

SUNDERLAND SELECTBOARD and FINANCE COMMITTEE MINUTES

January 31, 2022

Attending: D. Pierce, C. Drake-Tremblay, G. Kravitz; Absent: T. Fydenkevez

Others present: Finance Committee: A. Kajstura, J. Elias, L. Forget; Rep. Natalie Blais; Sen. Jo Comerford, Elena Cohen, Corinne Coryat; J. Unkles, K. McFarland, W. Houle, D. Pruyne, K. Umstot-Library Director, "Kara" Library Trustees: B. Barry, L. Starr, J. Rosewarne

Meeting: Hybrid: in person and remote, recorded by FCAT

Meeting called to order at 6:34pm by Vice Chair D. Pierce.

MINUTES

Ms. Drake-Tremblay motion to accept MINUTES of JANUARY 24, 2022, Mr. Pierce second, Vote 2-0.

BUSINESS

- **SENATOR JO COMERFORD AND REPRESENTATIVE NATALIE BLAIS** appeared to give a legislative update. They were joined by their aides: Elena Cohen - Sen Comerford; Corinne Coryat - Rep. Blais. Public Health matters have continued to be a focus this year. Emergency Preparedness has disproportion burdens in the 24 cities and towns they represent. Discussed capital bond, ARPA II, and supplement budgets; what are priorities for Sunderland? Rep. Blais introduced a municipal buildings bill to extend the same support given to schools and libraries. Rep. Blais praised the town's efforts for the Riverside Park resource and extends support for ongoing related projects. Mr. Kravitz recognized their efforts for keeping focus on the Mosquito Control District program which resurrected as the season approaches. The Governor's bill would have allowed spraying everywhere forever without recognizing the impacts state-wide, especially in western mass. There is an upcoming listening session on this topic and they encourage remote attendance for those interested. Rep. Blais noted the prospect of Regional Transit Authorities increase in services via FRTA and PVRTA is still being pursued due to demographic importance for their communities, particularly Sunderland since the town borders both services. Town Clerk, Ms. Houle thanked Sen. Comerford and Rep Blais for their efforts related to same day election registration. Ms. Houle 's expressed appreciation of their efforts and was proud of the state's election laws to keep the integrity over the election process. Sen Comerford and Rep Blais also spoke of their involvement in increasing Chapter 90 funds as a great need for the Commonwealth and Western Mass. There being no further questions from the audience, Mr. Pierce thanked Sen. Comerford and Rep. Blais for their updates and appreciate their continued support.
- **LIBRARY BUDGET PRESENTATION:** Library Director Katherine Umstot reviewed the library's budget, noting level funding for expenses; due to the increase in their budget last year by the town, they are able to meet all requirements set by the state. The increase has reduced the fund-raising receipts. Slight increase in the building operating line to cover supplies and services and some minor repairs that are realized throughout the year. Supply increase is due to covid cleaning protocols performed during open hours which is in addition to the building cleaning done nightly, the day-time practice will continue beyond the pandemic. Asking for a 6% COLA for employees and Director, recognizing they will be subject to personnel committee recommendations and town approval. Rate of inflation for the state is 5% while the federal inflation rate is 6%. Library is also asking for four (4) additional hours for the Head of Adult Services position. Position has supervisory roles and the additional hours would support the Library Director in her absence. Trustee B. Barry noted there was no title change, duties would remain the same, the increase is in hours to allow for increased volume and attention to responsibilities. Ms. Forget asked if the position increase would require health insurance offering to the person in the position and at what cost to the town. Recommended they consider an additional Circulation Assistant for the same cost of the additional hours who could provide a year's worth of service for the same cost and would allow the Head of Adult Services position to spend more time on higher priority duties. Ms. Umstot noted that the addition of another circulation Assistant would not have the same expertise as the current Head of Adult Services employee. J. Elias asked what donation values were received. Ms. Umstot reported library donations to be about \$3,000-\$4,000 through various sources, however, donations from the Friends of the Library is unknown and at their discretion. Ms. Starr noted the increase

in hours would make the position more attractive to future recruitment. Ms. Umstot stated 70% of their collection is books while digital content is increasing and was an increasing demand.

- SNOW AND ICE DEFICIT SPENDING REQUEST for HIGHWAY DEPARTMENT. Mr. Kravitz requested consideration to Deficit Spend for Snow and Ice: WAGES Account: \$10,000 and EXPENSES AND MATERIALS: \$15,000. The expense account includes for some unforeseen repairs that occur. It was noted there was no longer a QUORUM OF THE FINANCE COMMITTEE. Mr. Pierce motion to approve Snow and Ice Deficit spending requests of \$10,000 for Wages and \$15,000 for Expenses and Materials, Ms. Drake-Tremblay second, vote 2-0.
- BOSTON POST CANE RECIPIENT. The Town Clerk notified the Selectboard's Office that the last recipient no longer lived in town. Ms. Helen Rodak would be the next eligible recipient. A brief overview of the history of the Boston Post Cane was given by Mr. Kravitz which includes awarding the next recipient with a pin replication of the Original Cane, a certificate, and flowers. This will be presented by available Board members at her home with her family on Thursday. Ms. Drake-Tremblay motion to present the Boston Post Cane to Mrs. Helen Rodak, Mr. Pierce second, vote 2-0.

OLD BUSINESS

- SELECTBOARD UPDATES:
 - Ms. Drake-Tremblay-Personnel Committee meets tomorrow to include review of COLA percentage recommendation for non-contractual town employees.
 - Mr. Pierce will be attending Capital Planning, Frontier Capital Planning and Union 38 Negotiations.
- TOWN ADMINISTRATOR UPDATES:
 - SUBMISSION OF FREE CASH is expected this week.
 - Welcome to NEW SENIOR CENTER DIRECTOR: Jennifer Remillard, who started today.
 - CAPITAL PLANNING COMMITTEE met with Superintendent and Facilities Director at SES. Priorities include a PA System and Boiler including looking into other energy efficiency options. ARPA requests of priority include additional defibrillators for the Town Office Building, Library and Highway Garage. Funds do not need to be spent in total right now but must be committed by December 31, 2024.
- Next Selectboard meeting is scheduled for Monday, February 7, 2022, 6:30PM.

ADJOURNMENT

Ms. Drake Tremblay motion to adjourn at 7:33PM, Mr. Pierce second, Vote 2-0.

Respectfully submitted,



Geoff Kravitz,
Town Administrator