



Board/Committee Name: Finance Board
Date: December 21, 2022
Time: 5:30 p.m.
Location: Town Hall – Conference Room
183 Main Street, Groveland, MA 01834

Present:

Board Members: Ruth Rivard, Melissa Baker, Alexander Woods, Bill O’Neil

Absent Members: Jim Scanlon, Sarah McGrath

Other Attendees: Rebecca Oldham, Town Administrator

Opening:

The regular meeting of the Finance Board was called to order at 5:41 p.m. on December 21, 2022 by Ruth.

Fiscal Year (‘FY’) 2024 Goals:

Ruth noted that the FY 2024 goals were distributed to the Finance Board at the November meeting by the Town Administrator and that the goals are primarily the same community goals that have been used in previous years budget seasons. Ruth noted that the Board of Selectmen had reviewed and adopted the goals and that an open discussion and adoption should be considered by the Finance Board. Melissa made the motion to approve the Statement of Goals as presented by the Town Administrator and approved by the Board of Selectmen, which was seconded by Alex and approved unanimously.

Financial Policies:

Rebecca noted that the updated Financial Policies were distributed to the Finance Board at the November meeting by the Town Administrator. Ruth noted that updating the Financial Policies was one of the findings from the Division of Local Services (‘DLS’) review for the town and asked Rebecca to provide some additional background. Rebecca noted that the auditors had provided Management Letter comments during the audit process over the last few years indicating the policies were lacking and that there should be a formal document to set accountability. Using a ‘best management practices’ template formulated by the DLS based on their services, which also includes requirements of Massachusetts General Law, Rebecca noted that herself, the Town Accountant, the Treasurer/Collector, the Assessor and the Water & Sewer Superintendent

reviewed the template against neighboring towns and made the necessary modifications as deemed necessary to formulate the policies for Groveland.

Ruth requested clarification regarding a policy pertaining to grants in which it stated all grants over \$5,000 must receive approval from the Board of Selectmen. Rebecca noted that the version Ruth was reading from was out of date and the version approved by the Board of Selectmen states that the grants over \$5,000 must be approved by the Town Administrator. Rebecca noted that in the drafting of the policies there were some inconsistencies in wording, such as the one noted, and that there were no material changes between the version Ruth was reading from and the one that was approved.

Melissa noted that the policies now lay out specific deadlines as to when things need to be completed and questioned how those deadlines would be monitored and how the process would be improved if the deadlines aren't being met. Rebecca said that having specific deadlines, which was used to create a deliverable calendar, is something that the departments were excited to have as it would help with accountability to meet both internal or regulatory obligations and would be reviewed in monthly meetings so that any items of concern and/or resource constraints can be addressed timely.

After there was no further discussion, Melissa made the motion to adopt the Financial Policies Manual, which was seconded by Ruth and approved unanimously.

DLS Review:

Ruth gave a brief background on how the review came about and noted that the DLS has completed its review and presented its findings as well as its determination of peer communities to the Board of Selectmen. Ruth noted that the findings within the report were not surprising and were as follows:

- 1) Conduct a Comprehensive Bylaw Review;
- 2) Develop and Adopt Financial Policies;
- 3) Transition the Board of Assessors from Elected to Appointed / Professional Development;
- 4) Implement a Goal Setting Process for the Board of Selectmen and Town Administrator;
- 5) Hold Quarterly Financial Presentations;
- 6) Reactivate and Consider Reorganizing the Capital Planning Committee; and
- 7) Consider Adding Clerical Support for the Town Administrator and Finance Department Heads

Ruth briefly touched on each of the findings noting areas where progress has been made (i.e. Financial Policies) as well as areas that are more challenging (i.e. Capital Planning Committee).

Ruth also noted that the DLS gave several financial related templates that can be used going forward.

Capital Budget Update:

Rebecca reported the previously provided plan is the plan that is being adopted and that the Board of Selectmen wanted to associate funding sources to the purchases, which was a new approach this year.

Rebecca noted that there were three funding scenarios. Each of the scenarios would 1) leave approximately \$130,000 in free cash, 2) not draw from the stabilization fund (approximately \$1.3 million); and 3) not draw from the capital stabilization fund (approximately \$340,000). Rebecca also noted that there was still approximately \$415,000 of American Rescue Plan Act ('ARPA') funds that have not yet been allocated by the Board of Selectmen. Under the different scenarios, the ARPA funds remaining would be \$124,000, \$169,000 or \$224,000. Other funding sources included unused bond premiums that are not accruing any interest (\$44,956) and proceeds from the sale of the old town hall building (\$84,000). Rebecca noted that the Board of Selectmen approved 'Scenario 2'.

Rebecca indicated that the purchases that would be made include the new cruiser for the police department, a Jaws of Life for the fire department, flooring and HVAC for the library, some projects at the Bagnall school (911 system, cafeteria door removal for lockdowns, and oil tank removal to reduce maintenance costs), and the Trackless tractor. Rebecca also noted that the free cash numbers also include the allocation for annual recurring expenses, such as Other Postemployment Benefits, stabilization, buy back, etc.

Ruth asked whether the plan will project going forward to which Rebecca noted that is the purpose of the new plan as it will become a living document that can be monitored and/or changed based on situations where it might make sense to bundle projects or take on additional debt based on the status of interest rates at a point in time.

Wage and Classification Study Update:

Rebecca noted that while the job descriptions had been completed, the wage analysis had not yet been completed. Based on the timing she has heard from a neighboring community performing a similar study, she anticipated the final report to be available by the end of the year or early next year. Ruth asked whether Rebecca thought the report would be useful for the current budget process and she indicated she did think it would be.

Rebecca also noted that the status of the study has been relayed to the employees and she explained that results of the study would not mean salaries would be increased immediately but rather it would be utilized by the town to amend how it approached salaries, such as step increases, when

comparing the positions to comparable positions in other communities. Bill asked whether the results could indicate a position was at the top of the range. Rebecca said it was possible, but there was no way to know without the study in hand.

FY24 Budget Planning/Schedule:

Ruth noted that the Town Clerk had a scheduling conflict with February 1st, the date she was asked to meet with the Finance Board. Rebecca noted that no other conflicts have been brought to her attention. Reviewing the schedule, Ruth noted that the Town Clerk could potentially switch with the Council on Aging, who was scheduled to meet with the Finance Board on January 18th. Ruth indicated that she would reach out to see if that change would work for both parties.

Rebecca noted that she sat down with each of the departments to discuss the budget and any items of concerns, new legislations that could impact the budget or anything else that she needed to be aware of, which appeared to be well received. Rebecca reported that she was expecting the budgets to be returned by the end of December at which time she would compile the budget books for distribution to the Finance Board.

Meeting Minutes:

Melissa noted that the minutes from the October 19, 2022 meeting had been distributed for review and that Ruth had provided two minor comments (an extra word and an incorrect verb tense). With no other comments, Bill made the motion to approve the amended minutes, which was seconded by Ruth. The motion was approved 3-0-1 with Alex abstaining.

Finance Board Member Recruitment:

Ruth noted that Theresa Dunn, a longtime member of the Finance Board, has resigned due to personal obligations. Ruth noted that Theresa provided many contributions to the Board, especially during the budget season, and thanked her for her service.

Ruth explained the importance of being able to meet quorum requirements, particularly during the budget season when employees are being asked to stay late and rescheduling a meeting becomes much more difficult due to the tight timeline. With one full position and two alternative positions open, Ruth asked residents to consider joining the Finance Board and that they could reach out to her or Rebecca for additional information.

Ruth Rivard ClearGov Employment:

Ruth noted that she wanted to be open and transparent and thus wanted to disclose that she had recently become an employee of ClearGov, which is the software used by the Town Administrator to compile the budget. She indicated that she had reached out the Massachusetts Ethics Commission (the 'Commission') to ensure there was no conflict of interest with her role on the Finance Board. The Commission agreed there was no conflict of interest because the decision to purchase and utilize the software did not fall under the Finance Board. Ruth noted that she was

comfortable with that decision, but because the Finance Board does vote on that cost of the software, she would abstain from voting on that aspect of the Technology budget.

Other Items Not Reasonably Anticipated at Time of Posting:

Melissa asked Rebecca if they could touch base regarding getting the minutes from previous meetings uploaded to the website as they are not currently on the website for residents to review.

Adjournment:

A motion to adjourn the meeting was made by Melissa, seconded by Bill and approved unanimously. Meeting was adjourned at 6:45 p.m. by Ruth.

Minutes prepared by: *Melissa Baker*

Minutes approved on: February 15, 2023

Meeting Materials:

1. Statement of Goals
2. Town of Groveland Financial Policies Manual
3. Division of Labor Services' Financial Management Assessment report
4. Draft October 19, 2022 Meeting Minutes