

**TOWN OF TRURO**  
**SELECT BOARD and FINANCE COMMITTEE BUDGET HEARING**  
**September 3, 2020 at 4:00pm**  
**Remote Meeting Via GoToMeeting**

**Select Board Members Present:** Chair-Robert Weinstein, Vice Chair-Kristen Reed, Clerk-Susan Areson, Member-Stephanie Rein, Member-Jan Worthington

**Select Board Members Absent:** None

**Finance Committee Members Present:** Chair-Robert Panessiti, Lori Meads, Raphael Richter, Richard Wood

**Finance Committee Members Absent:** Jay Coburn

**Others Present:** Town Manager-Rae Ann Palmer, Assistant Town Manager-Kelly Sullivan Clark, Town Accountant-Trudi Brazil, Police Chief-Jamie Calise, Health/Conservation Agent-Emily Beebe, Town Moderator-Monica Kraft, Fire Chief-Tim Collins, Library Director-Tricia Ford, DPW Director Jarrod Cabral, Kevin Rice, Anne Greenbaum, Eric Parker, Deborah Best Parker

Chair Weinstein and Chair Panessiti both called the meeting to order for the Select Board and the Finance Committee at 4:00pm.

Chair Panessiti explained that because of Covid, the Finance Committee has not been able to meet to review some of the articles that are going to be voted at Town Meeting. There have been some changes to the budget. After the Select Board discusses the Warrant articles, with discussion at the end of the meeting, they will close the public hearing and then the Finance Committee will stay to vote the financial articles, of which there are four.

Town Manager Palmer read the instructions on how people can access the meeting to listen, participate, or provide comment.

Chair Panessiti briefly reviewed roles and responsibilities of the Finance Committee. He then turned the presentation of the budget over to Town Manager Palmer.

**Public Hearing on the FY2021 Budget**

Town Manager Palmer went over the Draft Proposed Covid Budget FY 2021. She stated that in March, a proposed budget was compiled after Budget Task Force review. Because Town Meeting was not held in April, the budget was not approved. The Town has been running, so far, with a 1/12<sup>th</sup> budget approved by the Select Board and the Department of Revenue. Town Manager Palmer then highlighted the areas on the Draft Proposed Covid Budget FY2021 where most of the reductions occurred.

Finance Committee Member Richter asked if someone could state the amount of the school budget reduction and the reason for that reduction. Town Accountant Brazil stated she would locate the email which listed the approved reductions from the School Committee.

Chair Weinstein asked Town Manager Palmer to go through the \$879,760 in cuts. Before she started, she asked Town Accountant Brazil if she'd found the education information. Town Accountant Brazil stated that the school is taking \$200,000 from other funding sources, meaning that although it appears to be a reduction in the budget, they are just coming up with an alternate funding source (circuit breaker funds, as well as school choice funds). Below is a list of reductions;

- Reduced \$20,000 from CIP. The School's capital figure is not included in the School's budget figures and is instead in the Town's Capital Improvement Program.
- Field trips reduced \$13,000 from \$15,000 to \$2,000.
- \$8,000 reduction from professional development conferences.
- \$3,000 from library books.
- \$3,500 from gym floor refinishing.
- \$1,000 from Principal's professional development.
- \$10,000 from custodial services.

The School's budget request is down from a request of just shy of \$6 million to \$5,820,974.

Town Manager Palmer began going through the cuts to the remainder of the budget;

- \$8,000 in the Select Board budget was a reduction in grant reimbursements and a line item used for professional services for if the Town needs to hire a consultant.
- The Finance Committee cut their budget from \$1,000 to \$500.
- The increase in the Town Manager's budget reflects the plans for negotiations for a new Town Manager.
- Accounting has a reduction in educational travel. Both the Town Accountant and Assistant Accountant usually go for their recertification which they will not be doing this year. Town Accountant Brazil added that there is also a reduction in the request for auditing services which is \$2,500 of that savings.
- Assessing has a reduction of \$4,023, which includes travel and overtime.
- Legal counsel was increased by \$10,000 instead of reducing it, because it was felt the bills are trending in that direction.
- Salary/Wage Adjustments/Buyouts/Vacation/Sick Leave is just a year over year reduction in adjustments to salaries.
- IT is reduced. IT Capital Expenditures were moved to the Capital Budget.
- Some of the savings in the Planning Department Salary line will offset some of the legal costs incurred by the Town using a KP Law attorney who is a certified planner to do planning work in the absence of a Town Planner.

Chief Calise then discussed the Police Budget cuts;

- The largest cut was one of the vehicles that they were anticipating.
- Reduction of \$33,00 from Field Training pay.
- Removed some holiday pay to reflect more real numbers based on what employees have been taking, at their option.
- Approximately \$3,000 removed from vehicle repairs which reflects the vehicle purchase made last year, plus a replacement from a motor vehicle accident during the previous year.
- Travel for the Training Budget was decreased due to Covid restrictions, and the fuel bill was reduced as well.
- \$4,800 was reduced from the Uniform and Equipment Allowances.

Town Manager Palmer added that the vehicle mentioned was cut from the Capital Budget, and then she continued going through the reductions.

- Parking Magistrate was reduced by \$200 which was a database that we now get for free.
- The reduction in Fire/Rescue/EMS was partly taken from training, stand-by pay was removed, along with any other travel in the budget.
- The Beach EMT program was reduced.

DPW Director Cabral stated that the fuel budget was reduced in the Transfer Station, along with supplies.

Town Manager Palmer continued;

- The COA/Community and Senior Services reductions are directly related to programming. They had put money in the budget for the Tuesday meals, which are not being provided so that was eliminated.
- There was some capital money in the Library budget, which was taken out, as well as reducing training. Library Director Ford confirmed that they removed the summer clerk from the budget, the vacation buyback, and some professional development and travel.
- Combined Beach/Recreation Program reduction was largely the summer rec program
- Town Accountant Brazil stated reductions for Pamet Harbor were for supplies, fuel, and maintenance supplies.

#### **Discussion of Town Meeting Warrant Articles**

Chair Weinstein stated that the Select Board has gone through the warrant articles carefully, and in an attempt to shorten Annual Town Meeting they have removed certain articles that in the past have not been a subject of debate.

Town Manager Palmer began by explaining the consent agenda. She stated that there are several articles that are customary articles that the Select Board voted to include on a consent agenda. The process for the consent agenda is that it will be moved as a whole and voted on as a whole. If someone wishes to discuss a specific article, they may ask that it be removed from consent for discussion. Articles on the consent agenda are as follows:

- Authorization to Set the Salary of the Select Board
- Authorization to Set the Salary of the Moderator
- Council on Aging Revolving Fund
- Authorization to Expend Funds in Anticipation of Reimbursement for State Highway Assistance Aid
- Authorization to Lease Land for Cellular Tower
- Accept M.G.L. c. 142, §12 Plumbing and Gas Fitting Inspectors
- Accept M.G.L. c. 143, §3Z Part-Time Building Inspectors
- Accept M.G.L. c. 166, §32A Wiring Inspectors

Town Manager Palmer moved along, then discussing financial articles:

- FY2021 Omnibus Budget Appropriation
- General Override
- Transfer of Funds from Free Cash
  - Section 1-To Reduce or Stabilize the FY 2021 Tax Rate
  - Section 2-To the OPEB Trust Fund
  - Section 3-To the Capital Stabilization Fund
  - Section 4-To the Stabilization Fund
  - Section 5-To the Affordable Housing Trust
  - Section 6-To Employee Benefit Buy-Out Account
  - Section 7-To the Affordable Housing Trust

Town Manager Palmer stated that those were the financial articles, and the one listed next was an article believed to be important to the operation of town business:

- Amend Personnel Bylaw, Article VIII, Section 8.1

Next were Capital Improvement articles:

- Capital Exclusion Request for Heavy Duty Tractor Truck Replacement

Chair Weinstein asked DPW Director Cabral to explain why it would make sense to replace this particular vehicle at this point. DPW Cabral proceeded to explain the reason.

- Borrowing Authorization for Ambulance

Town Manager Palmer explained the request for acquiring a Fire Department Ambulance.

- Community Preservation Act
  - Section 1-Administrative Support
  - Section 2-Contribution to the Affordable Housing Trust Fund
  - Section 3-Lower Cape Housing Institute

- Section 4-Restoration of Highland House Museum Phase 5
- Section 5-Historic Properties Inventory
- Section 6-Preservation and Restoration of Building T-5
- Section 7-Acquisition of 42 Corn Hill Road
- Section 8-Additional Funding for Puma Park Enhancement
- Amend General Bylaws Chapter 2, Section 2-1-1, Renting or Leasing Buildings
- Reduction of Truro's Net Greenhouse Gas Emissions to Zero by 2050

Town Manager Palmer continued, stating that there were several petitioned articles which the Select Board will vote that they be included on the next regular or special town meeting, whichever comes first.

Caller Anne Greenbaum asked if the vote on town meeting floor to postpone petitioned articles would be done individually, or simply as a group? Town Moderator Kraft could not answer the question at this time. She needs to talk to Town Counsel to see if it can be done as a group, or each one has to be done separately.

Select Board Member Jan Worthington joined the meeting at 5:12pm.

Chair Panessiti stated the Budget Hearing was closed and the Finance Committee needed to vote on four financial articles that were not present when they voted in March.

**Member Meads moved to recommend Article 9: FY2021 Omnibus Budget Appropriation as presented in the warrant.**

**Member Wood seconded.**

**Chair Panessiti-Aye**

**Member Meads-Aye**

**Member Richter-Aye**

**Member Wood-Aye**

**So voted; 4-0-0, motion carries.**

**Member Richter moved to recommend Article 11: Transfer of Funds from Free Cash-Section 5: To the Affordable Housing Trust as presented in the warrant.**

**Member Meads seconded.**

**Chair Panessiti-Aye**

**Member Meads-Aye**

**Member Richter-Aye**

**Member Wood-Aye**

**So voted; 4-0-0, motion carries.**

**Member Meads moved to recommend Article 11: Transfer of Funds from Free Cash-Section 6: To Employee Benefit Buy-Out Account as presented in the warrant.**

**Member Richter seconded.**

**Chair Panessiti-Aye**

**Member Reads-Aye**

**Member Richter-Aye**

**Member Wood-Aye**

**So voted; 4-0-0, motion carries.**

**Member Meads moved to recommend Article 11: Transfer of Funds from Free Cash-Section 7: To the Affordable Housing Trust as presented in the warrant.**

**Member Wood seconded.**

**Chair Panessiti-Aye**

**Member Reads-Aye**

**Member Richter-Aye**

**Member Wood-Aye**

**So voted; 4-0-0, motion carries.**

Caller Eric Parker stated he appreciated all the work being done by the Finance Committee and the Select Board. His concern is that there are a lot of things being asked for and he's curious how much of an impact will it be to the tax burden if everything is approved. He also asked why the ballot was being revisited if it was voted on in June. In addition, he's concerned about discussing some contentious items at Town Meeting. We're trying to cut the meeting short due to Covid but discussing these items will cause the meeting to go longer. He's also worried about the smaller quorum at Town Meeting and the possibility of something getting voted through without all the citizens that would like to participate.

Chair Weinstein thought he'd start with the re-appearance of a couple of items that failed the last time. People have the full information regarding the request for adding four paramedics and the DPW requesting the new vehicle. The fact that they re-appeared gives people the opportunity at the Town Meeting to decide whether or not they go forward to re-appear on a ballot. As for the quorum and the contentiousness, Chair Weinstein stated that they have no way of anticipating what people may find worthy of debate. He also reminded the caller that the Select Board has not yet voted to set the quorum. Their next meeting, September eighth, is when they will discuss what that number will be. He also added that the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, through the Governor's Office, has allowed all communities that operate (as Truro does) what's called an Open Town Meeting to reduce the quorum and, that there is no avenue for remote participation.

Member Reed stated that two people on this meeting had made good points during their last discussion regarding town meeting and the Covid-19 pandemic. Those being Town Accountant Brazil who stated that no matter what number the quorum is set at, the meeting will not start until every member of the town is seated and present. There is an arrival time of 11:00am and a meeting start time of noon. And the other person being Finance Committee Chair Panessiti, who made the point that if we do not meet the set quorum, Town Meeting would have to be rescheduled. He also pointed out that we were heading into colder weather, which would cause the meeting to be held inside, which could potentially be more hazardous during the Covid-19 pandemic.

Town Manager Palmer noted that the Select Board cannot take petitioned articles off of the warrant. If they were to ask the petitioners to take the articles off, they would have to get the signature of every person that signed it, to approve taking them off.

Caller Deborah Best Parker mentioned that the Planning Board articles were removed to decrease time, and she wondered if they could also take Article 15, with 8 sections, and postpone that to another meeting. She believes that removing that article will help in reducing the time spent in a crowd at Town Meeting. Town Manager Palmer stated that those articles were brought forth by a committee, so that committee (the Community Preservation Committee) would have to vote to hold them. She believes the Select Board could talk to the CPC and ask them if they would do that on the Town Meeting floor, but since they're closing the warrant on Tuesday, she doesn't believe there's time for CPC to have a meeting and vote. She added that she certainly thinks that it could be considered on Town Meeting floor.

**Member Meads made a motion to adjourn the Finance Committee meeting at 5:35pm.**

**Member Richter seconded.**

**So voted; 4-0-0, motion carries.**

**Member Reed made a motion to adjourn the Select Board meeting at 5:35pm**

**Member Areson seconded.**

**So voted; 5-0-0, motion carries.**

Respectfully Submitted,

*Noelle L. Scoullar*

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Town Manager Rae Ann Palmer

Under the Authority of the Truro Select Board

