

## **Call to Order**

### **Roll Call**

Chair Moffitt called the meeting to order at 6:00p.m and initiated roll call. Through video conferencing mode, present were Chairperson Eugenie Moffitt-Y, Andrew Betts-Y, Linn Anderson-Y, Mary Ellen Logee-Y, John Barry-Y, Paul Monticciolo-Y, Kevin O’Handley-Y, Spiro Christopulos-Y and Paul Russo-Y. Also present were Finance Director Donna Walsh and Assistant Town Manager Patrick Lawlor. The meeting was videotaped and live cablecast.

### **Fire/Rescue – Presentation on FY22 Budget – Chief Mansfield**

Mr. Monticciolo introduced Chief Mansfield who gave his presentation on his department’s FY22 budget (see attached PowerPoint presentation.)

Chief Mansfield reviewed the department organizational chart of 70 positions, with two current vacancies, one more expected at the end of the week, and a projected four/five more by the fiscal year end. There are four shifts under the direction of four Deputy Chiefs and three stations (Main Street, Ballardvale and West) supervised by three First Lieutenants of a comprehensive staff.

Over the last several years the ambulance-patient contacts has steadily increased. The pandemic has had following impacts: a) decrease in ambulance-patient contacts and flattening of numbers of EMS transport calls; and b) decrease in fire incidents and motor vehicle accidents. However, there has been an increase in fire prevention activities as well as service calls. Chief Mansfield noted that in 2019 due to the gas disaster there was a decrease as a result of businesses using LP gas as temporary means.

The Town Manager’s recommended budget of \$8,628,347 for salaries represents an increase of 2.34%, \$571,550 for expenses an increase of 4.46%. Most of these expenses is attributable to estimating the utility costs for the new Ballardvale Fire Station coming online. EMS sale from services in the past have met or exceeded costs in the past, but due to the pandemic CARES Act funding was used to offset costs this year. In FY2022 the number budgeted for sale of services is \$100K less with the anticipation that sales from service will increase to prior-pandemic numbers. There has been no increase in 72 FTE’s. The overall budget of \$7,949,897 represents a 4.21% increase.

The CIP budget is a) \$360K for vehicle replacement; b) \$50K for multi-band portable radios to allow for better communication with town crews and neighboring communities no matter what frequency they are on; c) \$38K for radio box repeater system to boost systems to fire headquarters; and d) \$200K for three bi-directional amplifier systems in schools, an antenna system monitoring the fire/police frequencies to allow for better communication inside/outside the buildings for a total of seven schools covered.

Discussion ensued on the civil service process of filling vacancies with qualified personnel. Also discussed were the challenges of fire/rescue operating safely within CDC guidelines and vigilance/supervision/protection of personnel, its physical and emotional toll as well as increased expenses of disinfection of vehicles/exposed personnel, etc. Training will be provided by DOT with regard to anticipated state highway remapping. Safety concerns have not been compromised in budgetary process and significant grants have been awarded to cover replacement of needed

safety equipment, i.e. \$500K FEMA grant for self-contained breathing apparatus and other smaller grants.

### **IT – FY22 Budget – Mr. Puzzanghera**

Ms. Logee introduced Mr. Puzzanghera who gave his presentation on the FY22 IT budget (see PowerPoint presentation attached.)

Mr. Puzzanghera reviewed the department organizational chart consisting of three teams of platform, customer service/operations and solutions team for a total of 23 team members. He outlined the aspects of what IT is and is not responsible for (see attached list.) The largest expense of the budget is software support contracts. These three-year contracts are necessary for technical support and upgrade. Currently there are 89 projects underway with 295 remaining to be done.

*Discussion ensued* on the number of clients IT serves. Mr. Puzzanghera noted 1,500 employees, 6,200 students and now (due to remote learning) 6,000 families are served. In addition maintenance of 1,000 telephones, 800 projectors and 1,000 access points is within the responsibility of customer service.

*Discussion also ensued* on the largest part of the expense budget. Mr. Puzzanghera clarified that when a piece of software is purchased, a license is obtained at approximately 20% of the purchase price to guarantee ongoing tech support, upgrades, enhancements, parts, service, and repair. The next largest part is attributable to the past upgrade in voice technology, with all costs for internet and bandwidth incorporated into the IT budget.

Discussion also ensued on the role of Facilities in projects. Mr. Puzzanghera noted dozens of projects are partnered with that department whenever possible.

Mr. Puzzanghera noted that all projects had been pre-empted by the urgent COVID response. Since the Governor's order of March 20, 2020 IT was responsible within a 45-day period of selecting, purchasing, deploying, populating and training teachers and students on a remote model of learning. He described the challenges of obtaining new equipment and servicing the old beyond their useful life. Demands on teachers and IT staff have been significant. CARES funding covered expenses for needed equipment. He discussed the open issues for the upcoming year including a rental program for young students.

The FY22 budget request of \$2,641,478 includes a restoration of levels to FY20 levels. The contract salary increases at \$82,307 represents an increase of 3.4% over last year. An ongoing issue is IT salaries. There are currently three open positions and salary demands from candidates cannot meet the salary scale. He noted that the town's salary scale is much lower than other municipalities. Expense request was reduced by \$30K. An unmet need of school principals is for increased levels of hand-on on-premises customer support. Virtual customer support center is a viable option to consider to address this need.

Mr. Puzzanghera reported that the decrease in his CIP requests for student and staff device refresh was adequate due to CARES funding offset: \$627,744 staff device refresh, \$418,128 student device refresh. The \$687,500 for platforms and infrastructure includes data center refresh,

improved video conferencing, classroom project refresh, support for construction, CUSI utility billing system upgrade and cyber security.

Discussion ensued on the approximate \$400/per person/per year cost to support devices and the need for more expensive equipment to allow for staff remote working. Additional conversation needs to include the increasing demand/role of technology in schools and town. The BYOD program in the past has been adapted in part to meet the current heavier needs for student learning. The rental program (including insurance) for younger students in one way has been very successful in meeting this demand. Devices logging onto the network are screened by a different set of rules as far as security concerns. Outsourcing of projects is done regularly, but outsourcing customer service is not doable because of wide range of needs of teachers, staff, employees. Collective bargaining restrictions might prevent hiring contract employees.

### **Liaison Updates**

#### *Revenue and Expenditure Task Force*

The task force will vote on the Town Manager's Integrated Financing Plan when all members are present on Friday, February 26<sup>th</sup>.

#### *Town Yard Parcel*

Town Yard presentation made by Mr. Simko is in the drop box. They are working with consultant. A change in RFP process in two rounds and not require financial commitment of developer. Selection committee is complete and RFP delivered early March.

#### *Select Board*

A new member will be chosen to replace Mr. Koh on the Select Board.

#### *Open Space Committee*

Open Space Committee has identified number of parcels they would like to acquire and has sent out letters of interest.

#### *Community Services*

Mr. O'Handley reported he had spoken with Ms. Lambert. No CIP requests this year and no additional FTE are planned. Opening the Senior Center is on the horizon.

#### *Retirement Board*

Mr. Russo referred to the fourth quarter retirement report in the dropbox to be presented to the Retirement Board tomorrow morning.

#### *School Committee*

The committee will be meeting tomorrow night. A district meeting is being scheduled.

### **Approval of Minutes of January 27, 2021**

Upon motion duly made by Mr. Christopulos and seconded by Mr. Barry, it was unanimously voted to approve above minutes. Chair Eugenie (Janie) Moffitt-Y, Linn Anderson-Y, John Barry-Y, Andrew Betts-Y, Mary Ellen Logee-Y, Paul Monticciolo-Y, Paul Russo-Y, Kevin O'Handley-Y and Mr. Christopulos-Y. Motion passed 9-0.

**Approval of Minutes of February 9, 2021**

Upon motion duly made by Mr. Christopoulos and seconded by Mr. Russo, it was voted to approve above minutes. Chair Eugenie (Janie) Moffitt-Y, Linn Anderson-Y, John Barry-A, Andrew Betts-Y, Mary Ellen Logee-Y, Paul Monticciolo-Y, Paul Russo-Y, Kevin O’Handley-Y and Mr. Christopoulos-Y. Motion passed 8-0-1 with Mr. Barry abstaining.

**Next Meeting**

Wednesday, March 10<sup>th</sup> @ 6:00PM (note earlier starting time)

Subcommittees to meet before March 10<sup>th</sup>

West EI – Paul Russo

Pension Obligation Bond and Integrated Financing Plan – Messrs. Betts and Russo

Report Subcommittee – Messrs. Monticciolo and O’Handley and Ms. Logee

Ms. Walsh to give summary report of town CARES funding.

Ms. Walsh to clarify process of the required audit at the conclusion of the project by MSBA and the recovery of \$1.2M to be re-appropriated.

**Finance Committee Report**

Ms. Anderson asked Ms. Walsh about the re-appropriation of funds voted for Bancroft to fund a similar project, which is the current school project. At the conclusion of the project, the MSBA does its required audit and at that time the town consequently recovered \$1.2M, the amount being re-appropriated. Ms. Anderson asked that approval of the minutes be deferred to the next meeting.

**Adjournment**

Upon motion duly made by Ms. Anderson and seconded by Mr. Barry, it was unanimously voted to adjourn. Chair Eugenie (Janie) Moffitt-Y, Linn Anderson-Y, John Barry-Y, Andrew Betts-Y, Mary Ellen Logee-Y, Paul Monticciolo-Y, Paul Russo-Y, Kevin O’Handley-Y and Mr. Christopoulos-Y. Motion passed 9-0. The meeting adjourned at 7:41PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Christine Martin Barraford  
Recording Secretary

*Attachments:*

*Public Safety FY22 Budget Presentation – Chief Keefe*

*IT FY22 Budget Presentation – Mr. Puzanghera*