



**Canton Finance Committee
801 Washington Street
Canton, MA 02021**

Minutes Voted on: 2/10/21
Vote: 8-0-0

**Meeting Minutes
February 3, 2021**

Finance Committee Members Present: Rob Barker, David Clough, Dan Cole, Emilio Mauro, Tim McKenna, Reuki Schutt, Tom Theodore, Cindy Thomas and Wai Wong.

Finance Committee Members Absent: All members were present for the meeting.

Guests Present:

Andrea Capone, Library Director
Liz Francis, Parks & Recreation Director
Ellen Jones, Finance Committee Secretary
Arafat Knight, Veterans' Agent
Randy Scollins, Finance Director

Opening: Chair McKenna called the virtual meeting via Zoom to order at 7:00 p.m.

Approval of Agenda: Chair McKenna reviewed the agenda.

New Business

Conservation (#171) FY22 Budget Requests – Discussion with Regen Milani, Conservation Agent

The discussion with Regen Milani regarding the Conservation FY22 budget requested was postponed due to a personal conflict. Ms. Milani will be scheduled for a future meeting.

The Finance Committee discussed inviting the following attendees/committees to their upcoming meetings and adding the following topics:

- Blue Hills Regional High School.
- Community Preservation Committee.
- Capital Planning Committee.
- Planning Board, Town Planner.
- Revenue Forecasting Committee is scheduled to meet on February 9th. The revenue forecast would be added to the February 10th Finance Committee meeting.
- Have the School Committee participate on the budget target setting meeting on March 3.
- Select Board (SB) to discuss budgets and SB-sponsored articles.

The Finance Committee will request a copy of the Annual Town Meeting (ATM) from the Select Board. Mr. Scollins is predicting approximately 46-47 Articles on the warrant this year. Planning Board articles not acted upon at last year's Annual Town Meeting would be on this year's ATM and the discussions for the articles will be circulated to the members for reuse in the warrant.

Library (#610) FY22 Budget Requests – Discussion with Andrea Capone

Ms. Capone thanked the Finance Committee for the opportunity to present the Library's FY22 budget requests.

Ms. Capone gave an overview of how the Library has been affected by the COVID pandemic. The library had to radically shift their service model. They have been providing electronic resources since March 2020 to meet the needs of the public. They have issued approximately 600 library cards, many digitally. They have moved to virtual Daily Storytime. Physical circulation has been brought back through curbside pickup. In one month alone the Library provided 10,000 items. They have been lending Chromebooks with hot spots for those in need of searching for employment, for applying for unemployment as well as faxing services. Ms. Capone stated that during economic hardships people turn to the Library.

Ms. Capone is looking for a \$67,200 FY22 budget increase consisting of the following:

- An increase to the Building and Maintenance supplies budget of \$23,000 (from \$25,000 to \$48,00) is being requested for flooring and HVAC repairs. The Library has had a severe pest problem of termites in the

historical part of the building. The floors need to be removed and reinstalled. The amount of damage is unknown and will be determined once the flooring is removed. There is also work that needs to be done with the Library HVAC system. Regular maintenance and repair of the HVAC system is not considered a capital request item and, therefore, must be included in the operating budget.

- An increase to the Custodial Supplies budget of \$6,700 (from \$3,500 to \$10,200) is being requested as a result of the additional cleaning and sanitizing to be done for COVID. This will also be used for maintenance of ventilation and filters to keep the Library safe.
- Ms. Capone is seeking a combined total of \$36,700 budget increase to four line items to meet the mandatory state certification requirements. The state requires the Library to spend 15% of its budget on library materials. She is recommending incremental increases so that the Library can move towards the 15% spending requirement. Budget increases are being requested for Books and Periodicals (from \$92,300 to \$115,000), Non-print (from \$13,000 to \$18,000), Digital Information (from \$22,000 to \$25,000) and E-Books (from \$24,000 to \$30,000) for a combined total increase of \$36,700.

Because of COVID the Library has had a strain on their revenue sources. In good conscience the Library has not been collecting the usual late fees. Because of social distancing the Library has not been issuing passports. The issuance of passports requires mask-less face to face interaction. Last year the Library was short of meeting the 15% requirement. This shortage difference was made up using revenue from fees and passport sales. The Library has also seen a drop in revenue from room rentals from \$3,500 in 2018, \$2,600 in 2019 to only a few hundred dollars for 2020.

- An increase of \$800 from \$1,700 to \$2,500 is being requested for the Meetings budget to meet the increased needs of digital training for staff.

In response to a Finance Committee member's question about the Town applying to the State for a waiver of the 15% requirement, Ms. Capone stated that the Town would have to fund it in the next year's budget. Every year that it is delayed would make it more difficult for the Library to make up that amount in their budget, making it harder to dig out of that deficit.

Mr. Scollins stated that the \$2,083,000 the Town received for COVID-related expenses has been almost all expended. The Town will continue to have COVID-related expenses in the last half of FY21, but it is unknown if the next round of stimulus will provide additional funding relief to cities and towns. He reported good news that FEMA will be covering certain expenses at 100% instead of 75% and that there will be an additional webinar on February 4th. He remains hopeful that there will be additional funds, but nothing is definitive. Mr. Scollins stated that the Library's flooring request was originally in the capital request budget but a decision by himself and the Town Administrator was made to move the Library's request to the operating budget in order to maximize cash capital.

Veterans (#543) FY22 Budget Requests – Discussion with Arafat Knight, Veterans' Agent

Chair McKenna welcomed Mr. Knight to his first Canton Finance Committee meeting.

Mr. Knight is requesting the following increases to the Veterans' budget for FY22:

- Communication – There is no budget for the Veteran's Communication budget at the present time. Mr. Knight is requesting a budget of \$700 to cover cell phone as well as an office land line.
- Office Supplies – An increase of \$200 (from \$300 to \$500) is being requested so he can properly supply the office with notebooks, pens, informational boards etc.
- Grave Markers & Flags – An increase of \$1,750 (from \$250 to \$2,000) is requested to cover the cost of replacing large flags in every year. The cost of an individual large flag can range from \$100-\$200 and must be replaced every five years. Mr. Knight would also like to replace the small flags that are displayed on the individual veteran-named street signs. Street marker signs need to be replaced every six months due to wear and tear from weather conditions.
- Dues & Memberships – An increase of \$230 (from \$70 to \$300) is requested to cover annual membership to MVSO (Massachusetts Veterans Service Organization) and for VetraSpec. VetraSpec is a web-based, secure veterans claims management software system used for electronic claims submission.

Mr. Knight commented that as an outsider he is excited to be part of such a tight-knit community such as Canton. He recently organized a drive-by parade for one of Canton's 96-year old veteran. It only took him three phone calls for word to spread to have 40 vehicles for the drive-by parade.

Mr. Knight has been seeing first-hand the impact COVID has been having on the older population of Canton – seniors and veterans not being able to get to the Senior Center or to the American Legion. Mr. Knight will soon be

advertising to increase membership in Canton's Honor Guard. The cost of service uniforms has been very expensive.

Mr. McKenna thanked Mr. Knight for his service and for all his work with the veterans of Canton.

Parks & Recreation (#630), Paul Revere Heritage Site (#650), Youth Services (#542) and Rink Enterprise (#700) FY22 Budget Requests – Discussion with Liz Francis, Parks & Recreation Director

Ms. Francis provided the following comments regarding her FY22 budget requests:

- A total budget increase of \$11,600 for the Parks & Recreation budget is being requested to cover minimum wage increases
- The department was unable to open the pool for 2020. The lifeguard salaries have been unspent for FY21. Unless things change with regard to COVID restrictions, the Parks and Recreation department will be running swim programs and lessons for smaller group sizes for the summer of 2021.
- A \$1,200 stipend has been requested in the budget to cover contractual obligations for phone stipends for union employees.
- Electricity and Heating Fuel/Gas expenses have been increasing. Ms. Francis is requesting a 3% increase for each of these budget line items.
- The Parks & Recreation's web-based platform software fees have increased. A small increase of \$200 is being requested to this budget line item.
- The pool is scheduled to be open in June. It is built into the contract for the vendor to come back in the spring for the start up of the pool. At the present time Ms. Francis does not know what the fixed costs will be to keep the pool pumps going for the season.

In response to a Finance Committee member's question if the Rink was being impacted by COVID, Ms. Francis offered the following comments:

- The Rink opened later in the season. The contractor had a few items to work out which delayed opening.
- Ice time was not sold until November in contrast to the usual start month of September.
- The department was also restricted on selling ice time into the evening due to night curfews.
- The Director also had to take into consideration allowing enough time in between games for teams entering and exiting the rink for proper social distancing.
- One of the biggest problems during COVID is crowd control at the rink.

A Finance Committee member inquired if the projected revenue of \$390,620 for the Rink Enterprise Fund for FY22 was a top line number or on the conservative side. Mr. Scollins stated that on average the rink has had revenue around \$450,000. Ideally it is better if the Rink Enterprise breaks even. When filing the tax recap budgeted excess enterprise revenue is required to be returned to the General Fund. That is why enterprise revenue budgets are set to meet appropriations.

If there is a deficit at fiscal year end there are a few sources for covering the deficit: a transfer can be made at Annual Town Meeting, a transfer can be requested from the Finance Committee's Reserve Fund or a transfer can be made from other general fund budgets that end the fiscal year with a surplus. Annual Town Meeting may also vote to make a transfer for some of the \$900,000 of unappropriated state aid. Mr. Scollins stated that he is not concerned about the Rink revenue.

Parks Department #650 – Paul Revere Heritage Site (PHRS) – Ms. Francis provided the following comments regarding the care and maintenance of the Paul Revere Heritage Site:

- A budget of \$80,000 is being requested for FY22.
- The Director has not seen a full year of electricity costs at the site but she is comfortable with the \$4,000 budget request for FY22.
- A budget of \$65,200 is being requested for Repair/Maintenance of Playground/Park. The largest component of this request is for \$35,000 for a landscaping contract for seven months. Pump maintenance (\$3,000) is for the maintenance of pumps that draw water from the pond for the irrigation system. There could be some repair of irrigation equipment due to damage over the winter.
- There is no snow removal in the budget request for FY22 as it remains uncertain if the sidewalks will be cleared during the winter months.
- A budget of \$9,750 is being requested for herbicide for weed removal in the diversion channel.
- The bridge opening date is unknown at this time.
- \$5,000 is being requested for geese removal. Ms. Francis stated they have used wildlife services through the University of Amherst, a program through the USDA. Different methods such as capturing the geese and disturbing the nests have been used.

Rink Enterprise (#700) – FY22 Budget Request – Ms. Francis stated that because the rink has only been open for a short period of time there is only a limited sample of information available with regard to expenses.

- Energy costs have been higher than expected. \$80,000 is being requested for FY22 as compared to actual expenses of \$53,273 in 2015. The Zamboni is 100% electric. Less kWhs are being used, but the per kWh rate has increased significantly since 2015.
- A request of \$34,000 is being made for an additional full-time maintenance staff for 28 weeks. Two full-time Recreation employees are transferred to the Rink while it is in operation. Ms. Francis stated that a full-time employee is needed at the rink at all times.
- A \$6,000 increase from \$5,000 to \$11,000 to the Repairs/Maintenance of Machinery is being requested. A service contract is required under the lease with the Commonwealth.
- A new budget line for an \$8,000 stipend is being requested. This will be in addition to the regular salary of one of the current employees. This stipend is being requested because it requires a special skill set for making the ice, maintaining equipment, being available for late-night calls and weekend calls for emergencies that come up at the rink. The expectation is that this employee will be available at all times.

In response to a Committee member's question about lost revenue, Ms. Francis stated that at the current time she cannot fill all of the requests for ice time and that there is definitely a market for it. She has had to turn away customers.

Another member inquired as to why he could not find any information available on the Recreation website with regard to open skate. Ms. Francis stated that 95% of the ice time is being used for leagues such as the Canton High School team, Canton Youth Hockey and Norwood High School hockey. She further stated that COVID made public/open skate a challenge and that they are hoping to be open for February vacation and are working on incorporating it into the schedule. She also stated that Town Counsel has been working on waivers that may need to be signed and that pre-registration for specific times would have to be reserved through the website. The total expenses for the Rink for FY22 are estimated at \$390,620.

Youth Services (#42) – FY22 Budget Request – There is no increase being requested to the \$5,000 Youth Services Budget for FY22.

Approval of Minutes

A motion made by Ms. Schutt that the January 27, 2021 minutes be approved with minor edits as recommended by Chair McKenna was seconded by Mr. Mauro.

Roll Call Vote:

Mr. Wong	Aye	Mr. Mauro	Aye
Mr. Theodore	Aye	Ms. Schutt	Aye
Mr. Barker	Abstain	Mr. Clough	Aye
Mr. Cole	Aye	Mr. McKenna	Aye
Ms. Thomas	Aye		

The motion passed 8-0-1.

Next Meeting Date – The next Finance Committee meeting will take place on February 10, 2021.

Adjournment - A motion made by Mr. Clough to adjourn the meeting at 8:53 p.m. was seconded by Ms. Schutt.

Roll Call Vote:

Mr. McKenna	Aye	Mr. Mauro	Aye
Mr. Theodore	Aye	Ms. Thomas	Aye
Mr. Wong	Aye	Ms. Schutt	Aye
Mr. Barker	Aye	Mr. Clough	Aye
Mr. Cole	Aye		

The motion to adjourn at 8:53 p.m. passed 9-0-0.

Minutes reviewed by: Tim McKenna

Respectfully submitted,



Timothy McKenna
Chair, Canton Finance Committee

**Canton Finance Committee Meeting
February 3, 2021**

Please note: Some meeting documents may be found on the Town's website under the Posted Minutes section (Laser Fiche).

Agenda for February 3, 2021 (1 page).

See the below link for detailed information regarding the FY22 budget requests discussed during the meeting.

<https://www.town.canton.ma.us/DocumentCenter/View/7526/FY22-Municipal-Budget---Dept-Requests---Jan-2021>