

Holland Finance Board

27 Sturbridge Road, Holland, MA 01521

Holland Town Hall – Community Room

Meeting Minutes for Wednesday, November 3, 2021

Virtual and Physical Meeting of the Board and Guests

Meeting Attendance –

In person: Members – Andy Harhay, Ernie Fancy and John Scott.

In Person: Guests – Selectman Clelland Johnson and Town Administrator Stacy Stout.

Open Meeting –

The meeting was called to order at 6:30 pm by the Chair.

Approval of Minutes –

Members had reviewed the minutes of 10/6/21. Ernie made the motion to approve the minutes and John seconded; Ernie, John and Andy voted yes.

Environmental Hazard Mitigation Project –

Andy had drafted and distributed a letter to members relative to the Finance Board supporting that Holland be considered for a Municipal Vulnerability Planning Grant. Ernie made the motion to approve the letter and providing it to Emergency Management Director/Police Chief Haughey. John seconded the motion and all voted yes.

Comments on Pioppi Construction Invoices –

Brian Johnson and Jim Pioppi arrived at Town Hall on 10/6/21 after the meeting had been closed. Ernie and Stacy had offered to remain to discuss concerns about the Pioppi invoice for work on Butterworth Road. It was noted that Pioppi had been at the site for many days more than shown on the invoice and the concern whether the work might have been incorrectly charged to the wrong job. Jim indicated that the extra days at Butterworth were done gratis, as he appreciated his new contract with the Town. In response to a question about the bidding process, Stacy indicated that after the Select Board received the sealed bids and provided them to the Highway Surveyor, the Surveyor was responsible for determining the winning bid and administering the

contract. Neither the Select Board or the Town Administrator is involved in the oversight of contracts developed by elected Town officials.

Elementary School Liaison –

Tantasqua/Union 61 Superintendent Deb Boyd had requested that each town appoint a Select Board and Finance Committee liaison to attend budget development meetings of their elementary school and Tantasqua. Ernie offered to be the liaison for Holland Elementary and would try to attend the summary session at Tantasqua. John also volunteered to attend the school committee working sessions... as a new member and former teacher, he would like to learn the ropes as to how the school budget gets developed.

Budget Request Letter for FY23 –

Andy had updated the letter used in last year's budget development process to get budget requests from Town departments, boards, committees and commissions. He suggested advancing all schedule dates by approximately two weeks. The proposed letter would be sent out on December 15, 2021, with requests due to the Finance Board by January 18, 2021. The dates for meeting with the responsible officials were advanced by two weeks compared to last year's schedule. Ernie made a motion to accept the proposed schedule change and John seconded; all members voted yes.

Free Cash –

- There was discussion about the \$443,956 of free cash certified for FY21. The interest was in determining the key factors in how this rather high amount was generated. The accountant will be asked to provide projected and actual revenue data, in order to determine if that was the key contributor to free cash. Clelland noted that the particularly high amount of free cash was generated when the advice to all towns was to expect lower revenues, so most, including Holland, reduced the projected revenue. The average free cash from FY12 to FY16 was \$229,702; from FY17 to FY21 the average amount was \$317,599.
- Follow up was requested on the Real Estate Tax Receivable line shown as a 'subtraction' on the Free Cash Certification form... the question is whether the \$201,096 is the amount of new unpaid taxes just in the fiscal year or a summation over the years. Clelland suggested that the question be directed to the tax collector.
- Ernie noted that the current deficit in the police detail account is currently ~ \$22K. Last year the end-of-year deficit was \$6.7K and had to be paid from free cash. The account is meant to be totally funded by the companies requesting a police detail and not by the tax payer. It was previously understood that Chief Haughey would only authorize payment to an officer working a detail when the contractor requesting the service paid the town for the coverage.

Ideas on Use of American Rescue Plan Funds –

Discussed the material distributed to all Holland municipal organizations about ARPA criteria to be applied to help municipalities deal with unexpected expenses or losses related to the pandemic. The members were not able to identify any items that would allow the FinBd to apply for funds. It was suggested that the Elementary School would likely be eligible for ARPA funds.

Comments re Select Board Activities –

The Holland sign at Town Hall was determined to be beyond repair and removed. Quotes have been requested for a replacement. A decision on whether to purchase a replacement will be based on cost.

Roundtable Comments -

- Andy indicated that the library's eligibility for state aid has been restored. The Director had forgot to add the \$4K approved in their budget for a handicap door... when the state aid form was amended to add the \$4K, the aid formula was met.
- Ernie noted that the Finance Board website needs to be updated in terms of meeting time and the normal schedule... Andy will provide updated detail to Becky.
- Stacy noted that she and Becky had put the FinBd's need for three new members and the 'job description' on the website.

Adjournment –

Ernie made the motion to adjourn and John seconded. John, Ernie and Andy each voted yes. The Chair adjourned the meeting at 7:19 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Andrew Harhay