Levy Limit.

4. Discuss and vote on recommendations of Warrant Articles to the Annual Town Meeting.

1. Article 1 – Water Department Receipts. Motion by Ms. Lennon, seconded by Ms. Herron; unanimous vote, Recommend Approval

2. Article 2 – Dump Truck for Department of Public Works. Motion by Mr. Love, seconded by Ms. Herron; unanimous vote, Recommend Approval

3. Article 3 – Pickup Truck for Water Department. Motion by Mr. Love, seconded by Ms. Herron; unanimous vote, Recommend Approval

4. Article 4 – Water Tank Maintenance. Motion by Mr. Love, seconded by Mr. Peters; unanimous vote, Recommend Approval

5. Article 5 – Appropriate funds to Road Improvement. Motion by Ms. Herron, seconded by Mr. Peters; unanimous vote, Recommend Approval.

6. Article 6 – Use funds from the Road Improvement. Motion by Ms. Herron, seconded by Ms. Lennon; unanimous vote, Recommend Approval

7. Article 7 – Chapter 90 funding. Motion by Ms. Herron, seconded by Ms. Lennon; unanimous vote, Recommend Approval

8. Article 8 – Revolving Accounts. Motion by Ms. Herron, seconded by Mr. Peters; unanimous vote, Recommend Approval

9. Article 9 – Wachusett Greenways. Motion by Ms. Herron, seconded by Mr. Peters; unanimous vote, Recommend Approval

10. Article 10 – Gold Star Family – Property Tax Abatement Section 5, Clause 22H. Motion by Mr. Peters, seconded by Mr. Love; unanimous vote, Recommend Approval

11. Article 11 - Town Budget – will make recommendation at the ATM.

12. Article 12 - Wachusett Regional School District Budget. Motion by Ms. Herron, seconded by Mr. Peters. Mr. Love reminded us that while limiting the school budget to a 2.4% increase was excellent, it must not be overlooked that this year’s 4.7% increase in assessment to the town, especially when the number of students attending from Paxton has gone down, is not acceptable. The State needs to improve the formula calculation, and the assessment of transportation should be covered 100% by the state. Admits that we alone can’t do anything about these, but we should continue to push for improvements by the state. Mr. Fenton: 100% reimbursement of transportation alone would end most of our financial problems that occur each year. Vote: 4 in favor, 1 (Mr. Love) against. Recommend Approval by majority vote.

13. Article 13 – Bay Path Budget. Motion by Ms. Herron, seconded by Mr. Peters. Unanimous vote, Recommend Approval.

5. Mr. Fenton: The Warrant will go to press next week. Our next meeting will focus on any new business that may arise prior to the Annual Town Meeting. Secondly, Mr. Love suggested that we begin discussion of various aspects of revenue generation by the town.

Virtual meeting adjourned 8:05 PM.

Respectfully Submitted

Richard Fenton