

MINUTES
TOWN OF HARWICH
FINANCE COMMITTEE
Small Meeting Room, Harwich Town Hall (Upstairs)
732 Main Street, Harwich, MA 02645
Wednesday, March 22, 2023 6:00 PM - 8:00 PM

Members present: Peter Hughes, Chairman, Mark Ameres, Bob MacCready, Mark Kelleher and Angelo LaMantia. Dana DeCosta, Michele Gallucci and Karen Doucette were present remotely.

Members not present: Dan Tworek

Others Present: Selectman Julie Kavanagh

Call to order: Chairman Hughes called the meeting of the Finance Committee to order on Wednesday, March 22, 2023 at 6:00 PM and read the Open Meeting Law notice. He noted that Selectman Julie Kavanagh was present to discuss, what he is calling, Article 11, Child Stipend Support Program which has an estimated cost of \$250,000. He stated that when the Monomoy School District was present at the meeting last week to discuss their Budget, there was conversation about this Program. The Superintendent of Schools was in support of this Program.

Ms. Kavanagh noted that the current Draft Article clarifies the name of the program as the Preschool Family Support Program. She read the Article and explained the reasons for it and the benefits to the children, their families and the school system.

Mr. Hughes clarified that this would start with the fiscal year, July 1st, and the \$250,000 would be the first effort to see how it works out. He asked through what group in Town Hall it would be administered.

Ms. Kavanagh foresees the initial impact to be that the money will be set aside, applications will be submitted and they will go through the Town Administrator's Office. She noted stipends and grants that they are exploring. This is for Harwich residents only. Chatham rolled out their programs last year for families that live in or work in Chatham. The funding source for Harwich, as of now, is Free Cash.

Committee members asked questions and Ms. Kavanagh replied with answers regarding the structure of the program and she explained how the money may be dispersed. The application procedure and money amounts may change as this is the first year of the program.

Chairman Hughes asked Ms. Kavanagh to send any updated information to him.

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Approve Minutes of the previous meeting:

Chairman Hughes noted that the date of the previous meeting is March 14, 2023.

Mr. Ameres moved to accept the Minutes of the March 14, 2023 meeting, seconded by Mr. MacCready.

Vote: 7:0:1 in favor. Motion carried.

Review CPC Articles & possible votes

Mr. Hughes noted that he had a discussion with Dave Nixon who is the Chair of CPC, and invited either him or the Vice Chair to attend. Neither one was available. Mr. Nixon stated to Mr. Hughes that they had completely vetted all the CPC proposals and asked that the Finance Committee vote to accept and adopt.

Mr. Hughes had the Warrant that was available on Monday in the Selectmen's packet. He referred to the next article as Article 22 and read the CPC Article.

Mr. DeCosta moved to accept and adopt Article 22, Community Preservation Act, Appropriation Housekeeping Expenses that summarizes the appropriation with an estimated cost of \$2,037,000 coming from CPC Funds. Seconded by Mr. Ameres.

Vote: 8:0 in favor. Motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Hughes referred to the next article as Article 23, Community Preservation Act, Herring River Land Preservation Project and read the Article.

Mr. DeCosta moved to accept and adopt Article 23, Community Preservation Act, Herring River Land Preservation with an estimated cost of \$125,000. Seconded by Mr. Ameres.

Vote: 8:0 in favor. Motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Hughes referred to the next article as Article 24, Community Preservation Act, Funding Harwich Affordable Housing Trust Fund and read the Article.

Mr. DeCosta moved to accept and adopt Article 23, Community Preservation Act, Funding Harwich Affordable Housing Trust Fund for \$250,000. Seconded by Mr. Ameres.

Vote 8:0 in favor. Motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Hughes referred to the next article as Article 25, Community Preservation Act, Lower Cape Housing Institute and read the Article.

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Mr. DeCosta moved to accept and adopt Article 25, Community Preservation Act, Lower Cape Housing Institute for \$7,500. Seconded by Mr. Ameres.

Vote 7:0:1 in favor. Bob MacCready abstained. Motion carried.

Mr. Hughes referred to the next article as Article 26, Community Preservation Act, Brooks Academy Renovations and he read the Article the read the Article.

Mr. DeCosta moved to accept and adopt Article 26, Community Preservation Act, Brooks Academy Renovations at an estimated cost of \$690,000. Seconded by Mr. Ameres.

Mr. Hughes noted a supplemental Article and how this Article will be funded. There are still questions to be asked and answered on the supplemental Articles. This Article still needs to be voted on.

Vote 7:1 in favor. Angelo LaMantia voted the negative. Motion carried.

Mr. Hughes referred to the next article as Article 27, Community Preservation Act, 203 Bank Street and he read the Article.

Elizabeth Harder confirmed that 203 Bank Street is not a good location for housing. She explained the plans for 203 Bank Street and noted that there are pictures on the website.

Mr. Ameres moved to accept and adopt Article 27, Community Preservation Act, 203 Bank Street, the old Fire Station in the amount of \$350,000. Seconded by Mr. Kelleher.

Vote: 6:2 Dana DeCosta and Karen Doucette voted the negative. Motion carried.

Mr. Hughes referred to the next article as Article 28, Community Preservation Act, Oak Street Bike Path Crossing Lights and he read the Article.

Mr. DeCosta moved to accept and adopt Article 28 Community Preservation Act ,Oak Street Bike Path Crossing Lights at an estimated cost of \$13,000. Seconded by Mr. Ameres.

Vote 8:0 in favor. Motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Hughes referred to the next article as Article 29 Community Preservation Act, Senior Softball Field Restrooms and he read the Article.

Mr. DeCosta moved to accept and adopt Article 29 Community Preservation Act, Senior Softball Restrooms at an estimated cost of \$150,000. Seconded by Mr. Ameres.

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Vote 8:0 in favor. Motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Hughes referred to the next article as Article 30 Community Preservation Act, Resurface Courts at Brooks Park and he read the Article.

Mr. DeCosta moved to accept and adopt Article 30, Community Preservation Act, Resurface Courts at Brooks Park with an estimated cost of \$110,000. Seconded by Mr. Ameres.

Vote: 8:0 in favor. Motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Hughes referred to the next article as Article 31, Community Preservation Act, Additional Funding Sand Pond Restroom Project and he read the Article.

Mr. DeCosta moved to accept and adopt Article 31, Community Preservation Act, Additional Funding Sand Pond Restroom Project for an estimated cost of \$35,000. Seconded by Mr. Ameres.

Vote 8:0 in favor. Motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Hughes referred to the next article as Article 32, Community Preservation Act, Skinequit Pond Remediation Project and he read the Article.

Mr. DeCosta moved to accept and adopt Article 32, Community Preservation Act, Skinequit Pond Remediation Project at an estimated cost of \$92,000. Seconded by Mr. Ameres.

Vote 8:0 in favor. Motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Hughes referred to the next article as Article 33, Community Preservation Act, War Memorials Project and he read the Article.

Mr. DeCosta moved to accept and adopt Article 33, Community Preservation Act, War Memorials Project with an estimated cost of \$256,282.00. Seconded by Mr. Ameres.

Mr. Ameres read a detailed description of what the project entails and clarified that the location is Evergreen Cemetery.

Vote 7:1 in favor. Bob MacCready voted the negative. Motion carried.

Mr. LaMantia suggested that the Committee take a look at how much taxes will increase when all these Articles are funded through CPC and Free Cash, for the taxpayers information.

Mr. DeCosta noted that CPC is a 3% tax and what the money has been used for. He also explained that it would take an article to change that formula.

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Mr. Hughes clarified with Mr, LaMantia that he is asking for what all the business at Town Meeting will ultimately cost the taxpayers.

Mr. MacCready clarified that when an Article associated with CPC is not passed, the money stays in the CPC Fund, it does not revert to the Town.

Mr. Hughes replied that CPC does not have to spend all their money each year but it can keep building a balance.

Ms. Harder explained that CPC is also funded by the state and gave the details.

Continue discussion and possible votes on FY24 Operating Budget & Warrant Articles

Mr. Hughes noted that he verified that on the Town Operating Budget, the \$43,101,586 is the correct number as of this date. He also confirmed that the Water Department Budget is correct as printed, \$4,552,834. The Wastewater Department Budget is correct as printed, \$1,993,973. The latest version of the Operating Budget which is called Appendix B, will be in the Warrant. He noted the total on the last page and that the Finance Committee had suggested a Personnel Article which the Board of Selectmen opted not to do. They did list, on the Town Operating Budget side, the full-time and the part-time positions. Mr, Hughes suggested that the Finance Committee include, in their Budget message, what those numbers actually are so people have visibility of it at Town Meeting. He recommended that they move forward with the FY24 Town Operating Budget.

Mr. DeCosta recommended further discussion.

Mr. Hughes replied that they will hold their vote for now. He reviewed the Budgets that were accepted and adopted at the last Finance Committee meeting. He asked for a response on the Water Department Budget.

Mr. Decosta moved to accept and adopt Article 7, the Water Department Budget for \$4, 552,834 to be Raised and Appropriated from Water Enterprise Fund. Seconded by Mr. Ameres.

Vote: 8:0 in favor. Motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Hughes noted the Wastewater Department Budget at the estimated cost of \$1,993,973. They have a position open for an Assistant Wastewater Superintendent at \$80,000 plus benefits equalling \$113,321. Mr. Pelletier assured him that within his explanation of what will be in the Warrant, they will identify the cost associated with that individual.

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Mr. DeCosta moved to accept and adopt Article 8, Wastewater Department Budget at the estimated cost of \$1,993,973 to be Raised and Appropriated. Seconded by Mr. Ameres.

Mr. MacCready clarified that \$1,015,050 is intended to come from the Town Operating Budget. The balance comes from the carryover in the Wastewater Fund.

Mr. DeCosta commented on the Water Department Budget which has been in that number range, slowly increasing in time. He anticipates the Wastewater Budget will also increase in time.

Vote 8:0 in favor. Motion carried unanimously.

Mr. DeCosta moved to accept and adopt Article 10, funded from the Cable Fund at \$47,222. Seconded by Mr. Ameres.

Vote 7:0:1 in favor with Mark Ameres abstaining. Motion carried.

Mr. Hughes referred to the next Article as Article 11, Preschool and Family Support Program, formerly referred to Childcare Stipend Support Program and he read the Article.

Mr. DeCosta moved to accept and adopt Article 11, Preschool and Family Support Program at \$250,000 from Free Cash. Seconded by Mr. Ameres.

Mr. MacCready commented that he feels there should be more information on how they will run the program before it is funded.

Vote 5:3 in favor. Michele Gallucci, Bob MacCready and Karen Doucette voted in the negative. Motion carried.

Mr. Hughes referred to the next Article as Article 12, Fund Technology Enhancements for Brooks Free Library.

Mr. DeCosta moved to accept and adopt Article 12, Fund Technology Enhancements for Brooks Free Library at \$25,000 from Free Cash. Seconded by Mr. Ameres.

Vote 7:0:1 in favor, Bob MacCready abstained. Motion carried.

Mr. DeCosta moved to accept and adopt Article 13, the Cemetery Regulations. Seconded by Mr. Ameres.

Mr. DeCosta described the benefits to accepting and adopting the Cemetery Regulations.

Vote 7:0:1 Mark Ameres abstained. Motion carried.

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Mr. Hughes referred to Article 14, to Accept National Law C41 s110a which he read.

Ms. Harder explained that this is only for the Town elections, not for Federal or State.

After discussion, this item was put on hold for a later date.

Mr. Hughes referred to Article 16, Promote the Town of Harwich and noted an email from Cindy Williams, Executive Director of the Chamber of Commerce, explaining why they increased their request.

DeCosta moved to accept and adopt Article 16, Promote the Town of Harwich for \$50,000 from Free Cash. Seconded by Mr. Ameres.

Vote 8:0 in favor. Motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Hughes referred to Article 19, Annual Departmental Revolving Fund Authorization.

Mr. DeCosta moved to accept and adopt Article 19, Annual Departmental Revolving Fund Authorization. Seconded by Mr. Ameres.

Questions and discussion followed regarding 203 Sisson Revolving Fund limits.

Vote 8:0 in favor. Motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Hughes noted that there are items in the Capital Plan that are under \$50,000.

Mr. Hughes referred to Article 36, Capital Outlay Plan Items Funded from the Water Retained Earnings and the read the Article.

Mr DeCosta moved to accept and adopt Article 36, Capital Outlay Plan Items Funded from the Water Retained Earnings, \$750,000 in total. Seconded by Mr. Ameres.

Vote 8:0 in favor. Motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Hughes referred to Article 37, Capital Outlay Plan Items Funded from Chapter 90 Funds at \$700,000.

Mr. DeCosta moved to accept and adopt Article 37, Capital Outlay Plan items from Chapter 90 at \$700,000. Seconded by Mr. Ameres.

Vote 8:0 in favor. Motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Hughes referred to Articles 38, West Harwich Route 28 Sewer Main Installation.

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Mr. DeCosta moved to accept and adopt Article 38, West Harwich Sewer Main Installation at \$6,500,000 subject to a Proposition 2 1/2 override ballot. Seconded by Mr. Ameres.

Vote 8:0 in favor. Motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Hughes referred to Article 39, West Harwich Route 28 Water Main Replacement and he read the Article.

Mr. DeCosta moved to accept and adopt Article 39, West Harwich Route 28 Water Main Replacement \$17,500,000 subject to a Debt Exclusion vote. Seconded by Mr. Ameres.

Vote 8:0 in favor. Motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Hughes referred to Article 40 which involves Wastewater Collection System Expansion in East Harwich and he read the Article.

Mr. DeCosta moved to accept and adopt Article 40, Wastewater Collection System Expansion in East Harwich at \$50,000,000 subject to a Debt Exclusion vote. Seconded by Mr. Ameres.

Discussion followed, concerns and opinions were expressed. Comparing FY24's Capital Plan to FY23's Capital Plan was also discussed.

Vote 8:0 in favor. Motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Hughes referred to an Article to reaffirm and extend MGL C59 c56 and he read the Article. After discussion it was decided that no vote will be taken at this time.

Mr. Hughes reviewed the Articles that the Committee has not yet voted. After discussion it was decided that the next meeting will be on Wednesday, March 29, 2023 at 6:00 PM in the Small Meeting Room at Town Hall. He asked that Mr. DeCosta take care of the posting. He also asked Committee Members to review the spreadsheet regarding 204 Sisson Road as well as the 204 Action Plan as well as BOS meeting minutes on this subject for a future discussion.

Other Business

No other business noted.

Adjournment

Mr. Ameres moved to adjourn. Vote 8:0 in favor. Motion carried unanimously.

Meeting adjourned.

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Respectfully submitted,

Judith R. Moldstad
Board Secretary

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