May 27, 2020

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Finance Committee Budget meeting held on Wednesday, May 27, 2020, beginning at 6:22 p.m. By the Order of the Governor - Order suspending certain provisions of the open meeting law, G.L. c.30A, Sec. 20 which limits public access – This meeting will be conducted entirely over conference call and recorded for public access. The recorded meeting will be publicly available through LCTV.

Members present by Roll Call vote: Eric Gregoire, yes; Susanne Boyea, yes, joined meeting at 6:50 p.m.; Joan Cavallo, yes; Richard Moskal, yes; Anthony Alves, yes; Nicole Parker, yes; Beverly Tokarz, yes

Member excused: Kim Downing

Kim Collins was also present

First Order of Business: The Pledge of Allegiance

Mr. Gregoire informed the committee that review of part of the department budgets will be discussed and voted on this evening. A meeting on Thursday evening will also be held to discuss the remainder of the budgets.

Ms. Collins updated the committee re: Tax Recap Analysis, Level 3 – FY' 2021 Budgets

Golf Enterprise Deficit – Capital Planning will help the Golf Course with golf carts and their capital lease in the amount of $11,000 which they don't have any retained earnings to cover. This is anticipating what their deficit will be for FY"20. There are a few options because of COVID. They can use Free Cash until the tax rate is set or they can amortize the loss over the next three years. The decision hasn't been made to date. The Board of Selectmen or the Accountant will make that decision depending or where the excess levy is at and what the best course of action will be made.

The $3,000 was removed for Celebrate Ludlow

Trash and Recycling Program: The DPW determined that they were no longer interested in the Purple Bag Program. They will charge a fee. There will be no funding for enterprise funds or trash bins. The entire $646,000 will go into the General Fund. It's required by law for that to happen. Their charging $100 per household and $75 per a senior citizen household. The DPW will bring that vote to the Selectmen and hope that they will approve of it as well. The Town is allowed to charge a fee for trash if it's not completely covered in the tax rate.

State Aid: $18,038,136 was last year's State Aid including Chapter 70. We did not cut Chapter 70, just did not take any of the increases that were promised a reduction of $70,000; decrease in General Local Aid by 14%; Local Receipts, reduced 25% on Hotel and Meal Tax; Motor Vehicle Excise 5%; reduction in Medicaid reimbursement at $300,000. Indirect Costs for the Enterprise Fund has been calculated and adjusted and sent to the Enterprise Manager. Free Cash will be

taken up separately. This puts an anticipated tax rate at $21.09 per thousand. That figure could change. This leaves us with $57,369 in Excess Levy.

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2020 AUG 26 P 2:31
TOWN OF LUDLOW

There is an adjustment on the reduction of New Growth by 10%. That may change depending on the COVID regulations that come out.

Departmental Budgets:

Level 3 Adjustments. Going through the ones on the sheets highlighted in blue which are the new changes.

Board of Assessors: Retirement coming up. Negative in Excess Levy. Had to make a decision to cut positions. The positions will not be filled if not needed. Looking to reduce someone to 25 hrs. a week/$13,000.

Treasurer's Office: Retirement coming up. Will not renew the position and outsourcing the payroll in FY'22.

Ms. Parker asked how many staff in the Assessors and Treasurer's Office. There are 2 ½ people under the Assessor and 3 employees under the Treasurer.

Collector's Office: $5,000 reduction in the Collections line item. There is a temporary person there.

The Personnel Board will be disbanded. The stipend is $2,441

Ambulance Dept.: Removed $8,000 from Chap. 111F and removed $15,000 in Overtime.

Department of Public Works: Vacant positions will not be renewed. There is an additional position that wasn't reduced because it's a required position.

Recreation Commission: Before and After School Program reduction of $79,590 and Overtime reduction of $10,000. Haviland Pond will be closed. Ms. Parker asked if there are any more savings because of the pond closing. Ms. Collins said it's included in the $79,590.

Mr. Gregoire said Recreation Commission voted on the items at their last meeting. He said that Ms. Collins did a lot of work on the revenue and on the expense side. Taking out and seeing the adjustments seems to be more of a balanced approach and taking out the positions on the personnel side is something for the committee to consider. The Levy Capacity and bottom line is very valuable.

Free Cash Analysis: Beginning Balance - $1,529,578.00

Stabilization Fund for FY"21 is $550,000; Reserve Fund for FY21 is $100,000. The Freightliner Plow, $33,000; Fire Engine, $134,000; and COA Van, $27,000 – those are all prior year leases which are in different stages. Golf Carts - $35,000; Golf Green Master Lease - $11,513; Dodge Durango Car is the police detective's vehicle that they have been requesting for several years, $37,967.17; Election Equipment, $36,400. This is required after the November election for the Town Clerk; Chevy Silverado, $35,000. The vehicle at the Fire Dept. will not pass inspection, this will be a purchase to replace that vehicle, which is required. Prior Year Bills, $20,000,

Article at Town Meeting. Infrastructure Article, $25,000, funding for different Articles if needed. Removed the COVID Article because of the CARES Act. Ludlow has available $1.8 million dollars in CARES Act revenue. The Town is required to submit to them their spending by June 5th as well as what the estimated spending will be from June 30th. Currently the total is $150-160,000 that she will submit. Ms. Collins is hoping to get more by next week. Once it's submitted, they will receive the money up front. The DPW Trash Bins Capital Article, will be removed. The Reclassification Plan $20,000; the HR Director has been asking for a Plan to go over salaries in the Town. School and Senior Fiber Optics connections once the buildings are completed, is $40,000. Police and Fire Overtime is $100,000. She will speak with the police department; the amount could be high and some of the overtime expenses could be covered by the CARES Act. The Land Taking for the Center Street Project is $5,000. Budgeting for the Golf Course is $100,000. Their looking at COVID to see how much they can bring in. Their working at a 75% capacity, the Town would have to subsidize them. It may be a few years before they can get back on track. Their making a plan to get the expenses back in the black instead of the red.

Ms. Parker feels that the Golf vehicle should come out of their budget. Ms. Collins said that the Free Cash always funds Capital Projects and they have to go through an Article. That's how the Bylaws state, that anything over $20,000 is a Capital Project. Ms. Parker feels that the Overtime should also come out of the department's budget. Ms. Collins explains how Chap. 111F works. The CARES Act. should cover some of those expenses. Ms. Parker asked what the DOR recommendation is for Ludlow. Mr. Gregoire said its 5% which includes the Stabilization Fund and Free Cash. Ms. Collins explains further the funds that go into the individual accounts.

Mr. Moskal asked if the Senior Fiber Optics is being covered by the Senior Center. Ms. Collins explains that the Town is covering that item through Free Cash.

Ms. Boyea joined the meeting at 6:50 p.m.

At this time the committee reviewed and voted on several departmental budgets:

Moved by Mr. Alves, seconded by Ms. Cavallo to approve the Moderator's budget in the amount of $549.
Vote: Ms. Tokarz, yes; Ms. Boyea, yes; Ms. Cavallo, yes; Mr. Moskal, yes; Mr. Alves, yes; Ms. Parker, yes; Mr. Gregoire, yes. 7-0 in favor

Moved by Mr. Alves, seconded by Ms. Cavallo to approve the Finance Committee's budget in the amount of $3,336.
Vote: Ms. Tokarz, yes; Ms. Boyea, yes; Ms. Cavallo, yes; Mr. Moskal, yes; Mr. Alves, Ms. Parker, yes; Mr. Gregoire, yes. 7-0 in favor

Moved by Mr. Alves, seconded by Ms. Cavallo to approve the Town Accountant's budget in the amount of $194,367.
Vote: Ms. Tokarz, yes; Ms. Boyea, yes; Ms. Cavallo, yes; Mr. Moskal, yes; Mr. Alves, yes; Ms. Parker, yes; Mr. Gregoire, yes. 7-0 in favor

The 8.2% increase is related to Ms. Collins Contract obligations. The increase also includes a Life Insurance Policy and Retirement contributions.

Moved by Mr. Alves, seconded by Mr. Moskal to approve the Board of Assessor's budget in the amount of $284,041.
Vote: Ms. Tokarz, yes; Ms. Boyea, yes; Ms. Cavallo, yes; Mr. Moskal, yes; Mr. Alves, yes; Ms. Parker, yes; Mr. Gregoire, yes. 7-0 in favor

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Moved by Mr. Alves, seconded by Ms. Boyea to approve the Treasurer's budget in the amount of $234,868.
Vote: Ms. Tokarz, yes; Ms. Boyea, yes; Ms. Cavallo, yes; Mr. Moskal, yes; Mr. Alves, yes; Ms. Parker, yes; Mr. Gregoire, yes. 7-0 in favor

Moved by Mr. Alves, seconded by Ms. Boyea to approve the Collector's budget in the amount of $264,520
Vote: Ms. Tokarz, yes; Ms. Boyea, yes; Ms. Cavallo, yes; Mr. Moskal, yes; Mr. Alves, yes; Ms. Parker, yes; Mr. Gregoire, yes. 7-0 in favor

Moved by Mr. Alves, seconded by Ms. Boyea to approve Town Counsel's budget in the amount of $176,000.
Vote: Ms. Tokarz, yes; Ms. Boyea, yes; Ms. Cavallo, yes; Mr. Moskal, yes; Mr. Alves, yes; Ms. Parker, yes; Mr. Gregoire, yes. 7-0 in favor

Moved by Ms. Cavallo, seconded by Ms. Boyea to approve the Human Resources budget in the amount of $119,818.
Vote: Ms. Tokarz, yes; Ms. Boyea, yes; Ms. Cavallo, yes; Mr. Moskal, yes; Mr. Alves, yes; Ms. Parker, no; Mr. Gregoire, yes. 6-1- in favor. Ms. Parker opposed

There was discussion regarding the Human Resources percent of increase. Ms. Collins explained that there was a reclassification of a position increasing her Level to a management position. There were also new steps, etc. that took over 1 ½ years to accomplish. Ms. Parker felt that it was a very substantial increase.

Moved by Mr. Alves, seconded by Ms. Cavallo to approve the Information Technology budget in the amount of $393,822.
Vote: Ms. Tokarz, yes; Ms. Boyea, yes; Ms. Cavallo, yes; Mr. Moskal, yes; Mr. Alves, yes; Ms. Parker, yes; Mr. Gregoire, yes. 7-0 in favor

Moved by Mr. Alves, seconded by Ms. Cavallo to approve the Town Clerk's budget in the amount of $128,809.
Vote: Ms. Tokarz, yes; Ms. Boyea, yes; Ms. Cavallo, yes; Mr. Moskal, yes; Mr. Alves, yes; Ms. Parker, yes; Mr. Gregoire, yes. 7-0 in favor

Elections: There was discussion re: Overtime. Mr. Alves would like to know why the increase in the overtime account. Mr. Moskal said that for elections, police officers are present and paid from that account. Mr. Gregoire will contact the Town Clerk for clarification. Votes to approve the Elections budget will be taken at the next meeting.

Moved by Ms. Parker, seconded by Mr. Alves to approve the Conservation Commission budget in the amount of $35,617.

Vote: Ms. Tokarz, yes; Ms. Boyea, yes; Ms. Cavallo, yes; Mr. Moskal, yes; Mr. Alves, yes; Ms. Parker, yes; Mr. Gregoire, yes. 7-0 in favor

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Moved by Mr. Alves, seconded by Ms. Cavallo to approve the Board of Appeals budget in the amount of $5,176.
Vote: Ms. Tokarz, yes; Ms. Boyea, yes; Ms. Cavallo, yes; Mr. Moskal, yes; Mr. Alves, yes; Ms. Parker, abstain, Mr. Gregoire, yes. 6-0-1 in favor. Ms. Parker abstained

Moved by Mr. Alves, seconded by Ms. Cavallo to approve the Building Department's budget in the amount of $234,478.
Vote: Ms. Tokarz, yes; Ms. Boyea, yes; Ms. Cavallo, yes; Mr. Moskal, yes; Mr. Alves, yes; Ms. Parker, yes; Mr. Gregoire, yes. 7-0 in favor

Moved by Mr. Alves, seconded by Mr. Moskal to approve the Sealer of Weights and Measures budget in the amount of $4,403.
Vote: Ms. Tokarz, yes; Ms. Boyea, yes; Ms. Cavallo, yes; Mr. Moskal, yes; Mr. Alves, yes; Ms. Parker, yes; Mr. Gregoire, yes. 7-0 in favor

Moved by Mr. Alves, seconded by Ms. Cavallo to approve the Animal Control budget in the amount of $25,208.
Vote: Ms. Tokarz, yes; Ms. Boyea, yes; Ms. Cavallo, yes; Mr. Moskal, yes; Mr. Alves, yes; Ms. Parker, yes; Mr. Gregoire, yes. 7-0 in favor

Moved by Mr. Alves, seconded by Mr. Moskal to approve the Safety Committee's budget in the amount of $2,487.
Vote: Ms. Tokarz, yes; Ms. Boyea, yes; Ms. Cavallo, yes; Mr. Alves, yes; Mr. Moskal, yes; Ms. Parker, yes; Mr. Gregoire, yes. 7-0 in favor

Moved by Mr. Alves, seconded by Ms. Cavallo to approve the Historical Commission's budget in the amount of $1,420.
Vote: Ms. Tokarz, yes; Ms. Boyea, yes; Ms. Cavallo, yes; Mr. Moskal, yes; Mr. Alves, yes; Ms. Parker, yes; Mr. Gregoire, yes. 7-0 in favor

Moved by Mr. Alves, seconded by Ms. Cavallo to approve the Council on Aging budget in the amount of $432,480.
Vote: Ms. Tokarz, yes; Ms. Boyea, yes; Ms. Cavallo, yes; Mr. Moskal, yes; Mr. Alves, yes; Ms. Parker, yes; Mr. Gregoire, yes. 7-0 in favor

Mr. Alves had concerns re: The Vehicle Repair and Maintenance line item in the Council on Aging's budget. He felt the cut brought the total to low and asked if something can be done. Mr. Gregoire said that the line item will stay as is, no funds will be added back, but if they run into problems and need more funds that can come before the Finance Committee for a Reserve Fund Transfer.

Mr. Gregoire will follow-up with the Town Clerk to receive information re: Elections budget.

Mr. Gregoire will inform the committee on what number to use to dial in to Thursday's meeting.

Michael Hill from LCTV thinks that the old number will be used. There are no other meetings in the Selectmen's Office on Thursday.

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Mr. Alves asked if there could be a virtual meeting on Zoom to make it easier for the meeting process. There is a charge to connect to Zoom, but the Enterprise Account used for COVID related issues could be used and the Town could be reimbursed. Mr. Hill thinks that Mr. Blanchard could do the zoom networking.

Moved by Mr. Alves, seconded by Ms. Boyea to adjourn the Finance Committee meeting at 8:07 p.m.
Vote: Ms. Tokarz, yes; Ms. Boyea, yes; Ms. Cavallo, yes; Mr. Moskal, yes; Mr. Alves, yes; Ms. Parker, yes; Mr. Gregoire, yes. 7-0 in favor

Eric A. Gregoire

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Ludlow Finance Committee