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By Jim Alexander - Asst. Town Clerk at 2:21 pm, Sep 12, 2023

Maynard Finance Committee Meeting

February 27th, 2023

Location: Zoom, <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89820275897?pwd=OEpmWhSekpYSGZBQlFWMVpyWC8zUT09>

Members Present:

Alannah Gustavson
Ken Estabrook
Katie Moore
Cavan Stone

Member Absent:

Peter Campbell
Khadijah Brown

Other Attendees:

Lauri Plourde, Chief Noble, Justin DeMarco, Linda Holt, Natasha Rivera, Chris Arsenault

1. Alannah called the meeting to order at 7:05 p.m. She took roll call and verified all devices were working properly.
2. First to present was Chief Noble with the FY24 PD Budget. Chief started with an overview of highlights, that they are only asking for one cruiser, that technology needed an overhaul (but they did that within the budget), and that the department took over the dispatch budget. The challenges he presented was employees running on overtime, as well as recruiting and retention. Overtime budget – do they shift this to a fulltime employee? The budget has been flat, and they have made it work. Burnout has been a current issue, as well as the added cost that we pay for academy for recruits. Alannah asked if we raised salaries, if that would help the budget overall – yes, retention. Ken also wanted to talk more about shifting the overtime budget to a fulltime employee. Cavan asked about benefits and health insurance, if that helps attract people. Chief noted this was likely not valid for the PD, and that we do not rank much higher than other towns. People leave for salaries, not benefits. We had to talk about Ottis (25) and discussed that he is mostly covered by donations. Last, Justin commented on the hybrid cruisers – the town mechanic under the DPW notes they have higher repair maintenance costs and less DPW downtime for other jobs, when the cruisers are not replaced timely.
3. Next on the agenda, the DPW budget with Justin DeMarco. He informed us that public employee cost and benefits are lower than the private industry, and this used to not be the case. The pool of employment applications is low. Justin then talked about isolated services making the budget difficult, and that continued underfunding of the DPW will not sustain. We cannot keep adjusting “on the fly”. Our contractual costs have gone up, not new hires. One of his concerns was lack of continued funding for roads/sidewalks. Ch. 90 is not enough, and we are not keeping up. Making a line-item for this is necessary. Ken asked about funding for infrastructure, and by refusing to pay now we are only deferring these bills. What is a magic # to keep up with roads? PCI index is 65-75, and we are at 50. What we need is 1.5 M JUST for roads to meet an increase in cost.

High-level points – new growth is held back by producing clean drinkable water, and general support for new growth. This prompted a discussion on Old Marlboro. Can we join towns that struggle as well? Water quality varies re: standards and we would open up ourselves to water quality issues. Cavan asked about cost saving opportunities. We need to become more in-house reliant rather than consulting needed. Next regarding solid waste, Justin noted that it is hard for Maynard to front capital to save over time potentially.

Reserve Fund Transfer was asked for next. Regarding the petroleum line item for all town equipment, Justin felt that 50K should get us through the next budget cycle. Building a community can increase costs (Maynard Crossing as an example), and most increase is due to call volume. Alannah entertained a motion to approve – Cavan 1st, Katie seconded. 5-0. Justin signed off at 9:17 PM.

4. Chris Arsenault from the Planning Board presented to us next – he discussed Articles C,D,E, and F.

C: Body Art Establishments – they would like to take off restrictions to body art, to treat the service like a nail or hair salon. 3.1.2 - to allow businesses without a BB vote (other than industrial).

D: Removing section 7.2 regarding body art.

E: To give Maynard Board of Health the control, rather than the zoning board.

F: Mixed use businesses – Mixed use and multi-family buildings will have a reduced area requirement in their development agreement. Through an overlay permit, a bonus unit can be allowed. A certain % of them would have to be affordable units. This change would allow more AU as a bonus and increase housing. This change would not be significant in how much housing would be added, but our goal is to keep improving.

G: To come - Chris talked about what we will see from it – it will regulate when a home owner can use their property as a business, and that the current “any customary home occupation” is too broad.

Chris signed off at 10:17 PM.

5. Routine agenda. Ken motioned to approve the minutes; Cavan seconded. 5-0.
6. Next meetings will be 3/13, 3/27, and 4/10.
7. We adjourned at 10:23. Ken 1st, Cavan seconded. 5-0.

Reserve Fund Allocation for FY23: \$250,000

Transfers: \$50,000

Reserve Fund Balance: \$200,000