

Minutes  
10/18/21 Buckland Finance Committee  
Taken by Bruce Lessels

Finance Committee Members Present: Larry Langford, Dena Wilmore, Bruce Lessels

Others Present: Kurt Gilmore, Heather Butler, Karen Blom, Lisa Blackmer

Called to order at 6:02 pm

- Review and acceptance September 27, 2021 meeting minutes. **Moved to approve - Dena Wilmore, Paula Consolo second. Passed unanimously**
- Review and discussion of October 23, 2021 STM warrant articles. Heather Butler led us through a discussion of the articles and what role the FC would play.

Discussion around whether the FC should write a memo for this special town meeting. We have typically not done it, but could do so last minute if we feel it's needed.

Paula Consolo suggested we should support the zoning article because it pertains to growth in the town which we support. **Paula Consolo moved that the Finance Committee support articles 1a, 1b, 2, 3 Dena Wilmore second. Unanimously approved.**

Article 4 is the first article that directly pertains to finance. EOE acceptance of \$400,000 PARC grant for construction of the new community swimming pool. The Town must authorize the full amount of the pool construction as budgeted and the Selectboard, as Recreation Commissioners will agree that Buckland Rec will always be in conservation and therefore can't be sold for other purposes. \$1,263,104 is in hand, the majority of which is from donations. This total also includes \$150,000 in General Stabilization funds. **Dena Wilmore moved that we support this article, Paula Consolo second. Unanimously approved.**

Article 5. Nilman Road culvert replacement. This is to authorize temporary short term borrowing of \$500,000. The bond bill money is not coming through soon if at all, so the Town met last week with Adam Hinds and other members of Mass DOT. There will be some supplemental funding (amount uncertain) that will ensure we can pay this back. DOT will come up with a certain amount and then Adam Hinds will try and add \$125,000 from funds he controls.

Paula Consolo asked if the bonded funds will come through eventually. Heather Butler explained the bonded funds may or may not be forthcoming. Buckland has not spent any Ch. 90 funds on this project. Dena Wilmore suggested we could offer an amount that would cover the engineering beyond this article. Buckland will also need to pay for some public safety expenses

related to this project. Heather Butler emailed Adam Hinds re the amounts she thinks the town can cover. Total project costs is \$1.2 million.

Impact of this borrowing is \$2,000 if we have to carry this into 2023. **Paula Consolo moved that we support Article 5. Dena Wilmore second. Unanimously approved.**

Article 6 Facilities - To move \$22,000 from the highway department general account to public buildings account. No new appropriation. **Dena Wilmore moved that the Finance Committee support article 6. Larry Langford second. Unanimously approved.**

Article 7 -To raise and appropriate \$10,500 to cover materials, tools and fuel in the new public facilities account. We are presently running a \$65,000 budget surplus so this amount can come from these funds. **Dena Wilmore moved that we support Article 7, Paula Consolo second. Unanimously approved**

Article 8 - Capital appropriation to purchase a tractor and snow blower for \$18,100. Tractor will be used for snow removal from town sidewalks. Town doesn't presently have a bylaw that places liability for snow removal to home/business owner that the sidewalk fronts. There have been two attempts to bring this bylaw to a vote and it has failed both times. Tractor is also to be used for roadside mowing with future purchase of sickle mower. Of the \$18,100, \$4,368 is newly appropriated money (\$10,000 will be moved from film account, and \$3,732 from unspent, but authorized, highway department vehicle funds).

Dena Wilmore expressed discomfort with by-passing our normal and effective way of managing capital expenses by allocating this amount out of cycle. This should not become standard operating procedures.

**Dena Wilmore moved that we support this Article. Bruce Lessels second. Unanimously approved.**

Article 9 - Capital appropriation to purchase a new hybrid police cruiser. The old Highway truck is now being used by the newly created Buildings and Grounds Department pickup and the Highway Department is now using the pickup formerly used as a police cruiser. This leaves the police department with only 2 vehicles. It should be noted that the Selectboard is meeting next week with the Town of Shelburne to begin talks about sharing services. If we share services with Shelburne, there will be a negotiation regarding which vehicles to keep and which to sell.

Paula Consolo raised concern about the levy limit. We have \$14,000 remaining if we approve this item. Heather Butler pointed out that we expect growth in several revenue areas, so she believes \$65,000 is a conservative estimate of where the limit will end up.

Dena Wilmore - we are just now beginning discussions with Shelburne re shared services. There are lots of unknowns at this point. It's premature to be adding a large capital item now when we have no idea what our department will look like going forward.

Lt. Gilmore - believes talks on shared services are likely to fail. It will need to go to town meeting and he thinks the town as a whole will shut it down. We'll have to maintain our own department with our own staffing. Police reform bill has created new constraints on our department. Part time officers will be gone. We'll be discussing getting another full time officer. This will put significant strain on our two remaining police vehicles. If we're down to two cruisers, the acting chief will not be able to take a cruiser home, which will impact our ability to respond to emergencies during off hours.

FY23 is the next cruiser purchase on the schedule.

**Paula Consolo moved that we support Article 9. Bruce Lessels second. Unanimously approved.**

- Review of budget discussions with department heads. Larry Langford sent out department assignments to Finance Committee members via email today.
- Review of the progress of filling vacancies. Dena Wilmore contacted Cheryl Dukes who said she is not interested. Dena Wilmore will contact Larry Brufee to see if he will consider it. Bruce will contact Sam Bartlett to see if he is interested.
- Review of committee meeting calendar. It's in a new folder on Google Drive. Paula Consolo/Larry Langford asked if we can move the meeting time earlier (to 4pm).
- No public comments
- Any other items not reasonably known 48 hours prior to the meeting

**Next Meeting: 4:00 p.m., Monday, November 8, 2021 (via Zoom)**

**Meeting adjourned at 7:30 pm Dena Wilmore moved, Paula Consolo second. Unanimously approved**