

Buckland Finance Committee
Meeting 3/15/21

Meeting called to order at 6:03 pm

Present

Finance Committee - Larry Langford, Ciara Hayden, Dena Wilmore, Paula Consolo, Bruce Lessels (taking minutes)

Barry DelCastilho (selectman), Marilyn Kelsey

There is not a quorum

Agenda

- Review and confirm FY 22 operating and capital budget
- Frame our recommendation to town on how to vote on warrant re MTHS capital budget request
- Buckland may request approximately 540,000 from American Recovery Act. Where do we want to position ourselves re use of this money? School systems are likely to get some money from American Rescue Plan as well.

Where do we want to put ARP money?

- Can it be used for Buckland Rec pool?
- Can't be used to fund pensions
- Excise taxes were down in 2020, can be topped off based on 2019
- Bed taxes were down
- Can we top up 2020 expenses based on 2019 expense levels?
- Reimbursement for contractors used for highway work
- Schools will be getting funding separately from the towns
- Relief to households and businesses impacted by the crisis
- Top up revenues
- Summer program for MTRSD free to Buckland residents
- Do sewer replacement? Would also then result in some roads being redone
- Can we reduce school capital costs with this funding?
- Broadband - Apple Valley buildout
- Reimburse library for upgrade to internet and HVAC. There may be some separate funding for libraries
- Buckland public facility air purification systems
- FRCOG may ask for some help. Some of our allocation will be money that is allocated to county governments where they exist.
- Open space plan items. Sidewalk all the way up North Street (probably 1.5 million so out of range), repave 112 to allow a wide shoulder with a pedestrian/cyclist lane.

Dena outlined corrections to FY 2022 operating budget

- Delete \$3,000 from selectboard salaries
- Budget some overtime on admin assistant salary
- Line 23 - why did collector/treasurer item go up so much?
- Line 99 - town garage expense - why has it not gone down significantly due to lower heating costs with new building? What else is in this line besides heat?
- Budgeted for 1 election but there's going to be an override vote and/or town clerk appointment so we should budget for 2 elections
- We need to find \$3,000 to balance the budget.
- Can/should we use ARP money to balance it?
- Project revenues based on FY19, 20, 21 to determine what we should be expecting in FY22

Audit of all Buckland public facilities may allow ARP money to go toward some capital items such as historical museum requests discussed on 3/8/21

School capital requests

We need to do some analysis on the capital requests for schools. Near term and longer term requirements. Fund immediate capital needs now and then wait 3 years for 2nd batch of capital items? We need to do some modeling to determine impact on town debt service for next 5 to 10 years. A small group should do this modeling. Model assumptions re term, interest rate, etc to determine what to recommend. Shelburne has to be involved since we share BSE.

Revenue grows at 3 or 4 percent per year
Expenses grow at 3 percent or less

ARP funds are likely not able to be applied to these capital projects.

Lowest common denominator among the member towns for Mohawk will determine what is possible in terms of capital funding.

Capital expense shares between Shelburne and Buckland are set at the time the capital is funded.

DW - Majority of pool will be paid for by grants and gifts. Pool funding to some degree will be determined by decision on school capital funding. DW - Pool should be paid for from stabilization.

Larry, Paula, Barry will work with Heather to put together a spreadsheet modeling capital scenarios.

Timeline for town meeting

Larry shared his proposed calendar for budget and memo prior to town meeting.

Public Comment

Marilyn Kelsey - Supports Barry's comment re using ARP funding for North Street infrastructure

Discussion re roles of fin comm and selectboard. PC pointed out that fin comm is independent of selectboard, though LL stated that fin comm should consult with selectboard to develop budget. Selectboard has authority to set compensation for staff. Fin comm is advisory only. Power to approve budget lies with townspeople.

Adjourned at 7:28 pm