

Essex Finance Committee
Tuesday June 9, 2020
7:00 P.M.
Meeting Minutes

The public was able to join this meeting by telephone. The call-in number will be: 717-275-8940. The access code was: 9898439

Members Present: Chairman Ben Buttrick, Rob Fitzgibbon, Michael Antell, Guy Bradford, Michael Flynn and Allison Williard

Also Present: Treasurer/Collector Jeff Soulard, Selectwoman Ruth Pereen, Peter Hoare, Annie Cameron

Chairman Buttrick called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m., motion made, seconded and unanimously approved.

Discussion ensued regarding Tax Collections and Public Safety Building Bond issuance. Treasurer Soulard discussed bond sale on 6.10/2020. Bond selling at par, we won't realize as much of a premium. So tax payers are not burdened, debt is spread out while paying ongoing high school. Treasurer Soulard is estimating interest rate to be low 2 percent. Treasurer Soulard presented an update on property tax collections for FY20.

Discussion ensued with Assessor Stephen Poulos regarding the assessment process and the process they must follow according to the Department of Revenue. Tax assessments change every year, whole model is based on real estate transactions. A building permit triggers an inspection. January 1st of each year Assessors track condition of completion and track building permit. Discussion ensued regarding how dependent our town is on real property taxes. Assessors must have tax rate certified by the Department of Revenue each year, tax levy will never go down – municipalities receive last year's levy limit plus 2 ½ percent plus new growth (structures that did not exist in prior year), this becomes the new tax rate. The mil rate adjusts, but you can only spend the levy plus 2 1/2 percent plus new growth.

Finance Committee member Michael Antell discussed reaching out to departments regarding potential increased revenue. Michael spoke about several places where departments would like to be able to increase revenue. Some departments must ask for board approval before increases can be voted at town meeting. A lot of departmental fees are set by the state. Chief Francis mentioned that if someone gets a ticket the state gets a piece, the town gets a piece, unless it goes to court and then sometimes no one gets any revenue. Chief Doucette, Pam Witham, Erin Kirchner were all current on fees. Many departments loved the idea of collecting parking fee revenue from parking meters. The library do not charge late fees for books because they want the asset back and they don't want to turn away customers. The whole process was incredibly responsive and the group of employees were eager to check out fees in other municipalities. Michael will check back with departments in a month or so to see where they are in the process of changing fees. Michael will also check with transfer station to see if the fee is still appropriate compared to the cost to run the transfer station.

Items that could not be reasonably anticipated by the open meeting law posting deadline – Chairman Buttrick discussed the budget collaboration meeting with MERSD – no modification made to school budget. The district is looking to the state for policy guidance before the model for the year can be determined, it could become costly. The question has not been answered regarding what the schools might receive in aid. Annie Cameron mentioned that the committee has a plan if more cuts need to be made. MERSD is meeting with the collaborative groups each week presently.

Accountant Ginny Antell discussed revenue and expenses for FY20 to date. Expense are in line for the end of the year and revenue is greater than estimated.

A motion was made, seconded and unanimously voted to approve line item transfer as follows:

\$160.00 to cover costs of Conservation Commission Payroll. Copy attached.

Chairman Buttrick said that he, Chairman Buttrick voted aye in favor; followed by Rob Fitzgibbon, said that he, Rob Fitzgibbon voted aye in favor; Allison Williard said that she, Allison Williard voted aye in favor; followed by Michael Flynn, said that he, Michael Flynn voted aye in favor; followed by Guy Bradford said that he Guy Bradford aye in favor; followed by Michael Antell, said that he, Michael Antell voted aye in favor.

Chairman Buttrick made a motion to approve minutes from 5/12/2020. Motion made, seconded and unanimously approved.

Public Comment - None

A motion was made, seconded and unanimously voted to adjourn at 8.34 pm.

REQUEST FOR A LINE ITEM TRANSFER

Requests are to be made and transfer voted BEFORE any expenditure is incurred. Please submit only one copy.

To: FINANCE COMMITTEE -TOWN OF ESSEX

Request for a Line Item Transfer from Account #1100.1.171.5110.00

Amount Requested \$160.00

To be transferred to Account #1100.1.171.5113.00

The specific purpose the amount requested will be used for: Clerical payroll overage

This expenditure is extraordinary and/or unforeseen for the following reasons:

Calculation error and additional hours needed for clerical staff.

Date: 6/2/2020

Signed: 

Michael Burke, Chairman
Conservation Commission

Date of Meeting 06/09/2020

Vote: X Yes No

Transfer voted in the sum of \$ \$160.00 Transfer disapproved

FINANCE COMMITTEE

Chairman Ben Buttrick

Michael Flynn

Michael Antell

Guy Bradford

Allison Williard

Rob Fitzgibbon