

Finance Committee

Meeting Minutes

October 8, 2019

7:30 PM

Town Hall – Room 204

Present: Christi Andersen, Roland Bourdon, Mike Majors, Steve Noone, Christine Russell, Al Vlainac (Associate), Dave Wellinghoff

Absent: Jason Cole, Tom Farley, Sahana Purohit

1. Opening

Chair Roland Bourdon opened the meeting at 7:30 PM

This meeting was recorded by Acton TV.

2. Public Participation

Terra Friedrichs spoke regarding the West Acton Sewer Project. She has questions on the interest rate, cost of expansion, the capacity in light of 40B developments, the build-out in West Acton, and how existing user's rates will be affected by a plant upgrade. She also questioned whether the local policy is for commercial growth or residential growth.

3. West Acton Sewer Update

Town Engineer Paul Campbell gave a brief overview of the West Acton Sewer Project with the help of Jack Troidl from project consultants Woodard & Curran and Board of Selectmen member David Martin.

- Sewer Project really started in Acton back in 1945, is a goal of Board of Selectmen, and Acton 2020
- Working off of a Comprehensive Water Resource Management Plan
- Plant upgrades are being studied separately along with a rate study. Won't affect betterment amounts but may affect usage fees.
- Mixed feedback so far from public forums.

Cost Estimates

- Using existing sewer betterment assessment model, Town General Bylaw Chapter D
- Total estimated cost is \$15,000,000. It is made up of:
 - \$3,500,000 of general benefits such as paving Mass Ave, connecting WA Library & Fire Dept to sewer, which will be paid by all taxpayers
 - \$11,500,000 remaining will be paid back by the 330 sewer betterment units in the new sewer area. Tried to get betterment amount in line with the cost of having a septic tank replaced.
 - 10% construction contingency ~\$1,000,000
- Plan on borrowing most of the cost from the State Revolving Fund.

- This fund offers low rates. Used 3% in their estimates
- Some costs are ineligible for borrowing, such as design cost. Estimated just under \$1,000,000.
- Majority of cost will be paid back as betterments are paid back into the Sewer Enterprise Fund. Betterments not sent out until project is complete and have 30 year payback option.
- Costs for each property owner:
 - Betterment cost based on property size/specs.
 - Connection cost. Property owner must hire own contractor
 - Cost to dispose of existing septic system
 - Recurring user fees (billed monthly at this time). Sewer usage rate subject to change.

Timeline

- Finalize project area to better determine cost estimates
- Mail out estimated betterment letters to property owners
- Get approval at Special Town Meeting
- Phase 1 Construction-
 - Construction of the sewer force main to serve the school (roughly 1 mile) by Summer 2020
 - Submitting a separate application for funding for this phase
 - 4% of budget
 - Includes the school building a small pump station
- Phase 2 – remainder of sewer system
- Both Phases being designed so that they can exist without each other

4. ALG Spreadsheet & Upcoming Budget Increases

Christi Andersen and Roland Bourdon went over the ALG Spreadsheet

- Shows a 7% tax increase.
- The numbers are preliminary. Put in there last year for financial planning.
- Town Manager John Mangiaratti and School Superintendent Peter light will be presenting finalized numbers the first week in December.

5. Massachusetts Municipal Association

Michael Majors talked to the Committee about an upcoming training opportunity.

- Association of Town Finance Committees 10/26/19 at Bridgewater State
- Selectman Jon Benson also spoke encouraging FinCom Members to attend.

6. Finance Committee Business

A. Committee Liaison Reports

Committee Members who are liaisons to Committees that met during the interim between last FinCom meeting and this meeting gave reports as to what occurred at those meetings.

Roland asked for a Finance Committee volunteer to attend the Housing Production Plan meeting which will be held November 14th at 5:00 pm. Christine volunteered.

B. Approval of meeting minutes

The September 10th, 2019 meeting minutes were reviewed and approved as amended.

7. Adjournment

At 9:53 p.m., it was moved and seconded to adjourn the meeting.

Documents and Exhibits Used During this Meeting

West Acton Continuation Slideshow

ALG Spreadsheet

September 10th, 2019 meeting minutes

Respectfully submitted,

Finance Committee