

Truro Budget Task Force
Friday, January 10, 2020
Truro Town Hall Selectmen's Chambers

Finance Committee Members Present: Chair Robert Panessiti; Vice-chair Richard Wood, Raphael Richter

Board of Selectmen Members Present: Chair Janet Worthington; Robert Weinstein, Susan Areson, Kristen Reed

Present: Town Manager Rae Ann Palmer; Assistant Town Manager Kelly Clark; Town Accountant Trudi Brazil

Select Board Chair Janet Worthington and Finance Committee Chair Robert Panessiti opened the meeting at 2:07 p.m.

Town Manager Rae Ann Palmer distributed the one-page summary of the dollar and percentage changes from the Fiscal Year 2020 Budget to the Fiscal Year 2021 Budget. She said this was an overview of the entire budget in draft form, not the final version.

Lines 114-199

Ms. Palmer explained a big decrease in the Town Manager's budget due to the separate budget for the Planning Department. She called attention to money available through the Cable TV and Internet Advisory Committee. She noted: the increase in operating capital; the IT budget, which includes a schedule for replacing 15 computers each year; the Moderator budget with no change; increases for the Select Board, Accounting, Assessor, Clerk/Treasurer/Collector, and Legal Counsel; a pending wage adjustment for Sick Leave; the COLA budget at 2%; ZBA's decrease; Town Hall operations with a small decrease; the Warrant and Town Report with no increase; and the Energy and Climate Action Committee's new request. The allocated Communications account has consolidated all telephone costs and shows an increase. The allocated Energy account has increased as well.

Lines 210-221

The Police Department has a small increase. The Fire Department has a substantive increase because of the beach EMT program and the addition of more firefighter/paramedics for the department to plan for assuming all EMS functions. The Lower Cape Ambulance has a small increase for a 1-year budget. Cape & Islands has an increase. The Building Department has a minimal increase for the support staff. There is an increase to Emergency Management related to shelter supplies that need to be replaced.

Lines 300-316

The Public Education budgets have not yet been prepared, Ms. Palmer said. Trudi Brazil said an assessment for Truro's share for the new Cape Cod Tech will be included in that budget.

Lines 400-499

DPW has an increase at the Transfer Station because of the cost of solid waste. A reduction in tonnage helps to offset this. The Health Board has approved new fees for the Transfer Station, Ms. Palmer said. There's a slight increase in the Cemetery budget and no increase in the Greenhead Fly Control line.

Lines 510-545

Human Service Providers is level funded. Health/Conservation has slight increase. There is no change to the Water Oversight Committee Budget. There is a small increase to the COA budget with the new COA director. Trudi Brazil explained the increase in the assessment for the Veterans' Benefits funding. Seventy five percent of the benefits that Truro pays to the veterans is reimbursed by the state, she said.

Lines 610-669

Rae Ann Palmer said the Library has an increase, but she hadn't yet examined it. Beach and Recreation has an increase because of a longer summer season this year. The Harbor has an increase for the dredge, which is currently underway.

Lines 710-752

Rae Ann Palmer said the Town is in a transition year with debt. Some debt is ending, but there is short-term debt for the Walsh Property, East Harbor and the fire tender that will stay that way until it has been determined how the Town will use the Walsh property. The interest is low, and the loan can be turned over for five years. She gave advice about borrowing long-term for the Walsh Property.

Lines 911-945

County Retirement assessment is up. The Town can save money by paying it up front but needs to do a cash flow analysis first. Workers' Compensation is level funded. Unemployment and Group Health Insurance have decreased. FICA has increased a little. There is no change for Life Insurance and Municipal Liability.

Not all of the budget requests are covered by tax proceeds, Ms. Palmer said.

RECAP

Rae Ann Palmer presented the draft 2021 Budget Summary Recap worksheet. The certified free cash number has not yet been determined. The operating budget, excluding \$520,000 for a tractor through capital exclusion and a new ambulance through debt exclusion, totals \$21,808,749 for appropriation at Annual Town Meeting. Money not appropriated at Annual Town Meeting includes the Overlay for Tax Abatements, Cherry Sheet Offsets, State & County Charges, Expenditures using Other Financial Sources, Free Cash Transfers, and CPA Articles. With these included, the current total of expenditures is \$23,414,170.

Trudi Brazil listed the sources of revenue from funds other than taxes: Betterment Funds, Community Preservation Act Funds (not yet determined), Free Cash, Local Revenues, Receipts

Reserved, State Aid, and Free Cash to Mitigate the Tax Rate. The sum of \$5,082,264 from these revenue sources added to the tax levy limit of \$17,877,073 totals \$22,959,338.

Although the expenditures and revenues are out of balance in the Recap, Rae Ann Palmer said she is not worried because this is a preliminary examination of the Budget.

Comments from Task Force

Task Force members commented on figures that need further scrutiny and the incremental increases that occur every year. Safety issues are a big concern, particularly in relation to ambulance services. There is interest in the other services provided. Robert Weinstein said he would like to see a per capita evaluation. When the School budget is presented, it would be helpful to get an explanation of aid to Education, the Chapter 70 Formula.

Finance Committee expressed appreciation for preparation of materials, especially the Recap at the beginning of the Budget meetings. Jay Coburn suggested presenting a comparison of the FY21 Budget with the budget of ten years ago, if possible. Robert Panessiti explained the role of the Finance Committee as advisors to the Budget. He said that the Finance Committee's Budget Message will reflect trends in town and what people want. Gathering questions, considering facts, and working together was his advice.

The public is encouraged to contact Budget Task Force members with their concerns. Public attendance at the Task Force meetings is rare, but engagement with the public is the productive way to proceed. Since Town Meeting tends to vote on the entire Budget without discussion, the Budget Task Force meetings offer an opportunity for people to question line items. Task Force members recommended posting which budgets will be dealt with at each meeting.

Adjournment

Robert Weinstein moved to adjourn the Select Board meeting. Susan Areson seconded, and the motion carried 4-0.

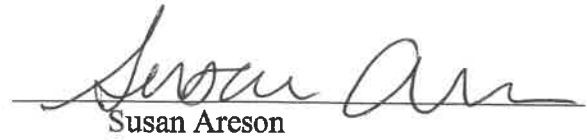
Jay Coburn moved to adjourn the Finance Committee meeting. Robert Panessiti seconded, and the motion carried 3-0.

The meeting was adjourned at 2:53 p.m.

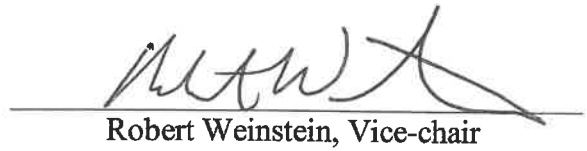
Respectfully submitted,


Mary Rogers, Secretary


Janet Worthington, Chair


Susan Areson


Kristen Reed, Clerk


Robert Weinstein, Vice-chair

Public Records Material of 1/10/2020
FY21 Budget workbook

