

Finance Committee Members Present: Christos Arsondiadis, David Clough, Dan Cole, Emilio Mauro, Tim McKenna, Barbara Saint André, Cindy Thomas and Wai Wong.

Finance Committee Members Absent: Rob Barker.

Guests Present:

Kathy Butters, Town Accountant
Andrea Capone, Library Director
Tracy Kenney, Town Clerk
Regen Milani, Conservation Agent
Randy Scollins, Finance Director
Ellen Jones, Finance Committee Secretary

Opening: Mr. McKenna called the meeting to order at 7:02 p.m. in the Salah Meeting Room of Town Hall.

- A. **Approval of Agenda** - Mr. McKenna reviewed the agenda.
- B. **Announcements** - There were no announcements.
- C. **New Business**

Town Clerk & Elections Budgets FY21 – Discussion with Tracy Kenney, Town Clerk

Ms. Kenney is requesting a budget increase of \$10,200 for FY21. The following are highlights of the discussion:

- Ms. Kenney decreased many of her budget line items for expenses to cover increases to the Elections budget.
- Increase of \$675 to the Town Clerk budget to cover the cost of a 20-year 5% step increase for the Assistant Town Clerk.
- Increase of \$9,525 to the Elections budget to cover three elections in FY21, extra costs for early voting in February for the Presidential Primary election and the costs to cover the increased minimum wage per hour rates of pay for the elections workers.
- Increase to the Board of Registrars salaries from \$600 to \$850 each. This is based on a Massachusetts General Law which states \$50 per \$1,000 of every registered voter. The total number of registered voters is 16,593.
- Increase to Purchase of Services budget line item to cover an increase to the annual warranty for the election poll pads/computers.

Accounting Division of Finance Department Budget FY21 – Discussion with Kathy Butters, Town Accountant

Ms. Butters is requesting a budget increase of \$37,493 for additional staffing and department changes. The following are highlights of the discussion:

- The existing union Accounting Senior Specialist position would be replaced with an Assistant Town Accountant. Ms. Butters has already negotiated this position change with the AFSCME union. An increase of \$11,000 is being requested to bring the annual salary of the Assistant Town Accountant to \$72,000. The Assistant Town Accountant position will be required to become a Certified Government Accountant with an eventual promotion to Town Accountant. Ms. Butters had the HR Department a salary survey for an Assistant Town Accountant position in surrounding towns. The average salary is \$74,383 which would have been Ms. Butters' first choice for the salary but the former Finance Director was not in support of the higher amount.
- A new 20-hour part-time Accounts Payable Clerk position with an annually salary of \$26,281 is being requested.

- Because of staff turnover in the Accounting Division the Town Accountant has been busy training employees as well as backing up staff while trying to complete tasks under her own position.
- The Town Accountant has been unable to keep up with deadlines for state and federal filings.
- The Town Accountant has been unable to take a full week of vacation in February until recently.
- School payroll encumbrances has added an extra burden to her division.
- The Division is under resourced for all of its responsibilities.
- The Accounting Division currently utilizes one of the Town's senior volunteers but also oversees the senior tax program.

Mitigation Funds as of 11/12/2019 – Discussion with Kathy Butters and Randy Scollins

- The current balance of seven mitigation funds is \$2,752,475. The Finance Director provided a spreadsheet of these seven balances but with no detail of how the funds had been spent to date.
- The mitigation funds are controlled by the BOS. Victor DelVecchio had presented a PowerPoint presentation in 2017 to Town Meeting identifying the uses of these various funds.
- The \$2,752,475 is not in the General Fund. This total is held in various funds and is not part of the Town's reserves.
- Once such recent use was the matching of funds by the BOS from the mitigation funds to funds that had been requested from the Reserve Fund. These combined funds were used for the pool project (Owner's Project Manager).
- These mitigation funds are mostly discretionary funds, however, there could be some uses identified in the mitigation agreements.

Library Budget FY21 – Discussion with Andrea Capone, Library Director

Ms. Capone is requesting a budget increase of \$52,310 for FY21.

- Increase of \$29,000 to the library assistant salaries line item. This would be for a 25-hours per week Library Technician position. This position would help support additional hours for circulation staff. There has been increased activity in printed material at the circulation desk.
- There has been a significant increase in teens and tweens (35-50) utilizing the library every day in the afternoons. Canton does not have a youth center. There have been staffing level issues to assure the teens have appropriate level of service and trained adults on site to serve other patrons as well. The Library is open 60 hours per week and there is only one 35-hour per week staff person dedicated to youth services. Noise, foot traffic and food in the building have become a challenge. The School Department has been generous to the Library by lending a school resource officer to the Library, especially on half days. The Library is taking steps to help solve problems by reaching out to community partners.
- The Library has not had a staffing increase in 12 years. The Director's goal is to make sure the 36,000 square foot building is safe and appropriately staffed.
- The Library is requesting an increase of \$23,000 for materials. Of this an increase of \$4,000 to the books and periodicals budget line item is being requested. This will support staffing in the collections area. The Library needs to purchase materials (such as research databases, on-line subscriptions to newspapers, E-books) to keep up with demand. The Library spent \$35,000 last year on E-books and expects to spend approximately \$40,000 this year. The state's state aid grant helps to supplement the Library's expenses in this area.
- The Library is looking to redesign the Library space to accommodate more meeting space. The art and music room items are being moved to the second floor to change the room to meeting space for evenings and a quiet space for adults to study during the day.
- The Library keeps a \$35 execution fee for every passport that is processed at the Library. Out of the execution fee the Library has to pay a stipend to the individual that executes the passport, any mailing fees and any supplies used to execute the passport. In FY19 the Library generated revenue of \$55,780 less any expenses, stipends and supplies. The Library uses part of the passport revenue to supplement their materials budget line item. In order to meet the State's standards for the Library to be certified the Library has to spend approximately \$200,000 on materials or digital materials every year. This is based on a state formula.

Conservation Commission Budget FY21 – Discussion with Regen Milani, Conservation Agent

Ms. Milani is requesting an FY21 budget increase of \$16,444 for salaries, which would increase support staff from 32 hours per week to 50 hours per week.

- The agent is requesting that the 32-hour per week Administrative Assistant position be increased by 3 hours to 35 hours per week. This position would no longer be the recording secretary for the Commission.
- The agent is also requesting that the three hours previously worked by the Administrative Assistant be increased to 15 hours per week for a new board secretary/clerical position. This position would attend two night meetings per month along with preparing the minutes for the Conservation Commission meetings. A Finance Committee member who has worked with many boards questioned the 15 hours being requested for the board secretary position, given that the Commission is only meeting two hours per week for only two weeks of the month.
- Ms. Milani stated that these staffing changes would help to provide at least the minimum services to residents as well as keep in compliance with federal, state and local laws. The Agent has been working diligently to close out escrow accounts.

Article 38 – Stormwater Management By-Law – There is an article on the Town Meeting warrant to change the square footage of soil and disturbance from 5,000 to 20,000. Ms. Milani stated that this by-law was put in place by her predecessor, which may not have been acting in the best interests of the Town. Article 38 will streamline the very costly permitting process making it easier for homeowners with single and two-family projects eliminating. Ms. Milani is unaware of another community with as strict a process as Canton.

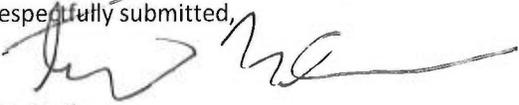
D. Old Business – The BOS would be voting on the budget requests at an upcoming meeting. The FY21 budget requests will have to be reduced by the BOS by approximately \$108,000 in order to meet the municipal budget target number. The BOS would be presenting their budget recommendation to the Finance Committee at a later date. Mr. Mauro would reach out to Gene Manning of the Economic Development Committee regarding Article 53 (43D Priority Development Sites).

E. Approval of Minutes - There were no minutes approved at the meeting.

F. Next Meeting Date: The next Finance Committee meeting would take place on February 19, 2020 at 7:00 p.m. at the Armando Recreation Center.

Adjournment: A motion made by Ms. Saint André to adjourn the meeting at 8:56 p.m. was seconded by Mr. Clough. Vote: 8-0-0.

Minutes reviewed by: David Clough
Respectfully submitted,



Tim McKenna
Chair, Canton Finance Committee

**Canton Finance Committee Meeting
February 12, 2020
Meeting Documents**

Please note: Some meeting documents may be found on the Town's website under the Posted Minutes section (Laser Fiche).

Budget documents may be found on the Town's website under the Finance Committee section.
<https://www.town.canton.ma.us/407/Municipal-Budget-Capital-Information>

Agenda for February 12, 2020 (1 page).

Mitigation Funds Summary as of 11/12/19.

Memorandum from Josh Cohen, Chairman of the Conservation Commission to the Finance Committee regarding FY21 Budget Request (1 page).