

Buckland Finance Committee
Meeting Minutes
June 1, 2020 - virtual meeting 7 p.m.

This meeting was conducted in accordance with the state of Mass. recommendations for virtual meetings during the time of Covid-19 pandemic.

Finance Committee Members: Paula Consolo, Karen Blom, Larry Langford, Raymond Lanza-Weil, Ciara Hayden, Ben Murray arrives at 7:25 pm

Others present: Town Administrator Heather Burke, Selectboard member Dena Wilmore, and residents Marilyn Kelsey and Tim Gaulin.

Meeting commences at 7:16 pm

Karen motions to accept the minutes from May 11, 2020. Larry seconds.

Role call: Karen-yes; Larry-yes; Raymond-yes, Ciara-yes, Paula-yes. No discussion

Karen motions to accept the minutes from May 18, 2020. Raymond seconds.

Role call: Karen-yes; Larry-yes; Raymond-yes, Ciara-yes, Paula-abstains (was not present). No discussion

Ben Murray arrives at 7:25 pm

Budget Discussion - the school budget is still in flux and will likely need to be reduced due to less state aid. Many questions remain: Could the town's assessment go up if state share goes down? Should we pass over the school budget or vote it down. The school committee has suggested that it not be passed until they have a better idea on state funding. They would like to go with a 1/12th budget until then, meaning the schools get 1/12 of last year's budget each month until they are able to create a real budget using real state aid numbers.

Heather has met with department heads and made reductions of about 4% or just shy of \$75,000 in the FY21 operating budget expense requests. Town operating budget revenue has been adjusted down 25% for state aid and local receipts off the FY20 budget. The budget balances with about \$25,000 surplus. Should it be more, 30% as suggested by one legislator? Vote on the 25% reduction - Raymond-yes, Larry-yes, Ciara-yes, Ben-yes. Paula asked to see what 30% would do; it pushes the budget in the red.

There was a discussion about COLAs. The 2.5% COLA for town employees is in the FY21 budget. Karen and Ben are not comfortable with giving COLAs with an unknown revenue model. It was acknowledged that some of our staff are below local standard pay levels. The BOS will decide on the COLAs at their next meeting on June 9.

We should reserve as much free cash (from FY19) as possible to provide a cushion for the fall. This is the one year the state is allowing free cash to roll over and be used in the next fiscal year. Once we know what the revenue situation is, we can appropriate funds for stabilization and some capital projects. We should fund a few capital accounts that are in the budget. Highway paving was decreased to \$50,000 to save some free cash. The budget will likely need to be adjusted and voted at a fall Special Town Meeting.

Larry and Karen will work on the Memo. The ATM on June 27 will be mostly the budget.

Public comments by Marilyn Kelsey - The Shelburne warrant has a new school capital line and she wondered what it is and if Buckland has a similar cost. Karen explains that yes, it's new and it is for the 2nd phase of the asbestos removal from the floors in Buckland Shelburne Elementary School. Was voted on at a previous town meeting.

Next Zoom meeting is set for Monday, June 15, 7 p.m. Members should review the budget and the memo before this meeting.

Karen motions to adjourn. Ciara seconds.

Karen-yes; Raymond-yes; Ben-yes; Ciara-yes; Paula-yes; Larry-yes.

Meeting adjourns at 8:22 pm

Respectfully submitted by Karen Blom