

Town of Hudson Finance Committee
Town Hall
78 Main Street, Hudson, MA 01749

Minutes of the Meeting of March 10, 2022

The meeting was held on the third floor of Town Hall. It had been publicly posted.

Members present: Guy Beaudette; Sam Calandra; Rob Clark, chair; Judy Congdon; Steve Forti; Jillian Jagling; Claudinor Salomão; and Steven C. Sharek, vice-chair.

Also present: Thomas Gregory, Executive Assistant; Patricia Fay, Finance Director/Town Accountant; Brian Bowen, chair of the Board of Assessors; Building Commissioner Jeffrey Wood; Public Works Director Eric Ryder; and two residents.

The chair called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

Review of the Budget

The Committee continued to review proposed department budgets.

Moderator

7:01 p.m.

On a motion made by Mr. Sharek and seconded by Ms. Congdon, the Committee voted 7-0-1 to recommend \$110 for the Moderator's budget, with Mr. Calandra abstaining.

Board of Assessors

Mr. Bowen reviewed the budget and answered questions. There were multiple questions about the percentage increase of the Assessors' salaries.

7:20 p.m.

On a motion made by Ms. Congdon and seconded by Mr. Sharek, the Committee voted 7-0-1 to recommend \$126,404 for the Assessors' budget, with Mr. Salomão abstaining.

Building Inspections

Mr. Wood reviewed the budget and answered questions about a new part-time clerk position that was being proposed. Mr. Calandra questioned whether the position should actually be full-time. The Executive Assistant indicated that he would reevaluate the need for a full-time position based on actual needs once someone was hired.

7:35 p.m.

On a motion made by Ms. Congdon and seconded by Mr. Sharek, the Committee voted 8-0 to recommend \$210,599 for the Building Inspections budget.

Public Works

Mr. Ryder distributed a March 10, 2022, memo to the Committee titled "Overtime Expenditures." He then proceeded to explain the highlights of his budget and answer questions. The Public Works Department includes seven Divisions: Administration; Parks/Cemetery/Forestry; Streets; Vehicles; Highway Snow and Ice; Sewer Collection/Disposal; and Water.

While discussing the Administration budget, Mr. Ryder explained that his department gets a discounted group rate through the state for gasoline purchases. In talking about the Streets budget, he said asphalt prices had gone up from \$68 per ton to \$100 per ton. He said the Town spends about \$900,000 for street repairs each year, with about \$300,000 coming from the town and the rest from Chapter 90 state funds. He said the town could spend \$10 million per year. Ms. Fay indicated the town could create a Road Stabilization Account dedicated only for roads. In the Highway & Ice budget, she said the total figure should be \$348,497, \$4,000 more than what was printed in the budget book. In the Sewer Collection/Disposal budget, Mr. Ryder said the cost of sludge disposal escalates annually and disposal sites in Maine no longer will accept out-of-state sludge. When speaking about the Water budget, Mr. Ryder said the cost of chemicals has gone up, along with the cost of PFAS testing. He said water treatment media, formerly in the Capital Budget, is now in his operating budget. Mr. Ryder said water and sewer rates will be going up in May. Mr. Gregory said the projected increases are 18% for water and 11% for sewer. Mr. Gregory also said he hoped to “stabilize” water and sewer rates with the creation of a Water Enterprise Fund and Sewer Enterprise Fund. He and Mr. Ryder said they also want to create a Stormwater Enterprise Fund. Town Meeting would need to vote to establish all three of the Enterprise Funds.

9:05 p.m.

On a motion made by Ms. Congdon and seconded by Mr. Salomão, the Committee voted 8-0 to recommend a budget totaling \$8,003,915 for the Public Works Department. It was noted that this total includes \$975,782 for Administration; \$708,056 for Parks/Cemetery/Forestry; \$978,241 for Streets; \$385,973 for Vehicle; \$348,497 for Highway Snow & Ice; \$2,193,474 for Sewer Collection/Disposal; and \$2,413,892 for Water. It was further noted that the Highway Snow & Ice budget of \$348,497 includes \$4,000 that had not been included in the budget book.

Public Works – Capital Budget Items

Mr. Ryder highlighted some of the items in the Capital Budget. He said his department is planning to redesign the intersection of Cox Street, Old Stow Road, and Old Bolton Road – near Brothers Pizza – to make it safer. It will be made into a four-way intersection. He said he was also seeking funds for a study to develop plans for a new DPW garage.

Discussion ended at 9:18 p.m.

Discussion

The chair indicated that the meeting on the Assabet Valley Regional Technical High School budget was being moved from March 17 to March 22. He also said that next week’s meetings may be moved to the auditorium on the second floor of Town Hall. Mr. Beaudette asked when he could discuss the \$225,000 annual payment that Hudson Light & Power makes to the Town of Hudson. The chair indicated that he could do so when Hudson Light & Power comes in to discuss its budget.

Adjournment

9:24 p.m.

On a motion made by Ms. Congdon and seconded by Mr. Calandra, the Committee voted 8-0 to adjourn.

Minutes prepared by Steven C. Sharek