

State of Rhode Island

County of Washington

In Hopkinton on the fifteenth day of May 2019 A.D. the said meeting was called to order by Town Council President Frank Landolfi at 6:30 P.M. in the Town Hall Meeting Room, 1 Town House Road, Hopkinton, RI 02833

PRESENT: Frank Landolfi, Scott Bill Hirst, Sylvia Thompson, Sharon Davis; Town Manager William McGarry; Town Clerk Elizabeth Cook-Martin; Finance Director Brian Rosso.

Absent: Barbara Capalbo, Town Solicitor Kevin McAllister.

The meeting was called to order with a moment of silent meditation and a salute to the Flag.

**DISCUSSION RE: LAND TRUST STEWARDSHIP FUND RESTRICTIONS**

This matter was scheduled to discuss and consider Land Trust Stewardship Fund Restrictions. Land Trust Chair Marilyn Grant was present.

Council President Landolfi stated that the Council had approved \$15,000 from the Town Clerk's tax stamp revenue to go into the Land Trust's Stewardship account.

The Land Trust wished the restrictions on that account to be relaxed. Ms. Grant stated that they wished to be able to spend this money however it was needed.

Councilor Thompson verified that they wished to spend the money for anything other than the purchase of land and Ms. Grant confirmed this. She indicated that they would just like one unrestricted account to use as needed. She explained that

if a grant was received, any money taken out of various accounts for grant expenses needed to be reimbursed by the grant and placed back into those specific

accounts. Finance Director Rosso believed that having one unrestricted account would simplify accounting procedures for the auditors. Ms. Grant wished the

\$15,000 received from the Town Clerk's office to go directly into their Citizens Bank account which Mr. Rosso felt could be done and would simplify matters;

however, he stated that if this was done the funds would need to be unrestricted.

It was suggested that Mr. Rosso prepare the language needed to change the

Memorandum. Councilor Thompson questioned which account an appraisal

would be paid from and Mr. Rosso believed this to be an operating expense. Ms. Grant believed appraisals were more directly related to land purchases, as well as the legal fees and surveys. Mr. Rosso indicated that there was a little more wiggle room with an unrestricted account. Councilor Thompson wished to add a statement to the Memorandum that the operating expenses included legal fees, appraisal – or possibly just appraisals. Ms. Grant indicated that she wasn't worried about appraisals and legal fees; however, surveys could be very expensive. The Council agreed with the change requested by the Land Trust.

**DISCUSS/REVISE PROPOSED FY 2019/2020 BUDGET**

This matter was scheduled to discuss and possibly revise the proposed FY 2019/2020 Budget.

Council President Landolfi asked Finance Director Rosso if there were any changes to the budget and Mr. Rosso stated there were no changes. Councilor Thompson advised that Councilor Capalbo had previously questioned whether the Ashaway Ambulance should receive the same increase that Hope Valley Ambulance received. Hope Valley Ambulance is to receive \$52,000 and Ashaway Ambulance is to receive \$50,000. Councilor Thompson believed that traditionally the libraries and ambulance corps received the same amounts and she thought that the Council should continue this practice. Councilor Hirst stated that the Town Council has demanded accountability of Ashaway Ambulance Association and they have not totally complied. He did not agree with Ashaway Ambulance receiving an increase. He stated that last year the Ashaway Ambulance Association went to the voters of the Ashaway Fire District, which is a taxing authority, and received \$50,000 from them and now he and every other taxpayer who lives in the Ashaway area are supporting the Ashaway Ambulance twice. Council President Landolfi stated that at the prior meeting, in speaking with Mr. Perrin, he believed they were all in agreement that the ambulance association's reporting requirements should continue in place until after the fiscal year and thereafter they would decide if those requirements could be relaxed. He did not agree with increasing their grant when they had not satisfied their reporting requirements and he would not support an increase. Councilor Davis asked how much the extra cost was for Ashaway Ambulance to prepare the

required reports and Council President Landolfi stated \$600 a year or \$50 a month. Councilor Davis felt that \$50 a month was not a lot of money when they were receiving \$50,000 and indicated that she did not support an increase.

Joe Moreau stated that at the last meeting he had heard Mr. Perrin twice say that he was not aware that the Council had not been receiving the reports. He felt that when you are requesting a grant of \$50,000, a \$600 expense was not a big deal.

Mr. Moreau also felt that when Councilor Hirst questioned Mr. Perrin, Mr. Perrin took the attitude of why are you questioning me about that and he felt that it is the Council's job to question things. Council Hirst stated that taxpayers who are having a tough time paying their taxes should assure that they are receiving the tax exemptions that they may be entitled. Councilor Thompson asked what percentage of our budget the debt service was and Mr. Rosso indicated it was 1.6% of our \$26.4 Million Dollar budget and 6.5% of our municipal budget.

#### **DISCUSS/REVISE PROPOSED WARRANT ITEM**

This matter was scheduled to discuss and possibly revise the one proposed

Warrant Item:

To authorize the use of \$51,000.00 in the Off-Site Improvements Fees Restricted Account #02-014 to earmark it for the purpose of Town-wide tree removal of potentially dangerous trees.

Council President Landolfi stated that this account had been dormant for approximately eighteen years and they felt that this money could be used to offset the cost of taking down approximately 97 dead trees which were deemed an emergency. Councilor Davis felt this was a good idea and everyone agreed.

#### **ADOPT THE FY 2019/2020 BUDGET AND WARRANT ITEM FOR THE JUNE 11, 2019 BUDGET REFERENDUM BALLOT**

This matter was scheduled to discuss, consider and vote to adopt the FY 2019/2020 Budget and Warrant Item for the June 11, 2019 Budget Referendum Ballot.

Councilor Hirst asked what if this budget was not approved, would the budget revert back to the prior year's budget. Mr. Rosso answered yes; however, it would still increase based on the school budget, decrease in State aid, warrant items and CIP and use of the fund balance. Councilor Hirst felt that this was a good budget and he thanked everyone for their hard work. Councilor Davis

believed the Town of Hopkinton was very efficient in spending their money; there was no fat in the budget; and, she wished they had more influence on the school budget.

Kendrick Swain, a member of the 1904 School Building Committee, questioned the proposed \$51,000 warrant item for the trees and asked if this warrant item would amend or reimburse the \$72,000 that is listed in the CIP? Council President Landolfi responded that this was going to offset some of that and the difference would go back in the fund balance. Mr. Rosso stated that they will be using just under \$500,000 of the fund balance this year, so it would reduce it by that amount. The amount needed for the CIP would reduce by \$50,000 which is an expense and when you lower the expense it is going to lower the revenue that comes from the fund balance. This would not lower our tax rate. Mr. Swain advised that the 1904 School Building Committee is desperately trying to find the funding to demolish that building. Councilor Davis asked Mr. Swain if there was any possibility, rather than demolishing the 1904 building, to renovate it for office use. Mr. Swain indicated no, due to the close proximity to the school and the expense. Council President Landolfi indicated that to bring that building up to code would cost \$3.5 Million Dollars; some of the issues being ADA accessibility, asbestos and the need of a sprinkler system. There had been two studies performed and it was determined that it would not be feasible. Mr. Rosso advised that the town received a really good bond rating for the Land Trust bond of 2.7% with the true interest cost being 2.45%.

A MOTION WAS MADE BY COUNCILOR DAVIS AND SECONDED BY COUNCILOR THOMPSON TO ADOPT THE FY 2019/2020 BUDGET AND WARRANT ITEM FOR THE JUNE 11, 2019 BUDGET REFERENDUM BALLOT.

IN FAVOR: Landolfi, Hirst, Thompson, Davis

OPPOSED: None

SO VOTED

**ADJOURNMENT**

A MOTION WAS MADE BY COUNCILOR HIRST AND SECONDED BY  
COUNCILOR THOMPSON TO ADJOURN.

SO VOTED

Elizabeth J. Cook-Martin

Town Clerk

Marita D. Breault

Deputy Town Clerk