

State of Rhode Island

County of Washington

In Hopkinton on the fifth day of March 2020 A.D. a budget workshop was held in the Town Hall Meeting Room, 1 Town House Road, Hopkinton, RI 02833 to discuss the proposed FY 20/21 budget.

PRESENT: Frank Landolfi, Scott Bill Hirst, Barbara Capalbo, Sylvia Thompson, Sharon Davis; Town Manager William McGarry; Town Clerk Lisa J. Cook-Martin. Also present: Finance Director Brian Rosso.

GRANTS & CONTRIBUTIONS:

Wood River Health Services

Alison Croke, President and CEO of Wood River Health Services was present. She noted that in the prior year, Wood River Health Services had received a contribution from the town of \$10,000 and they were seeking to be level funded. She advised that in the last calendar year they had treated 1,755 Hopkinton residents and they had opened a new facility in Westerly in July which as of this date did not have a dental clinic; however, they hoped to incorporate a dental clinic in that facility within three to five years. There were no changes made to this budget and it was agreed to be level funded.

Ashaway Free Library

Langworthy Public Library

Nomi Hague, the new Director of the Langworthy Public Library and Heather Field of Ashaway Free Library were present. Ms. Hague indicated that they were asking for an increase this year. Council President Landolfi noted that the town budget had been rejected last year so the amount they received was what they had been granted during the previous year; and, if the budget was rejected again this year, they would be receiving that same amount. Councilor Capalbo wished to increase their budget request from \$66,000 to \$68,000, which is what the Council wished to do last year. Councilor Hirst advised that he would be opposed to that and explained that they need to defeat the Chariho School budget because the school and the libraries have to follow maintenance of effort law. Councilor Davis agreed to an increase in the library funding. Councilor Thompson advised that she would support an increase. Council President Landolfi felt that libraries weren't used as much as they had been in the past and felt that they should be level funded. The consensus was to increase their budgets to \$68,000.

Hope Valley Ambulance

Richard Kenney of Hope Valley Ambulance was present and introduced Alissa (last name not given) who will be replacing him. Councilor Thompson noted that

the Hope Valley Ambulance Corp had a \$55,000 deficit. Hope Valley Ambulance was requesting \$52,000 which was agreed to by the Council.

Ashaway Ambulance

Eric Perrin of the Ashaway Ambulance was present. Councilor Thompson asked Mr. Perrin about the money that the Ambulance Corp received from the fire district for the past two years and if every Ashaway Fire District resident was now a member of Ashaway Ambulance and he indicated yes. Mr. Perrin noted that they had to hire more employees so their payroll has increased; they also had to purchase two heated IV bags due to a State mandate and hospitals aren't refilling their medications anymore so they are needing to purchase them as well. They advised that they do not receive any funding from the State. Council President Landolfi stated that they were requesting \$54,000; however, the Council agreed to a budget of \$52,000.

TOWN COUNCIL, continued

Councilor Davis indicated that she had done some research on the Town Council's stipend and found that in 2004 it was \$11,917 and in 2005 it went up by \$358; thereafter in 2012 it decreased by \$100. She suggested there has not been an increase for fifteen years. Councilor Thompson didn't agree with an increase of the stipend and noted that Richmond's Town Council received even less than Hopkinton; while Councilor Davis noted that Charlestown received more. Councilor Capalbo compared the current stipend to that of various other towns, some of which were more and some of which were less. Council President Landolfi noted that everyone in town government receives raises and he agreed that the Town Council should also receive a raise. Councilor Thompson felt that the stipend was too high ten years and fifteen years ago and she did not want an increase. Councilor Hirst felt that more people might run for the Council if the stipend was higher, but suggested that it might not be a good time. Council President Landolfi believed that because the Land Trust was receiving \$20,000 a year from solar projects, the Council should only be giving them \$10,000 rather than the \$15,000 they had requested. If the Council agreed to reduce that amount to \$10,000 then he would agree to an increase in the Council's stipend of \$5,000. Councilor Thompson did not wish an increase and Councilor Hirst indicated that at this time he did not wish an increase; however, noted that he was swayable. It was agreed to leave it as is for now but they would look at it again. An audience member suggested the Council members might receive a tax exemption for a certain fixed amount, but it was indicated that an ordinance would have to be passed in order to do that.

Community Education 2000 Foundation

Mr. Philips and Mr. Reddish were present. Mr. Philips noted that they were in their 21st year and they typically provide thirty to thirty-five scholarships a year. They are an all-volunteer organization and were looking for \$500. Councilor Capalbo felt that this should be funded by private donations and not by a

municipal government subsidy, which was agreed to by Councilor Hirst. This budget was not funded.

Wildlife Rehabilitation Association of RI

Kim Francine of the Wildlife Rehabilitator Center of Rhode Island was present. She noted that the wildlife center is a nonprofit organization located in Saunderstown and they are the only clinic in the state permitted by DEM to provide veterinary and rehabilitative care to native wildlife. This budget was not funded.

Neighbors Helping Neighbors RI

Susan Jacques, the President of the Board was present. Jason Tefft was present. Mr. Tefft asked if the Council would be granting any money to the Neighbors Helping Neighbors organization and they answered no. Mr. Tefft advised that he would like to donate \$1,000 to this organization as long as they agreed to use that money to help Hopkinton residents.

GENERAL GOVERNMENT, continued

Council President Landolfi asked Mr. Rosso if there had been any changes to healthcare and Mr. Rosso suggested there had been several changes made, both increases and decreases to health insurance, dental insurance and work related injury. Council President Landolfi asked if they were still at \$18.43 for the mill rate and Mr. Rosso suggested that after the increases that were made tonight, that may increase by a penny, but that would also depend on the outcome of the school budget.

The Council discussed postponing the meeting that had been scheduled for Monday, March 9, 2020 and rescheduling that until after the school committee meeting which was scheduled for Tuesday, March 10, 2020. Monday's budget meeting was rescheduled to March 12, 2020 at 6:30 p.m. at the Town Hall.

The Workshop was closed at 7:35 P.M.

Elizabeth J. Cook-Martin

Town Clerk

Marita D. Breault

Deputy Town Clerk