The Meeting of the Board of Selectmen held on Tuesday, March 24, 2020 began at 6:00 p.m. in the Selectmen's Conference Room, Town Hall. This meeting was held during the Covid-19 crisis. Remote participation was provided.

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Members Present: Derek DeBarge, Chairman, Antonio Goncalves, Manuel Silva and William Rosenblum
Absent: Carmina Fernandes
First Order of Business: The Pledge of Allegiance

Visitation:

Budget Discussion – 6:30 p.m.

Eric Gregoire, Finance Chairman and Kim Collins Town Accountant to discuss the FY21 Budget with the Board of Selectmen remotely.

Mr. Debarge: Alright so we have Kim Collins our Town Accountant and Eric Gregoire the Chairman of the Finance Committee. Good Evening both of you.

Mr. Gregoire: Good Evening.

Ms. Collins: Good Evening.

Mr. Debarge: And we are ready to get started. Once I, okay...

Ms. Villano: So, Kim is a little under the weather so I am going to take the lead if you don't mind.

Mr. Debarge: Yeah, go ahead.

Ms. Villano: So, I do have it up for anyone that is participating from home so they can see it.

Mr. Debarge: Can you hear us alright?

Mr. Gregoire: It's a little bit hard to hear from down the end of the table.

Mr. Debarge: Alright you have to speak up Ellie.

Ms. Villano: Okay I'm going to move down a little bit. So, what we have on the screen and presented is um and I think that both Kim and Eric have a copy of it, is the budget that we would like to present to the Board of Selectmen for FY 21. The budget's subcommittee got together I would say 3-4 times, maybe 5 times, came up with what we thought would be an appropriate budget based on, there was a level one budget which was what all of the departments put in as their wants and needs and then through a discussion and doing a comparison with out revenues and our expenditures in previous years and what we anticipate coming in we came up with a level two budget which required several reductions to both, to most of the departments. It was I believe under $1 million, was it 1% over $1 million, ...3.5% reduction. You can see in the red what the reductions are. The Fiscal Year 20 approved budget totally came in at $71,971,777. The level two subcommittee Fiscal Year 21 budget that we are presenting is $74,801,910. I believe it is an increase of $2,830,134 which is about a 3.93% increase over last year. So, again we went through line-item by line-item budget each of the departments, met with the departments, the bigger departments, talked with them and discussed what they could take and what they couldn't take as a reduction. So, we ended up cutting off about $3 million off of the original requested budgets were. The Town took about $1.1 million, a little over and the school is taking a $1.2 million decrease over what was originally requested. So that is on that first page. Eric do you have any questions, comments, Kim anything?

Ms. Collins: The only thing I want to point out is, when you were talking earlier about Elsa reviewed her fringe benefits and you had said that that reduction was in here. That reduction is not in here yet because that's part of the level three budget. So, you will see that once it goes to Finance Committee.

Ms. Villano: I'm sorry the 1.5%, the Health Insurance, we reduced that.

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Ms. Collins: I know we reduced everything but there is going to be a change to the health insurance budget redo a recalculating of you know how those numbers initially came up. So, there will be another reduction that you will see in the level three budget.

Ms. Villano: Okay. Can you tell me about, do you recall how much?

Ms. Collins: It's going to be about $744,000.

Ms. Villano: So, that is not shown on this one. So, that's part of the full fringe benefit budget so we did decrease the health insurance but now, based on, you are right Kim we reconfigured it and went back to the Town Treasurer on how she originally established her budget from last year to her requests and there was an error so now there is going to be another $700,000 plus reduction to the fringe benefit line item.

Mr. Goncalves: Beautiful.

Ms. Villano: Correct?

Ms. Collins: Okay, say that last part again.

Ms. Villano: When it was a reconfiguration based on what she originally put in as her numbers. Based on last year and the year before. So, there is going to be a over $700,000 reduction again.

Ms. Collins: Right.

Ms. Villano: Right. Okay.

Mr. Goncalves: Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Debarge: Mr. Goncalves.

Mr. Goncalves: So, I am looking here in the level two subcommittee, in the level two there is already a $375,000 total subcommittee reduction, which it shows a half million-dollar reduction on health so this is going to be an additional $700,000 and some odd thousand on top of that number?

Ms. Villano: Correct.

Mr. Debarge: For fringe.

Ms. Collins: Yes

Mr. Goncalves: For fringe. Great, perfect.

Mr. Rosenblum: So, it is $774,000 you are down to just a hair over $2 million.

Ms. Collins: I'm sorry, say that again.

Mr. Rosenblum: So, right now you are saying the increase before this was $2,830,000 and so minus you are saying around $774,000 gets us to about $2,056,000.

Ms. Collins: Yes.

Mr. Rosenblum: Thank you.

Mr. Silva: Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Debarge: Mr. Silva.

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Mr. Silva: Yes, there is something that I would like to point out and more for anyone watching and the taxpayers that we have $458,000 in this budget for the new trash that we are going to be implementing come July 1. I believe it is July 1, right Ellie, that it is going to be implemented.

Ms. Villano: Correct.

Mr. Silva: And we have put that, those monies in there to pay the additional fees that we are getting for the trash. And in addition, we are going to be receiving funds for the trash which is going to be required all trash is going to have to be bagged, right.

Ms. Villano: Purple bags, yes.

Mr. Silva: Bags and it's going to be a major change so we need everyone to understand that in fact what we are going to be doing.

Mr. Goncalves: What about these bins?

Mr. Silva: Not yet.

Ms. Villano: So, if you would like, nobody has any questions on the actual budgets of each of the departments, I can bring up the Fiscal 21 tax recap analysis which all of you have in your hands but the general public does not.

Ms. Collins: I'm sorry, I am having a hard time hearing because when I am watching you on the TV you are in a different part of the meeting then when I hear you on the phone.

Ms. Villano: Mr. Debarge could you tell her we are going to bring up the tax recap.

Mr. Debarge: Yeah, we are going bring up the FY21 tax recap now. Unless you have any other comments on the individual departments before we do that.

Ms. Collins: Um...

Mr. Gregoire: Mr. Chair, oh go ahead Kim.

Ms. Collins: No, go ahead Eric.

Mr. Gregoire: Mr. Chairman I just have some general comments and I will leave it up to you I guess the discretion as to how you would like to handle it about the FY21 process on a go forward basis in light of the Coronavirus pandemic and how we need to be addressing that in terms of the FY21 budget. So, it's nothing specific at this point to a department in particular's budget that Ellie is showing you on the screen but it's something .....process at large. So, if you would rather review that at the end, I'm happy to and hold a conversation.

Mr. Debarge: Yeah, if it is just a broader comment, Mr. Gregoire, why don't we take that at the end.

Mr. Gregoire: Sure.

Mr. Debarge: If you don't have any comments about the individual departments, are you comfortable with moving on to the FY21 tax recap?

Mr. Gregoire: That's fine. The only thing I would say you know about looking at the department budgets in terms of the level two that I would just remind and as Ellie pointed out this is through the process of the budget subcommittee. So, at this point these numbers are now being reviewed by the Finance Committee.

Ms. Villano: Correct.

Mr. Gregoire: As Kim indicated the fringe is adjusting upon that review and the work we are doing in all of the department areas. So, these numbers I would say are still fluid and I will save the balance of my comments about that potential fluidity.

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Mr. Debarge: Very good. Kim, are you good with moving on to the tax recap analysis for FY21?

Ms. Collings: Yes, that's fine.

Mr. Debarge: Okay, Ellie.

Ms. Villano: Okay so as you see on the tax recap we have the analysis for Fiscal Year 17, 18, 19, and 20. The level one requested and the level two so far for the budget subcommittee. Right now, we have just general numbers from State Aide they haven't, they almost actually we copied last year except for one small amount. We have put in about $10,000 to raise for unpaid bills from previous years.

Mr. Goncalves: Previous years.

Ms. Villano: Yeah. We put in what we believe is going to be a $21,000 deficit from the golf enterprise, $3,000 from celebrate Ludlow and you will see we are putting in all of our funding uses and then go down to all of our expenditures. Now again the expenditures do include the new fee for the trash/recycling collection and you may recall from a previous meeting that you had with the DPW, the cost of recycling is increasing and the cost of waste disposal is increasing and in order to recoup some of that funding, they are instituting the purple bag program for everything, no more free..... So, you will see that there is the trash/recycling program is in there. Okay so then down to local receipts, we have been put in everything that we believe will be coming in. We did add an additional $227,000 into the ambulance based on the third ambulance and some reconfigurations of revenues. Income reserve, a lot of the, when you get to one section it says..... that is all of the funding that we are using out of the free cash. We would like to use the free cash for ....reserve, the Chapter 41, oh no the Chapter 41 salaries are going to be put into a different section, previous years bills, the building infrastructure, transfer to stabilization we have earmarked about $400,000 out of our free cash to go into the stabilization fund. We have some articles that are going to be on Town Meeting, we are requesting about $15,000 for a classification study of all the positions in Town that has not been done since I think 2006. It probably wasn't implemented until about 2008 so it's really high time that we get a whole new classification study. So, we have about $15,000 earmarked for that. Other available funds are the ambulance fund, the and I think there's $10,000 for the landfill. Now there will be another article, it is an article to fund about $40,000 which we would like to take from free cash also that will have to be added into this for the fiber that needs to be brought to the Senior Center in order to have internet connection.

Mr. Goncalves: How much is that?

Ms. Villano: About $40,000. If I can get this down a little bit more. So, based on all of our revenues, all of our free cash to reduce, well we are not using any money to reduce the tax rate. Everything that we need to have raised and appropriated, we believe that the tax rate should go up about $.34, which is equivalent to about 1.69%. So, in speaking with the Assessors as to what our new growth should be, everything has been factored in. You will see there's new growth, there's what our levy limit is, what our ceiling should be, what the debt exclusion is, what our actual levy is and the excess levy capacity ends up at about $401,000 which is better that we were at out first level which was almost $3 million over. So, we I think this much better than where we were on our original. I'm please to see that there is excess levy. I know that a lot of communities go right down to zero. I've never been a big fan of that because if you find you are in difficult straits half way through your year you end up taking physical cuts. This gives a little bit of a buffer.

Mr. Silva: Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Debarge: Mr. Silva.

Mr. Silva: Yeah, I just want to explain that as part of the subcommittee to residents that we cut, cut and did more cuts. So, the people out there that are out there saying that the Town just spends, it's not so. We have spoken to most of the departments as Ellie has mentioned and we discussed where we could

scratch here and find some funds here and find some fund there with things that are going on and this is really bare bones as you will be able to tell and see on the budgets for each department and the numbers that are coming out are very, very good considering we were looking at over $3 million from where we initially started.

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Mr. Goncalves: For a level one.

Mr. Silva: As it amounts to raise there would be no way we could balance the budget with a 2 ½ provisions. We would have had to had an override or something and so we just had to get to work and cut. Where we are, I am really pleased. Unfortunately, it is still a tax average bill increase of approximately $170 but that is really, really good considering what it was looking like.

Mr. Debarge: Where is the excess levy?

Ms. Villano: It's at $401,000 at the bottom.

Mr. Rosenblum: Yeah, it didn't come up on this page.

Ms. Villano: So, could I ask you a question Kim, do we know the breakdown of how much the excess levy is in that by cents in that potential increase versus what operating is?

Mr. Silva: $.20.

Ms. Villano: Never mind.

Ms. Collins: I don't think you have it right there; I can pull it up. But basically, what you are looking at is a reduction in the budget because I want to say, we were up to a $1.00 within the tax rate and I think the increase was like $.65 or something like that. So, really you are looking at a $.34 increase but it's not reflective of the general budget at all, it's strictly due to debt and it's not even, the debt was even more than $.34 so you are really looking at a decrease in the operating budget.

Mr. Goncalves: And that doesn't include again the additional insurance money that's coming off.

Ms. Villano: Correct.

Mr. Goncalves: That's going to reduce that $.34.

Ms. Villano: Correct.

Mr. Silva: It should.

Ms. Villano: It should.

Ms. Collins: Mr. Chairman could I just add one more thing about the revenue on the recap?

Mr. Debarge: Yes, Ms. Collins go ahead.

Ms. Collins: I just want to point out a couple of things you know we are calculating what it would be for the trash/recyclable program to bring revenue into the Town as of July 1st. So, when we look at our excess levy of the $401,000 estimated, I guess this revenue concerns me a little bit at this point in time just due to what is going on with Coronavirus and everything being kind of up in the air. I was under the impression at this point that the DPW, I don't know if they are working for the next two weeks and I don't know what will happen going forward so I'm not sure when that program will actually be implemented. And the other thing I would want to mention is that for the local receipts based on the calculation that was done for the ambulance that the Fire Chief had provided, it looks like we have been really underestimating you know the ambulance due to third ambulance and the rate increase so we did add $227,000 into the local receipts for that but we also have to keep in mind that that's contingent on the third ambulance running and if we are cutting budgets, if we are cutting the requested budgets then

you know that's revenue that we wouldn't be able to rely on if the budget cuts in turn cause them to stop using this third ambulance.

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Mr. Debarge: Yeah, all good points.

Mr. Silva: Now Mr. Chairman just one more point for me, it's important to understand what is happening with the State and the numbers, we are getting our .....sheet numbers in, they are not finalized yet and even if they are final, the State can always cut your distributions as they did back several years ago when the economy just went totally south and what happened was it put some communities, as my community I work in, it puts them over the levy limit and because of that we had to go and quickly have a Special Town Meeting to cut funds some of the budgets. So, it's important to have this leeway here just in case we get cut 200, who knows what the State will do, they just up and do whatever they please so if we don't get those funds in, that's where it has to come from.

Mr. Goncalves: That $401?

Ms. Villano: Yes.

Mr. Silva: Yes.

Ms. Villano: If I might add, there are a lot of communities that I call it zero base budgeting, they bring it all the way down to zero, they use every penny of their excess levy so that they are at zero at the end.

Mr. Goncalves: No rainy-day fund.

Ms. VIllano: And I, Ludlow has always been very, very conservative in that respect and we have always had a balance. Now we usually, for many years had like $1 million as a balance in our excess levy, there has been a point when we were down to, I think $70,000 and then at one point even lower than that so that was concerning to me. So, as we went through the budget and started making cuts and making the proper adjustments to the revenues coming in or the anticipated revenues coming in and the funding sources. The fact that we were able to bring in up from a minus $2 million plus to the $401,000 is good because just based on the scenario that Mr. Silva presented of having to have a Special Meeting a make cuts mid-year. The specific year that Mr. Silva was talking about the Town did incur I think about $184,000 to $190,000 in a cut and we were able to absorb it through our budgeting process and the excess levy so we actual came out well. And again, you know all of the departments that year were asked to take a 5% cut 6% cut to their personnel and a 9% cut their general expenses so that was an extremely tight year and we have been building back since that point and here we are.

Mr. Goncalves: Good stuff, good job.

Mr. Debarge: Alright.

Ms. Villano: I don't know if Mr. Gregoire or Ms. Collins needed to say anything else.

Mr. Debarge: Um, Mr. Gregoire your comments.

Mr. Gregoire: Yeah, so I have been and I have had conversations with both Kim and Ellie about some of the concerns that I have I think going forward with FY21 and the budget.... Process and obviously you are all aware we are in a very unpreceded territory around this. I think that the numbers that we have and have been discussing tonight that are in front of you are very optimistic plan of how the Town's finances could come into play for next Fiscal Year. I'm increasingly concerned as weeks go by and what is occurring both at the State level and just nationally, the impact on our local economy and the fact that we should be considering other scenarios and considering some extraordinary measures for ourselves and how we should approach this budget year. I think one of the things we is a strong indicator of the State hesitance to set their own budget calendar, the House of Representatives already announced that they will likely not be releasing their budget by April, which is typically a strong indication of how State Aide will be flowing, the estimates that we have built into this budget and were just discussing are you know based on an initial budget that the Governor developed back in January. We, the assumptions that were used to build this budget and even to do these cuts, all the way down to even the assumption

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around our health insurance, was predicated on a different world that did not involve COVID-19. So, I'm concern that operating under the same time line thinking that Town Meeting could be occurring in May at the same point in time for one reason the public health concern, as a potential public health concern but secondly just allowing greater time in our time line to digest some of the information coming out and for of the dust to settle potentially on this pandemic and the economic fallout of it. I think we need to be operating in the footing that we are currently in a recession and that the potential that we will be in a recession because if we don't have those scenarios and some contingencies.....out and do some planning for FY21 we could be caught very... So, I think for FY21 there's some continued work that may need to be done and including examining the time line for when we set our budget. I know that the legislature currently has legislation in front of them to evaluate Town's ability to set their Town Meetings..... on different time-lines. So, I think we need to exam the tools in tool kit that we have available now and that we will potentially have through a successful package of legislation like that and then secondly, I would just mention because it is not....FY21 but it .... Budget process in general that this is having an impact on our operating budget currently and could have substantial impact on it currently. So, I also you know just wanted to raise the concern about that for FY2020 for impacts being felt, there's the potential both for the positive, unfortunately because of this, as well as added expenses that were not forecasted and were definitely not planned for FY20. So, I think there are some contingencies that would necessary in that regard as well. I wanted to put this out there because the Finance Committee is meeting tomorrow and we are, I put this on the agenda to kind of just understand where folks were at and potentially we will get some updates on it but at this time I really reviewing department budgets that were set without this context around them we need to be applying a focus on it that there will be a...to our Town budget because of this pandemic.

Mr. Debarge: Okay.

Ms. Villano: If I might, it is my understanding that you can postpone your Town Meeting but it has to be done before June 30th.

Mr. Debarge: Correct.

Ms. Villano: So, while I agree to some degree with Mr. Gregoire, I am afraid that we are not going to know enough even by June 30th if we postponed our Town Meeting to as late as we could. Again, this is what we are presenting to you right now. He is correct, three weeks from now it could be a different story.

Mr. Debarge: Sure.

Ms. VIllano: As I spoke to you at the last meeting, you do have the option of postponing Town Meeting for a very short period of time. Our warrant isn't set and out. I think we are in better shape than some communities that have their Town Meetings in April because they already passed this process, ours is in May. So again, we still have time, until I think maybe the third week of April for the Board to make that decision as to whether they want to postpone Town Meeting or not. You have until the time right before you post the warrant.

Mr. Debarge: Um, Eric is that something that the Finance Committee might discuss would be an option or is that something you guys would consider as a suggestion?

Mr. Gregoire: Well I have placed this topic on the agenda for the Finance Committee meeting tomorrow and I am planning on to kind of understanding what people's perspective is. So yes, I would think that we could provide a recommendation to the Board based on that. I think Ellie is absolutely accurate that we could punt the Town Meeting to the end of June and have some semblance of idea and not have all the assumptions right but it would give us more time to allow some dust to settle or to figure out what their perspective might be for the next year and I think it also is just much likelier living our daily lives and the fact that we are in a state of adaptability we might have to, for Town finances, adopt that same footing and be very open and considering that if we adopt an FY21 budget, that there is potential we may have to revisit it. During FY21 using Special Town Meetings and other tools that the Commonwealth provides to us because the situation I think is going to be changing. The information is just been changing about this disease and the situation we are finding ourselves in economically. So, I think that yes, I am happy to answer your question, to bring this to the Finance Committee's attention

and that we have this conversation and that it is something that's on the table. But I think that, I wanted to bring it up in large part too so that we are focusing all of ourselves on that claim that next year we are going to planning and we can try and assume as much as we can but it's probably going to be a lot of scenarios that would be running at the same time.

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Ms. Villano: And if I might Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Debarge: Sure.

Ms. Villano: And Mr. Gregoire can correct me if I'm wrong but it is my understanding that there will be some either FEMA or MEMA reimbursements based on what the next couple of months could prove. I know that the Government, at the highest level, is looking at economic packages, so we could see some reimbursement or some assistance based on how this pandemic plays out over the next couple of weeks. I for one think that three weeks out from now, I think we are going to have a better understanding of where we are.

Mr. Debarge: I agree.

Ms. Villano: It is a little crazy right now. So, I think that for purposes of our budget we have to move forward. I mean we have to figure out kind of what we want to do and where we are going to head and I agree with Mr. Gregoire completely, it's fluid so while we think this is a good budget, we may not think that a month from now based on what is going forward. But again, by June 30th, 7 days before June 30th, you have to set your budget. There is legislation that is going to supposedly allow maybe a 1/12 budget for starting in July but definitely Town Meeting and budget setting is going to have to take place by the end of June. As is our election, which we postponed. So, I think that June, May and June are going to be some interesting months.

Mr. Silva: Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Debarge: Mr. Silva.

Mr. Silva: Question for Ellie and maybe even Greg, in our Town Meeting, in our articles do we have any articles in there that maybe we can amend or to let's say get some funds if we do run into some situations where we really need to get some of this you know extra levy so that on the floor we can amend and not put it in for instance into the stabilization fund or is there ways.

Ms. Villano: Sure, there is an article to put money from free cash into the stabilization fund.

Ms. Silva: Right, but what I'm saying is are there any articles where we can take that money, not put it in there and use it for whatever you know...

Mr. Goncalves: Surprises.

Mr. Silva: Extra surprise that comes forth with this big issue.

Ms. Collins: Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Debarge: Yup, Ms. Collins I had a feeling you were going to...

Ms. Collins: Yes, I'm having a hard time hearing anybody but Derek and Eric at this point. But I think something that might be helpful to know if that they have released guidance, that you know that if we do run into situations specifically due to COVID-19 that we can issue emergency funds and in certain cases we can appropriate money to be used for other instances. You know we just have to go through some steps in order to do that.

Ms. Villano: Right.

Mr. Debarge: So, Kim what Mr. Silva was just talking about and actually I was going to ask the same thing, we normally put about $400,000 into stabilization every year, give or take and his question or

statement was if we decided not to do that this time around and just keep that in free cash or just you know to have that as a buffer this time, is that an option? Has that money already been earmarked for stabilization or could we keep that out?

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Ms. Villano: It is all on your motions and how the articles are written.

Mr. Silva: So, we can amend it?

Ms. Villano: Yes.

Mr. Silva: So, if there is a couple of articles in it that we can amend maybe we can take that.

Ms. Villano: Yes.

Mr. Silva: And we have to close the Town Meeting I'm, from what I recall and are we too late to insert an article in there for if and why...

Ms. Villano: So, you have closed your warrants but there is nothing that says you can't reopen the warrant to insert an article.

Mr. Silva: And insert and article to take care of the Coronavirus issue that may arise.

Ms. Villano: So, if I hear correctly you want to have an article to, a special article for the COVID-19 and possibly put a certain amount of dollars that could have been earmarked for stabilization but put it into...

Mr. Silva: Right.

Mr. Goncalves: Leave it more liquid.

Ms. Villano: this special article.

Mr. Silva: If it comes to fruition that we really need that money and there's nothing else we can do.

Ms. Villano: Well there is the emergency borrowing that the DLS and DOR have just came out with, that's special legislation that allows you to do emergency borrowing. I can certainly check with Town Counsel, I believe that we could probably reopen the special to add such an article but it would be then, correct me if I am wrong Kim, we would have to do a special account specific to COVID-19.

Mr. Silva: Right.

Ms. Villano: And you are going to have to take some, I would say some of the free cash and put it into this account or fund strictly for COVID-19.

Mr. Silva: And then postpone if we don't need it.

Ms. Villano: And then, yes.

Ms. Collins: So, I'm sorry, no we don't have to have a specific account for it, we just have to be able to track it specifically. So, what I have requested is that anybody who is and this is specifically really the Fire Department. Anybody who has overtime that is specifically for COVID-19, they are tracking that and then any expenses specifically related to COVID-19 I am just having them you know, document that on the invoices.

Mr. Silva: That is the reimbursements.

Ms. Villano: Right and that is for the current fiscal year, I think that Mr. Silva is thinking of taking maybe $100,000 or $200,000 that we would have voted for Fiscal Year 21 to go into the stabilization fund but instead put into a special fund, COVID-19. So, that for Fiscal Year 21 we would have this account that we

would be able to tap into to help us through the Fiscal Year 21 process if some of the COVID money, if it extends into Fiscal Year 21.

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Ms. Collins: I don't see any reason why you wouldn't be able to do a special article for that.

Mr. Silva: So, if that is a can do why don't we just go ahead and open that Special Town Meeting now rather than wait for future meeting or whatever and then have to you know...

Ms. Villano: Well I want to double check with Town Counsel because it may have to get advertised again but that is certainly is something that...

Mr. Silva: Yeah, but they can always pull it if we can't do, we can't do it, no.

Ms. Villano: My suggestion would be to meet next Tuesday for that very purpose.

Mr. Silva: Okay.

Ms. Villano: But if you are of a mind where you want to open it, insert an article and then close it. I think that...

Mr. Silva: I just want to make sure you have time to you know get it all out.

Ms. Villano: We can certainly let the general populous know. A lot of it is letting the residents know that the warrant is being reopened. So, that is certainly something I can have a conversation first thing in the morning. Town Counsel and I have been speaking every day. There is legislation that is passing and being presented...

Mr. Silva: Right, every day.

Ms. VIllano: and proposed every single day.

Mr. Debarge: Three hours.

Ms. Villano: Yeah, so again that's the fluidity of this particular event.

Mr. Silva: So, we can certainly wait until Tuesday.

Ms. Villano: Yes, and you can certainly put that article in.

Mr. Goncalves: Who is Greg?

Ms. Villano: Eric Gregoire.

Mr. Silva: The Chairman of the Finance Committee.

Mr. Goncalves: Oh, Eric?

Mr. Rosenblum: He sits next to Mr. Bloomberg.

Mr. Silva: Gregoire.

Ms. Villano: So, I guess, does anyone have any comments or anymore comments or questions on the budget process so far and where we are at? Again, it is all going to go to Finance and Finance will be doing their recommendations and making their reports. Over the past many, many years Finance has had a great relationship with the Departments and you know we have actually been working together to if they recommend cuts, usually the Departments are accepting of the cuts or the Board of Selectmen will take the recommendations of the Finance so that at the end and the budget is presented at Town Meeting it usually is a budget that everyone has agreed upon. So, am I incorrect there Mr. Gregoire?

Mr. Gregoire: No, I think that is a great summation of the process we are embarking on and that, you know I just think it is complicated at this stage because of what we are reviewing and how we are going through this....and what we have been discussing this evening.

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Mr. Debarge: Okay, Ms. Collins do you have any other comments?

Ms. Collins: No, not right now.

Mr. Debarge: Mr. Gregoire any other comments?

Mr. Gregoire: No, Mr. Chairman, I think I am all set. Thank you.

Mr. Debarge: Okay I appreciate you both calling in and thank you for your insight.

Mr. Goncalves: Thank you guys.

Mr. Rosenblum: Thank you.

Mr. Goncalves: Feel better.

Mr. Silva: Go to bed.

Mr. Debarge: Goodbye. Okay.

Mr. Rosenblum: Okay, so if my math is right, we are dropping from 3.93% down to about 3%.

Mr. Goncalves: Good job Mr....

Mr. Rosenblum: I have been sitting over here punching numbers just to get to that, no.

Mr. Goncalves: For how many days now?

Mr. Debarge: That's why you are a billionaire.

Ms. Villano: Well, if I might Mr. Chairman before you do adjourn, I guess going back to the budget, are you all comfortable with the budget that has been presented to you at this time?

Mr. Goncalves: I am.

Ms. Villano: We are going to move forward with these numbers and work with them with Finance and...

Mr. Silva: Until Finance comes in with....

Ms. Villano: Alright, okay.

Mr. Rosenblum: I am, I think these numbers are better than expected.

Mr. Goncalves: Better than the first round.

Correspondence:

91. Ludlow Police Department – informing the Board of Special Police Officer Tyler J. Bastos' intention to resign effective March 10, 2020.

Moved by Mr. Goncalves, seconded by Mr. Rosenblum to accept the resignation of Special Police Officer Tyler J. Bastos. Vote 3-0. All in favor.

92. John R. Maher, Director of Government Affairs, Charter Communications – informing the Board of changes in the channel line-up and programming information.

Moved by Mr. Rosenblum, seconded by Mr. Goncalves to file. Vote 4-0. All in favor.

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93. John R. Maher, Director of Government Affairs, Charter Communications – informing the Board of Charter offering free access to Spectrum Broadband & Wi-Fi for 60 days for new K-12 and college student households and more.

Moved by Mr. Goncalves, seconded by Mr. Rosenblum to file. Vote 4-0. All in favor.

Unfinished Business:

COVID-19 (Corona Virus) Updates. Mr. Debarge explained that there is a new computer system called MAVIN that the Director of Nursing at the Board of Health explained to Mr. Debarge that this is a new web based disease surveillance and case management system that enables State and local health departments to capture and transfer public health, laboratory and clinical data efficiently and securely over the internet in real time. Therefore, if we had a positive test for this Corona Virus from any resident that has gone to the hospital or any clinical setting, it would go into this system so that our Board of Health knows about it. Because of the crisis that we are in, the data has not been updated on a regular basis and therefore we don't know and don't have accurate numbers on any positive tests through the MAVIN system. We will continue with our own responsibilities, if you came across anyone that is sick you should stay home for at least 14 days. It is now up to the individual.

Moved by Mr. Goncalves, seconded by Mr. Silva for the Board to approve and sign the Selectmen Meeting Minutes of December 3, 2019. Derek Debarge, Antonio Goncalves and Manuel Silva were present. Carmina Fernandes and William Rosenblum were absent. Vote 3-0-1. One abstention.

Moved by Mr. Goncalves, seconded by Mr. Silva for the Board to approve and sign the Selectmen Meeting Minutes of December 17, 2019. All members were present. Vote 4-0. All in favor.

Moved by Mr. Goncalves, seconded by Mr. Rosenblum for the Board to approve and sign the Selectmen Meeting Minutes of January 7, 2020. All members were present. Vote 4-0. All in favor.

Moved by Mr. Goncalves, seconded by Mr. Rosenblum for the Board to approve and sign the Executive Session Meeting Minutes of March 3, 2020. All members were present. Vote 4-0. All in favor.

New Business:

For the Board's information - Health Insurance Renewal is -1.5%.

Board perused Selectmen Meeting Minutes of January 21, 2020.

Chairman approved and signed all bills, warrants and abatements. A record of all warrants is in the Selectmen's office for perusal until provided to the Town Accountant's office.

Closing Comments:

Mr. Silva asked for residents to pay attention to the CDC, Governor and local recommendations as far as the Corona Virus and do not go by Facebook. It's important that you trust the officials will have the correct information.

Mr. Rosenblum also asked that residents go to Mass.gov or the Town's website to get the Corona updates. You will see that Massachusetts is doing the same as surrounding states. The more we listen now, the sooner we will be out of this. Try to enjoy your time with your family.

Mr. Goncalves stated that the elderly and immune compromised are the most vulnerable and to try and pay attention to your neighbors and help out where you can.

Mr. Debarge our first press release stated that anyone who decides to self-quarantine or is positive for COVID-19 should notify our Board of Health so that our first responders will know in advance in case

their services are needed. Our first responders need to be protected at all times and having that information in advance is vital. If a first responder is infected and then infects the rest of the squad, it could be detrimental. Mrs. Villano and I also had a conversation about programs for individuals who have drug or alcohol issues and the concern for not having access to meetings right now. I did touch base with Narcotics Anonymous and I would assume there is the same for the Alcoholics Anonymous as well. There is a New England Region of Narcotics Anonymous that has a website, that website is NERNA.org which is a link that will show temporary closures of Narcotics Anonymous meetings and it will also show the link for virtual Narcotics Anonymous meetings on Zoom. So, it will show you what the virtual meetings are and the numbers and how to link to those meetings. The website also has a toll free number which will connect you with your local area where someone can help you link to that Zoom app and get to that virtual meeting or connect you with a person to talk to the number is 1-866-NA-HELP-U or 1-866-624-3578.

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Moved by Mr. Goncalves, seconded by Mr. Silva to adjourn this meeting at 7:09 p.m., not return to open session. Vote 4-0 all in favor.

Ludlow Board of Selectmen

All related documents can be viewed at the Board of Selectmen's Office during regular business hours.