

State of Rhode Island

County of Washington

In Hopkinton on the first day of March 2022 A.D. a hybrid budget workshop (in person and remote) was held in the Town Hall Meeting Room, 1 Town House Road, Hopkinton, RI 02833 to discuss the proposed FY 22/23 budget.

PRESENT: Stephen Moffitt, Jr., Sharon Davis, Scott Bill Hirst, Robert Marvel and Michael Geary; Town Manager Brian Rosso; Deputy Town Clerk Marita Murray. Also present: Finance Director Elizabeth Monty.

Town Manager Brian Rosso noted that no one was present from the Land Trust so he felt they should continue a review of their budget to the March 9, 2022 workshop.

TAX ASSESSOR

Tax Assessor Tiana Zartman was present. Mr. Rosso noted that there were some changes to the healthcare line item due to a new employee enrolling in the healthcare plan. Councilor Davis questioned the line for land use penalty and questioned why this was needed. Ms. Zartman advised that this was for the farm, forest and open space penalty which was when someone in that program withdrew earlier than the required fifteen years. It was decided to leave this line item in. There were no further questions.

IT/GIS

IT Director Jeffrey Frenette was present. Councilor Hirst asked why there was such a big increase in the IT Director's salary from previous years. Mr. Rosso explained that in the past former Town Manager McGarry, in an attempt to get the former IT Director to stay, took him out of the union and offered him an independent contract with a pay increase. Mr. Rosso indicated that he has been working very closely with Mr. Frenette in an attempt to get every department the technology that they need, for Hopkinton is very outdated. Mr. Frenette will be getting the new Vision System up and running; working on the new town website; and, a new email platform which will be cloud-based. Mr. Frenette noted that they have just got the hybrid system up and running; he will be working on a new

email system; and thereafter, he will work on the website. Mr. Rosso noted that the police department calls Mr. Frenette almost daily asking for his assistance as well.

TAX COLLECTOR

Tax Collector Mary Lynn Caswell was present. Ms. Caswell indicated that she has been over-running her tax bill expense line item and therefore has increased that by \$500 which she believed would be sufficient. Mr. Rosso commented on including an insert with the tax bills noting that Ms. Caswell would work with Vision to make that happen. Ms. Caswell noted that she did received several quotes to include a notice in with the tax bills and Mr. Rosso advised that this line item could be increased when they knew what that additional cost will be or it could be taken out of the Council contingency fee.

MUNICIPAL COURT

Mary Lynn Caswell as present for the Municipal Court budget. It was noted that their revenue was down due to COVID which had stopped them from holding Municipal Court for over a year. Court has started again and she hopes that the revenue will improve.

CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PLAN

Mr. Rosso noted that the Vision upgrade was on the CIP list, as well as the cost of the full reval. Finance Director Elizabeth Monty indicated that due to COVID all reval meetings are by phone calls, with no physical meetings held at the town hall. She noted there were over 5,000 parcels to revalue and they look at the market for the three years prior. The representatives from Vision will try to see every property, though people may choose to not allow them in. Councilor Davis asked if someone installed a new roof, new furnace or a whole house generator, would this add value to their property and Ms. Monty indicated no, not by itself. If they were to get a complete upgrade of their home, inside and out, then that would matter as to value. She believed a new roof was just maintenance and a new generator is not taxable. Mr. Rosso noted that everyone gets very nervous about their revaluations and explained that your taxes do not go up when your house is revalued because they decrease the tax rate inversely to achieve the same tax levy. The only time that peoples' taxes go up is during the budget process. If your

property value increases by 20%, it does not mean you are going to have a 20% increase in your taxes. Councilor Marvel suggested this be explained on social media so residents will know this is coming and what to expect. Councilor Geary wished to know how many people are participating in the senior discount programs.

The Workshop was closed at 6:40 P.M.

Marita D. Murray

Deputy Town Clerk