

Town of Weston

Finance Committee Meeting Minutes

Thursday May 14, 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, May 14, 2020 via a Zoom video conference and was broadcast live and recorded by Weston Media Center. There being a quorum present, the meeting was called to order at 7:00 P.M.

Present for the meeting were:

Finance Committee: Lisa Reitano – Chair, Ellen Richstone, John Sallay, James Jarrett, Karen Meslin, Bharath Venkataraman, John McDonald and James Philipkosky.

Also Present: Leon Gaumond-Town Manager, Susan Kelley and Frank Caine.

1. James Philipkosky was appointed to serve as Secretary *pro tempore* and charged with keeping the minutes of the meeting.
2. The minutes of the meeting of April 30, 2020 were unanimously approved.
3. Resident Comments: Karen Meslin, Finance Committee member speaking on the record as a Weston resident described the behavior of the Select Board as unacceptable and disrespectful to Lisa Reitano (Chair of the Finance Committee) during the Select Board's resident meeting's 7pm meeting, held via a Zoom video conference, on May 7, 2020. The issue stemmed from the Select Board's discussion of a Finance Committee's report re: the town's proposed fiscal year 2021 ("FY21") budget, and Ms. Reitano's not being allowed to speak on the Finance Committee's behalf as the report was discussed. Members of the Finance Committee actively discussed the topic.
4. The Committee, led by Chair Reitano, discussed the status of town's proposed FY21 budget, the timing of a Town Meeting and Town Elections, and the use of 1/12th budgeting as an interim budget for FY21 until a budget for FY21 is voted on and approved by the town.
 - a. A date for Town Meeting in September was discussed but not scheduled by the Select Board. Mr. Gaumond remarked that the State of Emergency has not been lifted and that he doesn't expect that to change any time soon.
 - b. Per the town's bylaws, the town election is to be held the Saturday before the Town Meeting and the offices change to those elected at the Town Meeting.
 - c. Mr. Gaumond noted the Commonwealth continues to refine its guidance of using the 1/12th budgeting approach being proposed.
 - d. Ms. Reitano and Messrs. Sallay and McDonald were elected to finalize and send an open letter to the Select Board that outlines the Finance Committee's budget recommendations and publish the letter for the town residents to read. The Finance Committee agreed the letter would focus solely on budget issues.
5. A letter posted in the Town Crier by members of the Recreation Master Plan Steering Committee regarding comments made by the Finance Committee's was discussed.

6. Subcommittee Projects: Mr. Sallay reiterated the town's need to have a long-term scenario planning model, asked questions regarding the status of the effort to obtain it and requested feedback at the next Finance Committee meeting.

A motion to adjourn was made, duly seconded and the meeting was adjourned at 8:53pm.

Respectfully submitted,

James D. Philipkosky

A Stabilization Budget for a More Secure Future

In this time of great economic disruption and uncertainty, we do not support increasing the Fiscal Year 2021 operating and cash capital budgets as proposed by the Town Manager, and as further discussed by the Select Board. We do not oppose the school budget increase of 3.5%, which is 1.7% after adjusting for accounting changes and legally mandated special education expenses. Rather, we are concerned by the remaining proposed municipal budget in this unprecedented environment. We recommend deferring all significant discretionary spending and all proposed budget increases which are not absolutely necessary until after the current crisis has subsided. At that point, we may be able to restore discretionary expenses and investments on which there is already broad agreement and debate other increases as may be prudent at that time.

Specifically, for FY21 we recommend maintaining a level spending budget of \$52.7 million for all Town departments except for the schools, where we support the budget increase proposed by the School Committee. The Town Manager's currently recommended budget is up 6.6% over the previous year – 3.5% for the schools, where enrollment continues to decline at about 2% per year, and 8.9% for the balance of town services – in a much lower inflation environment. Weston currently has the highest average single-family tax bill in Massachusetts, at \$20,922, or \$5,313 (+34%) higher than the \$15,609 average of comparable affluent Boston-area communities.

The current environment requires bold action and ultimately will encourage all of us in Weston to step back and reconsider the level and trajectory of Weston taxes and spending, across the board. We all should review and work to refresh the Town leadership's financial vision, strategy, and fundamental budgeting principles. This broad reconsideration may not be possible during this Covid-19 health and economic crisis, not to mention some already disruptive challenges such as several proposed 40B developments. In the meantime, however, we believe it is most prudent to: 1) keep spending at current levels subject to maintaining existing public safety and municipal infrastructure, 2) honor all legal and contractual commitments (e.g., existing union contracts, debt service) while looking to offset required cost increases with savings from efficiencies elsewhere, 3) not plan for any new hires except for replacing departures, and 4) defer all capital expenditures except where absolutely necessary. As the Covid-19 crisis subsides and as soon as practicable, we will work with the Select Board, School Committee, Town Manager and others to reevaluate longer term objectives and principles.

In March, as the Covid-19 crisis began to unfold, we made several recommendations regarding the FY21 budget that we now believe need to be taken even further. At that time, we recommended reducing the proposed FY21 budget by approximately \$2.63 million through a combination of reduced budget increases and deferrals. We suggested taking a hiatus in the Department of Public Works program to upgrade our roads, and spending a more steady-state \$1.2 million on roadway maintenance rather than \$2 million as proposed. We also recommended reducing by up to half this year's annual OPEB contribution of \$2.25 million, since those funds will not be required for decades. We recommended deferring the \$100,000 school campus feasibility study related to the Recreation Master Plan while enrollment trends are studied further. And while sustainability must become a high priority for all Town departments, for FY21 we recommended exploring energy-related grants and cost savings by using a low-cost consultant or contractor, rather than adding a full-time Sustainability Coordinator at \$104,000 per year. Finally, we recommended that the Town Manager and the Select Board pursue

additional reductions where possible without jeopardizing public safety. Even with all these recommended example reductions and an additional \$500,000 in further savings, the overall budget would still increase by 3.8% (versus 6.6%), still above the expected levels of new growth and inflation over the coming year.

As the Covid-19 health and economic crisis has intensified over the last several weeks, it has become apparent that the economic downturn will be much more severe than most of us expected, and that it will have a significant negative impact on the Town of Weston and its residents notwithstanding our relative affluence. Consequently, in addition to the \$2.63 million savings and deferrals previously suggested, we recommend instituting a hiring freeze for all new positions. This would include holding off on the Sustainability Coordinator mentioned above (\$104,000 per year), the two additional firefighters on top of the two already added (\$131,000, or \$191,000 net of overtime savings of \$60,000), the Assistant Town Planner, Conservation Assistant, and COA Coordinator increased staffing levels (\$64,000), for a total of about \$300,000 per year.

We also recommend deferring all capital expenditures except where absolutely necessary. This would include the proposed school/town networking equipment upgrade (\$953,000), the ambulance and fire equipment replacements (\$550,000), the fire and recreation vehicles (\$102,000), and DPW equipment (\$41,000), for a total of about \$1.65 million.

The total of our previously recommended cost savings and deferrals, including some unspecified savings recommendations from the Town Manager, the freeze in additional new hires, and further deferrals would be approximately \$4.6 million. Although this figure is still below the \$4.7 million increase proposed for non-school expenditures in the current budget, we hope that further review can identify additional savings that will enable us to hold the municipal non-school expenditures flat at \$52.7 million, and total FY21 expenditures at \$95.6 million, still +1.6% above FY20.

Although we believe that the town's existing cash reserves and cumulative surplus of taxes over actual spending (known as "free cash") will be sufficient to cover unexpected FY21 revenue deficits and/or extraordinary expense, the Town Manager and Select Board should carefully reconsider all of the potential contingencies.

And again, over the next few years, we recommend that the Town explore new and significant opportunities to enhance long term fiscal prudence and financial flexibility by seeking new measures of relative cost and municipal service performance, and by developing new analytic tools for evaluating various projects and spending plans. Specifically, we believe the Town should:

- Establish baseline measures of success for all Town departments, especially for the Schools, Police and Fire Departments, and the Department of Public Works, so that Townspeople can easily track service performance and costs over time, compared to the same metrics in neighboring comparable towns and other objective measurable standards.
- Develop and implement a long-range financial planning model, so that we are all better able to analyze the financial implications and tradeoffs associated with various policies, commitments, and large special projects over time.

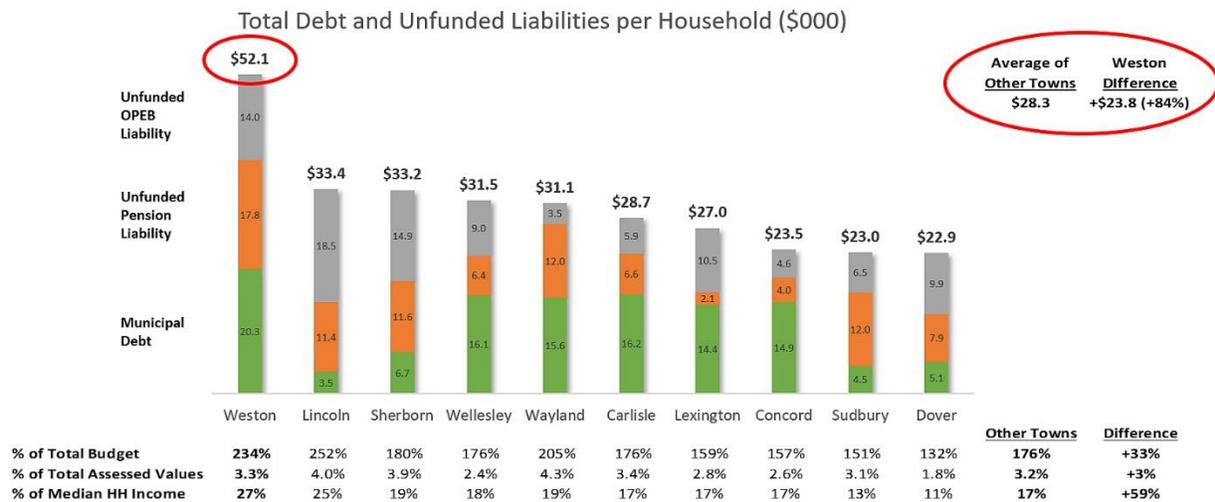
Just as we are all adapting to new social customs for our personal and community safety, it has become necessary now to work together to stabilize and secure Weston's financial future.

Fincom Perspective on Weston's Debt and Discretionary Spending

As follow-up to last week's article by the Weston Finance Committee, "Fincom Perspective on Weston's School Budget", which detailed our lack of support for the proposed Fiscal Year 2021 town budget as recommended by the Town Manager, we want to provide a revised exhibit and some additional perspective on the issues it raises with respect to the town's many recent amenity projects, and especially the proposed 2020 Recreation Master Plan.

As noted last week, we do not oppose the school budget increase of 3.5%, which is 1.7% after adjusting for accounting changes and legally mandated special education expenses. Rather, we are concerned by the remaining proposed municipal budget in this unprecedented environment. We have recommended deferring all significant discretionary spending and all proposed budget increases which are not absolutely necessary until after the current crisis has subsided. When the duration and economic impact of the coronavirus pandemic is better understood, it may be appropriate to restore discretionary expenses and investments on which there is already broad agreement, and debate other initiatives as may be prudent at that time.

Weston's obligations far higher than other towns



In response to a question relating to a previously published exhibit showing Weston's Total Debt and Unfunded Liabilities per Household, we have obtained additional regional school data from primary sources to supplement data originally obtained from Massachusetts Department of Revenue databases, the Public Employee Retirement Administration Commission (PERAC), and the Middlesex and Norfolk county retirement systems.

The overall message of the revised chart remains unchanged: Weston's total level of debt and unfunded pension and retiree healthcare liabilities, now approaching a quarter of a billion dollars, is far higher than in comparable neighboring affluent towns on a per household basis. In FY20, Weston's total debt and unfunded liabilities totaled approximately \$57,120 per household, up from \$52,100 in FY18, itself close to twice the comparable town average of about \$28,300 per household (+\$23,800 or +84%). Further, Weston's debt and unfunded liabilities are 234% our total annual operating budget, compared

with neighboring comparable towns averaging debt and unfunded liabilities at 176% of their operating budgets.

Unfunded employee pension liabilities and health insurance liabilities (known as Other Post-Employment Benefits, or OPEB) constitute most of these long-term municipal obligations. However, since 1997 the Town has authorized a number of large capital projects totaling nearly \$213 million, all funded with Proposition 2 ½ excluded or CPA debt. This list includes major renovations of the schools, construction of the new Field School, Community Center, DPW and Police Station, an addition to the Town Hall, Case Campus Improvements, Case Estates Land acquisition, and more recently, Case House Rehabilitation, Old Library (WAIC), Josiah Smith Tavern, and Town Center Master Plan and Burying of Utilities. Outstanding excluded debt against these projects (as well as a number of smaller projects), will total approximately \$89 million in General Fund Dept and \$101 million in debt when CPA projects are included. This debt amounts to more than Weston's annual town operating budget.

<u>Year</u>	<u>Major Capital Projects Since 1997</u>	<u>Total (\$Million)</u>
1997	High School Renovation	15.0
1998	Middle School Renovation	10.8
1999	Middle School Renovation	3.5
2000	Community Center	2.6
2001	Town Hall	6.2
2002	Woodland & Country Schools	37.2
2007	Case Estates Land Acquisition	20.5
2010	DPW Building	14.5
2011	High School Science Labs	12.8
2012	Field School	22.2
2014	Police Station	12.2
2014	Case Campus Master Plan	3.3
2017	Case Campus Roadways & Walkways	1.1
2017	High School Proctor Field	4.6
2017	Weston Arts & Innovation Center	4.5
2019	Case House Rehabilitation	7.8
2019	Town Center Improvement Project	18.1
2019	500 Wellesley Street Land Acquisition	3.4
2019	Josiah Smith Tavern Renovation	12.5
	TOTAL	212.8

Most of the major projects approved in the past five years are non-school related and many are partially, if not entirely, discretionary. Aside from the Field School (2012) and the High School science labs (2011), other school building related improvements were completed two decades ago. At some point, we will undoubtedly again need to refurbish or perhaps even replace some of our school buildings.

We have been concerned about the large number, size, and frequency of these various projects. And now, we are extremely concerned by the potential future cost of executing the new Recreation Master

Plan, which while involving some necessary fixes to current fields/facilities, also includes many “nice to have” items.

We are extremely grateful for the enormous time, effort, and volunteer commitment that went into the development of the 2020 Recreation Master Plan. The last recreation-related master plan was developed in 2005 and focused on Weston High School athletic facilities and the many athletic fields and tennis courts around town. That 2005 Athletic Fields Master Plan envisioned significant and expensive renovations which were then estimated at \$8-9 million including ongoing maintenance. The plan itself contemplated 85% of the necessary funds coming from private donations and CPC funding. Ultimately, 90% of the actual costs were raised privately and/or CPC funded. This 2005 master plan did not envision the 2017 Proctor Field project at the High School, which was almost entirely funded with excluded debt attributed to the school budget.

2005 Athletic Fields Master Plan

- Major Initiatives Envisioned
 - Replace football stadium bleachers
 - Renovate High School gym
 - Add 8 fields
 - Renovate 22 fields and rebuild 16 tennis courts
- Estimated Costs – \$8-9 million, 85% privately raised
 - \$5-6 million one-time capital improvements
 - \$3-4 million ongoing maintenance (over 10 years)
- Actual Costs – \$6.3 million, 90% private and CPC
 - \$4.0 million privately raised
 - \$1.7 million CPC funding
- Did not anticipate 2017 Proctor Field (\$4.6 million)

The 2020 Recreation Master plan has much grander ambitions, including a major renovation of Memorial Pool, replacing and expanding the Middle School Pool, and adding a brand new indoor field house having indoor gymnasiums, indoor fields, and an indoor track. The \$100,000 Feasibility Study proposed by the School Committee for a vote at the upcoming Town Meeting is the first step required to execute this vision. This 2020 Recreation Master Plan also contemplates renovations and upgrades to 8 playing fields around town at an estimated cost of \$4 million.

2020 Recreation Master Plan

- Major Initiatives Envisioned
 - Major renovation of Memorial Pool
 - Expand/replace Middle School Pool
 - Add indoor field house (gymnasiums, indoor fields, indoor track)
 - Add pickle ball courts
 - Renovate/upgrade 8 fields
 - Improve parking and access to outdoor facilities
- Estimated Costs – To Be Determined
 - \$4 million to renovate/upgrade 8 fields
 - All other major projects – TBD
- Potential Funding Sources Discussed
 - “Traditional Public Bidding” (i.e., property taxes)
 - Donations and corporate sponsorships
 - Partnerships (e.g., with private schools)
 - Sports foundations/funds/associations

We believe these sorts of ambitious amenity projects are encouraged by Weston’s practice of forming ad hoc long-term committees, which become committed to seeing them happen without regard to bigger picture trade-offs or costs. There is a tendency to analyze projects in isolation, and to focus on debt service when presenting projects to the Town (e.g. only \$200 per taxpayer per year, based on the median home value of \$1.2MM, for the next 20 years), rather than considering that the debt service costs of these various projects add up to a significant increase for years to come.

The ongoing maintenance and operating costs associated with an individual project must also be considered, as these may require the addition of permanent personnel and/or equipment. In addition to the annual tax impact, this debt can ultimately also affect real estate values. When a property is eventually sold, a buyer will be looking at the overall tax bill, which is by far the highest in the state, rather than a small amount per year associated with any one project.

To summarize, again, we appreciate all the hard work that went into the Recreation Master Plan. With regard to this proposal, the desire for many of the discretionary aspects (new indoor field house with indoor gymnasiums, and track and field complex), should be weighed against the cost of required maintenance upgrades (Memorial Pool, Middle School Pool and some fields) – and the likelihood that both the Middle School and High School will require significant refurbishments in the foreseeable future.

The 2005 Athletic Fields Master Plan and 2020 Recreation Master Plan are available on the Town of Weston website at <https://www.weston.org/DocumentCenter/View/10135/RMPSC-Report-October-2005-PDF> and <https://www.weston.org/DocumentCenter/View/22294/Recreation-Master-Plan-2020-PDF>.

The full Finance Committee report is available on the Town of Weston website , on the Finance Committee page, at <https://www.weston.org/DocumentCenter/View/22549/Report-of-the-Finance-Committee-PDF>.

Melissa Crocker and I have responded to this letter in this week's Crier (well, I hope it is published). We are both members of the Recreation Master Plan Steering Committee.

++++++As members of the Recreation Master Plan Steering Committee, we are gobsmacked by FinCom's negative reception of the 2020 Recreation Master Plan and the recent "perspective" by FinCom member Lisa Reitano published in this paper. Either FinCom has jumped to conclusions rather than understanding that the Committee is still evaluating and prioritizing, or they are confused about the charge of the Committee. We would like to elucidate the status of the master plan, and the Committee charge.

The RMPSC has a specific charge given to it by the Select Board, which is listed on the Town webpage.

<https://www.weston.org/583/Recreation-Master-Plan-Steering-Committee>

Develop and maintain a 10-year Master Plan for the Town of Weston for the creation, use and maintenance of fields and facilities to be used for recreational purposes. The Master Plan should:

Represent the collective needs of recreational User Groups

Provide a detailed, prioritized schedule for the creation, upgrade, maintenance, re-purpose, and acquisition of all town and school recreational fields and facilities

Be updated periodically based upon changing User Group needs and/or funding of specific projects

RMPSC is a standing committee and not "ad hoc," as stated by FinCom. The Recreation Master Plan Steering Committee consists of one (elected) School Committee Representative, one (elected) Recreation Commission representative (Melissa), three (appointed by Select Board) at-large representatives from the town (Kristin is one), and representatives of the major youth sports associations (Lacrosse, Soccer, Basketball and Baseball). We also have valued ex-officio (non-voting) members: the town Recreation Director, the Fields and Grounds Coordinator, the current public schools Athletic Director, and the past public schools Athletic Director. In our view, it is one of the best-run committees in the town of Weston. Come hang out with us at 7 am once a month on Fridays.

RMPSC has been accused of having "grand ambitions, including a major renovation of Memorial Pool, replacing and expanding the Middle School Pool, and adding a brand new indoor field house with an indoor gymnasium, indoor fields and an indoor track." That, in fact, is not true. At no point are we, as a Committee, able to force through major capital expenditure without a town-wide vote, nor are we all excitedly testing out our indoor track shoes.

Past feedback from FinCom on town projects is that committees do not do a good job with long-term planning and lack transparency on potential future projects. This Committee was charged with doing both and, in our view, has fulfilled those charges. The Master Plan is not a shopping list; this is a review of maintenance needed, renovations suggested and long-term "wants" of the Town, with options for all of these choices. We carefully debated the priorities of each. At the beginning of the process, we had no idea that pickleball was an unmet need by a large percentage of our town. We learned. We added. We also subtracted -- sorry, no return to skiing

at Cat Rock. We were asked to consider an indoor hockey rink but decided against including it in the Plan, based on current and expected demand and the availability of nearby facilities.

In our role as recreation “stewards,” we are responsible for noting that Memorial Pool has a filter system that has reached its life expectancy and the pool shell has exceeded its life expectancy (page 45). The well pump has failed and been replaced twice in the last three years. Options for consideration are presented. Or shall we wait until everything simply breaks? That doesn’t seem like very good planning.

Let us also take a moment to look at our analysis of the Middle School pool. On page 43, you will see that the report reads: “the pool is reaching its life expectancy and will likely require approximately \$100,000 to \$300,000 in reinvestment within the next 5 to 7 years to stay compliant with code requirements and to meet the needs of the Town.” Code compliance is not “ambition.” Options of renovation or replacement are detailed. Planning is suggested. We can wait until the bell tolls, or we can plan for it.

Finally, Ms. Reitano’s comment about RMPSC “adding a brand new indoor field house with an indoor gymnasium, indoor fields and an indoor track” is misleading and “fake news.” No one is voting on TD Garden West. While the plan does bring up a feasibility study, it specifically states that we would like to examine the need more thoroughly than this plan allows, and that we would like to investigate whether indoor facilities at local private schools and organizations could be used for our schools and town. If the reader-resident recalls, we also asked if there was any interest in inviting a privately-funded and run facility to town. In our opinion, options should be explored.

Please see graphic included for the Committee’s summary remarks, which are paraphrased: The members of the RMPSC have done their best to meet their charge and provide long-term planning and transparency for potential recreation projects for the town. While we deeply appreciate the amount of work and analysis FinCom puts in on the budget of this Town, we strongly feel that they have misread this Master Plan, and effectively hamstrung our efforts to identify, repair and improve on a long-term basis.

We encourage all of the residents in this Town to read the Master Plan. You don’t need to read the whole thing: check out the executive summary. And know that this is a long-term plan, and there is nothing “ad hoc” about it.

Kristin Barbieri
Recreation Master Plan Committee Member
2017 Open Space and Recreation Plan Committee Member

Melissa Crocker
Recreation Master Plan Committee Member
Recreation Commissioner



DLS

DIVISION OF LOCAL SERVICES
MA DEPARTMENT OF REVENUE

Geoffrey E. Snyder
Commissioner of Revenue

Sean R. Cronin
Senior Deputy Commissioner

Bulletin

BUL-2020-6

An Act to Address Challenges Faced by Municipalities and State Authorities Resulting From COVID-19

TO: Local Officials
FROM: Mary Jane Handy, Director of Accounts
DATE: May 2020
SUBJECT: **Deficit Spending Authority for Continued Operation After June 30, 2020
In the Event of a Delay in FY2021 Budget Adoption**

This Bulletin provides guidance to local officials regarding the procedures for obtaining deficit spending authority for continued operation beginning July 1, 2020 as authorized by section 5 of [An Act to Address Challenges Faced by Municipalities and State Authorities Resulting From COVID-19, Chapter 53 of the Acts of 2020](#), (the Act). Section 5 provides an option for towns and districts for expenditure without appropriation if the town's or district's annual budget is delayed beyond June 30, 2020 due to the current COVID-19 emergency ("emergency").

Section 5 authorizes the Division of Local Services' Director of Accounts (director) to approve expenditure from any appropriate fund or account of an amount necessary to continue uninterrupted government operations of not less than 1/12th of the town's or special purpose district's FY2020 approved budget. The director's authority continues provided the emergency prevents budget adoption by a town or special purpose district meeting. Once the FY2021 budget is adopted, the deficit expenditure authority approved by the director terminates and spending authority thereafter will be pursuant to the budget approved by the town or district meeting.

Towns and districts may not spend beginning July 1, 2020 without either a FY2021 budget approved by the town or district meeting or approval of monthly deficit spending by the director under section 5 through the procedures described in this Bulletin. If it is possible that a scheduled town or district meeting may not be held by June 30, we strongly encourage that a monthly expenditure plan under this Bulletin be submitted as soon as possible to ensure spending authorization starting July 1.

I. Process to Receive Deficit Expenditure Approval by the Director

A. Delay of Town or Special Purpose District Meeting

Section 5 applies to a town or district where the adoption of its annual budget is delayed beyond June 30, 2020 due to the current COVID-19 emergency (“emergency”).

[Bulletin 2020-02](#) explains sections 1 through 4 of Chapter 53 of the Acts of 2020. These provisions grant authority to boards of selectmen and town councils to delay town meetings beyond June 30 and to moderators to recess and continue scheduled meetings due to the emergency. Towns are advised to consult with their local counsel regarding the responsibilities of the board or council and the form of vote to delay the meeting. Districts are advised to post their annual meeting warrants and have the moderator recess and delay the meeting if necessary.

B. Develop a Monthly Expenditure Plan

Section 5 requires that the selectboard, town council or board of commissioners approve an expenditure plan for the month of July for submission to the director that provides sufficient expenditure authority necessary to achieve uninterrupted government operations and prudent fiscal restraint. The plan development and approval process will continue for each successive month while the emergency continues and prevents the adoption of a budget by the town or district meeting.

The monthly expenditure plan should include:

- an expenditure estimate for operations in the general fund and enterprise fund (estimates should consider that a reduction in estimated revenues may be required during the FY2021 tax rate setting process);
- amounts sufficient to cover regional school district, pension or other similar assessments; and
- debt service payments.

The monthly budget plan should not include:

- any activities which you have reason to believe will not be supported by the relevant appropriations (once adopted);
- increases in salaries called for in collective bargaining agreements that have not previously been approved by the legislative body;
- appropriations such as reserved premiums, overlay surplus, free cash, stabilization or other similar funds balances;
- capital or other items that ordinarily require special purpose appropriation by town or district meeting; and

- estimated FY2020 COVID-19 emergency expenditure deficits or other emergency expenditure deficits given authorization by the director under [G.L. c. 44, § 31](#).

FY2020 encumbrances, borrowing proceeds, gifts, grants, final judgments of courts or other adjudicatory agencies and other similar expenditures that do not require town or special purpose district appropriation for expenditure may be spent as usual without the director's authority.

Questions as to specific expenditures which can or cannot be added to the plan may be sent to the director for a decision.

C. Approve the Monthly Expenditure Plan

The monthly expenditure plan must be approved by the selectboard, town council or board of commissioners by majority vote pursuant to the open meeting law, as revised per Governor Baker's Executive Order on March 12, 2020. The vote need only indicate that the board or council approves the plan being submitted. The clerk of each board or council must certify that a vote to approve the plan was properly taken.

D. Submit the Monthly Request for Deficit Expenditure Authority

Towns and districts are required to complete and submit in Gateway for each month the Deficit Expenditure Approval form found in the "Misc Forms" Module along with these additional requirements:

- the uploaded monthly expenditure plan approved by the selectboard, town council or board of commissioners;
- completion of the summary of expenditures section of the form;
- an uploaded Clerk's certificate of vote stating the submitted plan was approved by the selectboard, town council or board of commissioners, the date and time of the meeting and vote results; and
- the Clerk's electronic signature.

Spending is not allowed beginning July 1 without a FY2021 budget approved by the town or district meeting or approval of monthly deficit spending by the director under this Bulletin. If it is possible that a scheduled town or district meeting may not be held by June 30, we strongly encourage that a monthly expenditure plan under this Bulletin be submitted as soon as possible to ensure spending authorization starting July 1.

II. Director's Approval

Section 5 authorizes the director to allow deficit expenditures for continued operations beginning July 1, 2020 of not less than 1/12th of the town's or district's FY2020 budget. For non-tax rate setting special purpose districts, the director will rely on FY2020 budget information received from the district's board of commissioners.

The director will approve monthly expenditures for July if the submittal is in compliance with section 5 and the instructions contained in this Bulletin. If the emergency continues to prevent budget adoption by a town or special purpose district meeting, the process described above will continue as long as necessary.

III. Accounting for Approved Expenditures

Once the town or special purpose district receives expenditure approval by the director, local officials must use best practices to manage spending so as not to exceed the director's expenditure allowance. When the annual budget is approved by the town or district meeting, the director's expenditure approval terminates and spending authority for the town or district is then pursuant to its adopted budget.

All expenditures made under the director's approval must be fully raised or otherwise funded on the FY2021 Tax Rate Recap.

Weston Fire Department

COVID – 19 NFIRS impacts (As of 5/1/2020)

Overall Trend

2019 Calendar Year – 2,524 Emergency Incidents – Daily Average 6.91

2020 YTD (Jan 1 – April 30) – 686 Emergency Incidents – Daily Average 5.66

Projected Annual for 2020 (2,071) down 18.1% from 2019

Due to increasing emergency incidents year over year, our projected annual incidents for 2020 assuming “shelter in place” for the remainder of the year, would be similar to the fire department 10-year average emergency incidents as seen in 2011. (2,100 calls for service)

2009	2009
2010	2453
2011	2272
2012	2166
2013	2183
2014	2395
2015	2397
2016	2325
2017	2320
2018	2491
2019	2524

10 year Fire Department Emergency Responses.

We have seen an overall increase year over year, however are down approximately 18 percent due to “shelter in place” When re-entry plans are put into place, we expect to gain our emergency calls back due to increase in vehicle accidents from more vehicles traveling on the roads, increase in medical emergencies as and increase in other services as society begins to move back to normal operations.

Like the hospital’s in the metro Boston have also reported a drastic drop in need for emergency care as most folks choose not to call for an ambulance, or request emergency care at a hospital for an injury for they will be exposed to COVID-19, we have also see the drop off in emergency medical services through both medical emergencies, but also through vehicle accidents with significantly less vehicles traveling.

Our staff is more critical to us than ever. During this pandemic, they have been on the front lines transporting and caring for those sick with the COVID-19 virus. Their days are filled with updated protocol changes, and ensuring proper protection is set and ready to be deployed. They are critical to on-going support for the local community in their time of need.