

Weston Finance Committee
Meeting Minutes
March 5, 2020

A meeting of the Finance Committee of the Town of Weston, which was duly called and posted in compliance with the laws of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, was held on Thursday, March 5th, 2020 at the Weston Town Hall. There being a quorum present the meeting was called to order at 7:03pm.

Present for the meeting were:

Finance Committee: Lisa Reitano – Chair, John McDonald, James Jarrett, Gerard Jansen, Karen Meslin, John Sallay, and Bharath Venkataraman.

Also Present: Leon Gaumont, Town Manager, Susan Kelley, Finance Director, Lisa Yanakakis, Assistant Town Manager, Zoe Pierce, Treasurer/Collector, Michele Grzenda, Conservation Administrator, Tracy Sullivan, Director of Municipal Information Systems, Lee McCanne, Director of Technology of Schools and Katharina Wilkins, Sustainability Committee Chair.

Karen Meslin was appointed to serve as Secretary pro-tempore and charged with keeping the minutes of the meeting. The meeting was recorded by Weston Media and is available online.

- 1) There were no resident comments.
- 2) The minutes of the meeting of February 27th were approved by all members.
- 3) FY21 Information Systems Budget was discussed. Bharath provided the following summary: The IT budget is a level service budget with a year over year increase of 12.4% (\$106,000). The biggest increase is in software maintenance costs, largely driven by the cost to switch to hosted MUNIS, which should provide better security. Other cost increases are for HP support and network monitoring. The IT capital request of \$1,565,000 over the next three years is to update the town and school's network infrastructure. As proposed, Phase 1 (net cost \$825,000 in FY21) covers network switching and wireless access point upgrades, small cell enhancement for some buildings, in-building fiber/copper network cabling upgrade, and server infrastructure. Phase 2 (FY22 net cost \$340,000) covers copper network cabling upgrades, investigation of cloud infrastructure, security surveillance upgrades and phase 2 of the school and security enhancement. Phase 3 (FY23/24 net cost \$400,000) covers a telephone system update and phase 3 of the school communication and security enhancement. A discussion followed as to whether these items should be part of the regular annual operating budget or whether to borrow, as these are capital items.
- 4) FY21 Conservation Budget was presented by Michele Grzenda. There are three requests: a) \$10,000 requested for Case Estates Land Management to manage invasive plant overgrowth; b) \$14,000 to maintain trails and fire roads which are

in need of upkeep. WFTA currently pays \$45,000 per year to keep walking trails cleared of invasive plants and downed trees; requested additional money will be used to ensure the fire roads and wider trails are accessible to emergency vehicles; and c) \$10,000 requested to hire a consultant to assess the feasibility of a Wetlands By-Law. In addition, she is requesting a .35 decrease in FTE for a Stewardship Program Coordinator and a .4 increase in FTE for another part-time Conservation Assistant, for an overall increase of .05 FTE.

- 5) FY21 Sustainability Coordinator: Leon Gaumond and Katharina Wilkins proposed adding a sustainability coordinator position to address climate change and sustainability issues. Although \$82,000 is being requested for this position the expectation is that much of this cost will ultimately be covered by grants and ongoing cost savings that will result from sustainability efforts realized as a result of the position.
- 6) There was a preliminary review and discussion of the Finance Committee Report for the Annual Town Meeting Warrant book.
- 7) Work on subcommittee projects continues. No significant updates to report at this time.

The meeting adjourned at 9:35pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Karen Meslin