

State of Rhode Island

County of Washington

In Hopkinton on the eighth day of March 2023 A.D. the said meeting was called to order by Town Council President Michael Geary at 7:00 P.M. in the Town Hall Meeting Room, 1 Town House Road, Hopkinton, RI 02833.

PRESENT: Michael Geary, Scott Bill Hirst, Sharon Davis, Robert Burns, Stephen Moffitt, Jr.;
Town Manager Brian Rosso and Town Clerk Marita Murray.

LAND TRUST

Sarah Windsor, Chair of the Land Trust was present. She provided a handout to the Council and stated that the Land Trust was looking to be level funded at \$14,000. Mrs. Windsor noted that the Land Trust has completed various stewardship projects and purchased another sixty acres of land. This year they plan on taking care of what they have. Councilor Hirst advised that the Land Trust was part of town government and not a private entity.

WOOD RIVER HEALTH SERVICES

Sarah Channing, Director of Development and Communications and Ed Smith, CFO were present. Ms. Channing indicated that Wood River Health Service is a federally qualified health center serving the community since 1976. They offer various medical services including dental care, behavioral health, chronic care, women's health, lab, pharmacy services and they recently opened an express care clinic. She advised that they have seen a 20.5% increase in patients in the previous year and of those patients 23% are residents from Hopkinton. They are expanding their footprint to meet these needs and therefore are increasing their request to the town to \$20,000. Ed Smith explained that there has been a 7% increase in inflation, and they are having a difficult time keeping their employee base. Councilors Burns, Moffit and Davis all expressed their desire to have this budget level funding.

ASHAWAY & LANGWORTHY LIBRARIES

Ambrosia Lavalley, Library Director of Langworthy Library was present and Heather Field, Library Director of Ashaway Library attended via zoom. Ms.

Lavellee explained that there has been an increase in operational costs of ten percent and due to this they are requesting a slight increase to \$71,000. Mrs. Fields explained that energy and insurance costs have increased, as well as minimum wage. She noted that if they were to receive an increase from the town, they would automatically get an increase in funds from the state. Councilor Hirst explained that there was maintenance of effort regarding libraries; Rhode Island law requires that the town give the same amount as the previous year or the libraries would be penalized. Councilors Hirst, Moffit, Davis and Burns expressed their support of the increase to \$71,000.

HOPE VALLEY AMBULANCE

Dan Sherman was present and requested to be level funded at \$62,000. Mr. Sherman noted that there are only four ambulance departments that are nonprofits, Ashaway, Richmond, Westerly and Charlestown, and they have been meeting each month to try to have legislation changed regarding insurance reimbursements.

ASHAWAY AMBULANCE

Eric Perrin was present and requested to be level funded at \$62,000. Mr. Perrin noted that Rhode Island was fiftieth in the country in insurance reimbursements. In Providence the average reimbursement rate is 25%; however, the four remaining nonprofit ambulance corps in this end of the state receive 14% insurance reimbursement. They held a Legislator’s Night at the Rhode Island Southern Firemen’s League and gave a presentation which resulted in a bill being formed, H 6119, requesting 90% of Medicaid. Councilor Geary requested a Resolution in Support of this Bill be placed on the next Council agenda.

GENERAL GOVERNMENT AND CIP/DEBT SERVICES

Councilor Moffit questioned the overall increase percentage and Mr. Rosso explained that Chariho’s proposed budget is an increase of 5.2% and our total increase is 4.1%; however, our revenue has increased. He stated that this did not mean that taxes will be going up by 4.1%; there would be a 1.36% tax increase. Councilor Davis stated that the tax rate is going to change from \$18.53 down to \$14.63.

WARRANT ITEMS

There was no discussion regarding warrant items.

The workshop was closed at 7:20 p.m.

Marita D. Murray

Town Clerk

Sydney Fernandes

Deputy Town Clerk