May 28, 2020

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TOWN OF LUDLOW

Finance Committee budget meeting held on Thursday, May 28, 2020, beginning at 6:00 p.m. Please be advised that by Order of the Governor – Order suspending certain provisions of the open meeting law, G.L. c.30A, Sec. 20 which limits public access – please feel free to view this meeting via cable television as this meeting is broadcast live. Questions can be directed to the committee via email: questions@ludlow.ma.us.

Members present by Roll Call vote: Eric Gregoire, yes; Maureen Downing, yes; Susanne Boyea, yes; Joan Cavallo, yes; Richard Moskal, yes; Anthony Alves, yes; Beverly Tokarz, yes.

Members excused: Nicole Parker

Kimberly Collins did not attend the meeting. Ellie Villano was present.

First Order of Business: The Pledge of Allegiance

A question was asked at the Wednesday night meeting re: Elections Department, questioning the full- time elections position and overtime. Mr. Gregoire stated that the Other Temporary Salary relates to the extra election, Primary and Regular Election. Police Officers, early voting, extra help if more space is needed. Regular Overtime relates to the office staff, work on election day and overtime for that day.

Moved by Mr. Alves, seconded by Ms. Downing to approve the Elections budget in the amount of $118,036.
Vote: Ms. Downing, yes; Ms. Tokarz, yes; Mr. Moskal, yes; Mr. Alves, yes; Ms. Boyea, yes; Ms. Cavallo, yes; Mr. Gregoire, yes. 7-0 in favor

Moved by Ms. Downing, seconded by Ms. Cavallo to approve the Selectmen's budget in the amount of $314,092
Vote: Ms. Downing, yes; Ms. Tokarz, yes; Mr. Moskal, yes; Mr. Alves, yes; Ms. Boyea, yes; Ms. Cavallo, yes; Mr. Gregoire, yes. 7-0 in favor

Moved by Ms. Downing, seconded by Mr. Alves to approve the Public Buildings budget in the amount of $692,785
Vote: Ms. Downing, yes; Ms. Tokarz, yes; Mr. Moskal, yes; Mr. Alves, yes; Ms. Boyea, yes; Ms. Cavallo, yes; Mr. Gregoire, yes. 7-0 in favor

Moved by Ms. Downing, seconded by Mr. Alves to approve the Property and Liability budget in the amount of $550,000
Vote: Ms. Downing, yes; Ms. Tokarz, yes; Mr. Moskal, yes; Mr. Alves, yes; Ms. Boyea, yes; Ms. Cavallo, yes; Mr. Gregoire, yes. 7-0 in favor

Moved by Ms. Downing, seconded by Mr. Alves to approve the Planning Board budget in the amount of $147,769
Vote: Ms. Downing, yes; Ms. Tokarz, yes; Mr. Moskal, yes; Mr. Alves, yes; Ms. Boyea, yes; Ms. Cavallo, yes; Mr. Gregoire, yes. 7-0 in favor

Moved by Ms. Downing, seconded by Mr. Alves to approve the Police Department budget in the amount of $3,839,865
Vote: Ms. Downing, yes; Ms. Tokarz, yes; Mr. Moskal, yes; Mr. Alves, yes; Ms. Boyea, yes; Ms. Cavallo, yes; Mr. Gregoire, yes. 7-0 in favor

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2020 AUG 26 P 2:37
TOWN OF LUDLOW

Moved by Mr. Alves, seconded by Ms. Downing to approve the Dispatch budget in the amount of $446,914
Vote: Ms. Downing, yes; Ms. Tokarz, yes; Mr. Moskal, yes; Mr. Alves, yes; Ms. Boyea, yes; Ms. Cavallo, yes; Mr. Gregoire, yes. 7-0 in favor

Mr. Gregoire stated that there was discussion with the Fire Chief about the budget number which would include level service budget for the department and adding back in funding to maintain the number of ambulances being run to provide that level of service to the community but not have an impact to the revenue if they were to apply it. That amount is a $107,075 adjustment

Moved by Ms. Downing, seconded by Mr. Alves to approve the Fire Department budget in the amount of $3,059,294
Vote: Ms. Downing, yes; Ms. Tokarz, yes; Mr. Moskal, yes; Mr. Alves, yes; Ms. Boyea, yes; Ms. Cavallo, yes; Mr. Gregoire, yes; 7-0 in favor

Moved by Ms. Downing, seconded by Mr. Alves to approve the Ambulance EMT budget in the amount of $1,037,136
Vote: Ms. Downing, yes; Ms. Tokarz, yes; Mr. Moskal, yes; Ms. Boyea, yes; Ms. Cavallo, yes; Mr. Gregoire, yes. 7-0 in favor

Moved by Ms. Downing, seconded by Ms. Cavallo to approve the Emergency Management budget in the amount of $18,000

Mr. Alves wanted to know the background as to why the amount went from $9,000 to $18,000. Mr. Gregoire said that when the Fire Chief met with the committee, he said the department was budgeted at $19,000. There was a State Grant that offset the budget so they utilized the grant in that way. It was a matching type grant. It was from MEMA. It was recommended to use the full funding of $18,000 and then the Town would get back a ½ reimbursement.

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

Moved by Ms. Downing, seconded by Ms. Boyea to approve the Department of Public Works budget in the amount of $3,161,135

Mr. Alves asked if they made any adjustments given the current state of things, or are they still expecting to hire part-time people for the summer? Mr. Gregoire said that based upon the notes that he has, they were still scheduled to hire their summer help. The reduction would not account for adjusting anything in their summer help program, it would be positions that are full time or part time that have been vacant and will not be filled. Mr. Gregoire would want to vote on this because of the time line of Town Meeting. The goal is to complete the recommendations by next week. Budgets could certainly be revisited. Mr. Alves things that it would be good to have the

summer help and hopefully that work force will be there. He was just curious, but will not hold him back from voting.

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2020 AUG 28 P 2:37
TOWN OF LUDLOW

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

Moved by Ms. Downing, seconded by Ms. Cavallo to approve the Department of Public Works Snow and Ice Budget in the amount of $240,000
Vote: Ms. Downing, yes; Ms. Tokarz, yes; Mr. Moskal, yes; Mr. Alves, yes; Ms. Boyea, yes; Ms. Cavallo, yes; Mr. Gregoire, yes. 7-0 in favor

Moved by Ms. Downing, seconded by Mr. Alves to approve the Street and Traffic Lighting Budget in the amount of $291,000
Vote: Ms. Downing, yes; Ms. Tokarz, yes; Mr. Moskal, yes; Mr. Alves, yes; Ms. Boyea, yes; Ms. Cavallo, yes; Mr. Gregoire, yes. 7-0 in favor

Moved by Ms. Downing, seconded by Mr. Alves to approve the Board of Health Budget in the amount of $352,909
Vote: Ms. Downing, yes; Ms. Tokarz, yes; Mr. Moskal, yes; Mr. Alves, yes; Ms. Boyea, yes; Ms. Cavallo, yes; Mr. Gregoire, yes. 7-0 in favor

Moved by Ms. Downing, seconded by Mr. Alves to approve the Veterans Services Budget in the amount of $398,038
Vote: Ms. Downing, yes; Ms. Tokarz, yes; Mr. Moskal, yes; Mr. Alves, yes; Ms. Boyea, yes; Ms. Cavallo, yes; Mr. Gregoire, yes. 7-0 in favor

Moved by Ms. Downing, seconded by Ms. Boyea to approve the Hubbard Memorial Library Budget in the amount of $521,321
Vote: Ms. Downing, yes; Ms. Tokarz, yes; Mr. Moskal, yes; Mr. Alves, yes; Ms. Boyea, yes; Ms. Cavallo, yes; Mr. Gregoire, yes. 7-0 in favor

Moved by Ms. Downing, seconded by Mr. Alves to approve the Recreation Department Budget in the amount of $310,481

Mr. Alves had a few questions regarding Haviland Pond. Will the pond open to reflect the number of lifeguards hired. Mr. Gregoire stated that last evening the Ms. Collins confirmed that the Level 3 adjustment for the Recreation Commission includes the pond being closed and the lifeguards not being funded at the level that they requested. That is about a $50,000 value for the closure of the pond. There is also an adjustment down for the before and after School Program because of the restrictions. That is also a cut and the amount is reflected in the Level 3 column. Mr. Alves asked about the plans for the Summer Camp and how it's reflected in the budget? Mr. Gregoire stated that based on the response from the Commission, their continuing to plan to open the Summer Camp and will abide by the guidelines that will be provided. There are no guidelines set to date.

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

Moved by Ms. Downing, seconded by Ms. Cavallo to approve the School Committee's Budget in the amount of $33,072,751

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TOWN OF HADLEY

Mr. Alves questioned a few line items and would like more information. They are school supply line items. One in particular is a 300% increase. Went from $4,000 to $16,000. He would like to know the reasoning behind it. The other one is in the Athletic Department, that jumped from $11,000 to $43,000. He would like background on that also. Ms. Downing said that the committee can investigate and ask questions, but the committee has no prevue over the line items in the budget. The school is autonomous as far as the line items. Mr. Gregoire said that the Superintendent was open to provide information to the committee as to why there were changes. Their cutting their service budget so it might be a matter of moving money in line items to address things that are needed in the year. They had to purchase new books etc. but their holding off on those things, so they made substantial cuts and it reflects at the bottom line. Ms. Boyea states that if Mr. Alves would like clarification, the committee could take a vote on their budget and he could still get his clarification. We can't tell the school department where to spend their money. If he has questions, he should get the answers. He would feel more comfortable before voting, but if the committee wants to vote that's fine and he could get his answers afterwards.

Vote: Ms. Downing, yes; Ms. Tokarz, yes; Mr. Moskal, yes; Mr. Alves, no; Ms. Boyea, yes; Ms. Cavallo, yes; Mr. Gregoire, yes. 6-1 in favor. Mr. Alves opposed

Moved by Ms. Downing, seconded by Ms. Boyea to approve the General Interest and Debt Budget in the amount of $3,972,283
Vote: Ms. Downing, yes; Ms. Tokarz, yes; Mr. Moskal, yes; Mr. Alves, yes; Ms. Boyea, yes; Ms. Cavallo, yes; Mr. Gregoire, yes. 7-0 in favor

Moved by Ms. Downing, seconded by Ms. Boyea to approve the Fringe Benefits Budget in the amount of $15,951,242
Vote: Ms. Downing, yes; Ms. Tokarz, yes; Mr. Moskal, yes; Mr. Alves, yes; Ms. Boyea, yes; Ms. Cavallo, yes; Mr. Gregoire, yes. 7-0 in favor

Moved by Ms. Downing, seconded by Ms. Boyea to approve the Sewer Enterprise Budget in the amount of $1,875,930
Vote: Ms. Downing, yes; Ms. Tokarz, yes; Mr. Moskal, yes; Mr. Alves, yes; Ms. Boyea, yes; Ms. Cavallo, yes; Mr. Gregoire, yes. 7-0 in favor

The Landfill Enterprise Fund is funded through an Article. The committee will discuss this when there is discussion and votes on the Articles. This is a standard Article with usually a $10,000 allocation.

The Golf Enterprise Funds: Members need more time to review it. It's not necessary to take a vote at this time. Mr. Alves would like more time to review the material. Ms. Collins is working on the changes. Mr. Gregoire would feel comfortable having more time to look at the budget with explanations. Mr. Alves would like to hold off voting until Ms. Collins has more changes. Ms. Villano said that she and the Town Accountant reviewed the whole budget before it was sent to the Golf Commission. There was a conference call to discuss some issue that they were having. Ms. Villano suggested at that time that the Town Accountant go over the budget with the full commission. At this point the committee should wait to vote and have Ms. Collins review the

entire budget with the commission next week. She will bring back any opinions that they have. HOLD

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Moved by Ms. Downing, seconded by Ms. Cavallo to approve the Cable TV Budget in the amount of $295,109
Vote: Ms. Downing, yes; Ms. Tokarz, yes; Mr. Moskal, yes; Mr. Alves, yes; Ms. Boyea, yes; Ms. Cavallo, yes; Mr. Gregoire, yes. 7-0 in favor

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Mr. Gregoire informed the committee that the next regular meeting will be held on June 17, 2020. Everyone received the draft Articles. He asked that we continue to review the Articles. If there needs to be a review meeting, they can be scheduled on June 3rd and June 10th. End of Year Transfers will be reviewed in a few weeks. The meetings will begin at 6:00 p.m.

Ms. Villano gave an update re: Town Meeting

Ms. Villano said they have been advised to rearrange the process of the Warrants. Most of the Articles will be taken out of the Annual Warrant and placed in the Special Warrant. The thought process for this move is to open the Annual Warrant, vote on those Articles that are specific to FY'21 vote on them and dissolve the Annual Town Meeting. The specific items for FY'21 have to be voted on before the end of the fiscal year which is July 1st. The Special Town Meeting Warrant will be opened immediately after to take up the remaining Articles. If need be the Special can be continued to another day if time runs to late. The second decision that was made was to hold the Town Meeting in the auditorium of the High School. Based on the fact that we are a Precinct Representative Town Meeting government, the most voters that can be in the auditorium is about 114 people. The Town Clerk, Ms. Villano and the Building Commissioner toured the High School and Mr. Larivee assured them that if everyone were to show up, they would still be able to have the 6 ft. distancing within the auditorium. This could be subject to change. People will have assigned seating and they will be spread out throughout the whole auditorium in order to accommodate the 6 ft. social distancing. There will be bright yellow stickers and numbers on every seat where somebody needs to sit. Ms. Downing asked about wearing masks. The people will be required to wear masks. All committee members will be permitted to attend, she's not sure if all of them will be able to sit on the stage. They will open the curtains and use the entire stage to hold the Selectmen, Town Counsel, Moderator, Town Clerk and as many of the Finance Committee members that they can. The other thought was to have the committee members sit along the front of the stage in the audience. Ms. Tokarz asked when the Warrants will be available, when the Town Clerk has to mail out the packets of information and if the recommendations can be available at Town Meeting. Ms. Villano said that there will be a draft budget presented to the Precinct Members in the mailing packet. Once the Finance Committee make their recommendations, she will have a second mailing with the overflow information to send to each of the precinct members. She doesn't think that paper information should be allowed on the stage as in the past. Mr. Gregoire said that the committee can finish making recommendations at the next meeting in time to do a second mailing prior to Town Meeting. Ms. Villano is also working with the Board of Health to draft a protocol plan and the information will be sent out in the packets. They want to ensure the comfort of the precinct members that will sitting down to vote. Gloves, hand sanitizers etc. are some of the items

mentioned. Ms. Villano said if there are changes in the next few weeks, she doesn't know what will happen. There is legislation talk about changing the quorums of Town Meeting, but pertain more to communities that have an Open Town Meeting where every voted has the right to attend. We have a representative Town Meeting, which is more restricted. Mr. Gregoire appreciates the updates and adjustments that have been made to accommodate Town Meeting.

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Moved by Ms. Downing, seconded by Mr. Alves to adjourn the Finance Committee Budget meeting at 7:21 p.m.
Vote: Ms. Downing, yes; Ms. Tokarz, yes; Mr. Moskal, yes; Mr. Alves, yes; Ms. Boyea, yes; Ms. Cavallo, yes; Mr. Gregoire, yes. 7-0 in favor

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Ludlow Finance Committee