

**IPSWICH SELECT BOARD**  
**Meeting of Tuesday, January 26, 2021**

The Select Board participated in this meeting remotely utilizing Zoom in accordance with the Governor's March 12, 2020 Order suspending provisions of Open Meeting Law and to promote public health and social distancing.

Board Members present: Linda Alexson, Chair; Dr. Tammy Jones, Vice Chair; Kerry Mackin; Nishan Mootafian; William Whitmore

Also present: Anthony Marino, Town Manager

With a quorum present, Ms. Alexson called the meeting to order.

**Welcome/Announcements**

Governor Baker has updated Phase 2 of the COVID-19 vaccination distribution plan. Individuals age 75+ can start receiving vaccines next week. The Double Tree Hilton in Danvers will open as a vaccination site. Ipswich residents over 75 who do not have internet access should call the Senior Center for assistance in making an appointment online. The Senior Center is also able to provide transportation to the vaccination site for those who need it.

**Citizen Queries**

None.

**FY22 Budget Review: Public Works**

**CEMETERIES & PARKS**

Jeff Putur (Superintendent of Cemeteries & Parks) presented the proposed FY22 budget. The budget is level-funded from FY21, with contractual salary increases responsible for an overall 1.88% increase. Major improvement projects will be put on hold, but regular maintenance will continue.

FY21 revenues are on target for the year at just over \$44,000. The department typically holds about one hundred (100) funerals per year, and this year they have done one hundred and seventeen (117). Eleven (11) were known to be COVID-related, however, there was an increase in cremations and as a result, the department was not notified of a cause of death.

Boardwalk replacement for Crane Beach was on the Capital Plan for this year, but has been postponed. In the meantime, \$50,000 has been allocated from Beach sticker sales, and the remaining \$50,000 will be funded in FY23 to cover the cost of a total replacement.

Ms. Alexson asked if there is grant money available to cover the cost of park-improvement projects, such as replacing the basketball court at Bialek Park. Mr. Putur responded that because of the demographics of Ipswich, they have continuously been denied grants. He reported that local coaches have been talking about organizing a fundraiser to replace the basketball court.

**PUBLIC WORKS**

Rick Clarke (Director of Public Works) presented the proposed FY22 budget.

DPW Administration is level-funded, with the exception of salary increases and a \$100 increase in legal fees due to an increase in permits being filed with the Conservation Commission. Out-of-state travel allocations were not spent in FY21 due to annual conferences being canceled. For FY22, only \$1,000 has been allocated, because Mr. Clarke expects that the August 2021 conference will be canceled as well.

Equipment Maintenance includes a \$200 increase to stipends for employees who hold Commercial Drivers Licenses (CDL), as the contractual increase went from \$500 per year to \$700 per year. Diesel fuel was also increased because of an anticipated rise in prices. Currently about 61% of the FY21 fuel budget has been used.

Building Maintenance projects include a new entrance at the DPW office and window replacement.

Snow & Ice have ended the year under budget since 2015, and the budget has not been increased in almost ten (10) years. It is on track to finish FY21 under budget, and the remainder will be put into Free Cash.

Other adjustments include a 5% increase for police details; an increase in overtime allocation as a result of salary increases; a \$6,000 increase for outside consultants in anticipation of Market Street redesigns and work on Argilla Road. The Town is also in year four (4) of a five (5) year contract with JRM, and saw a large increase in waste production due to residents being home during the past year.

Ms. Mackin asked how the DPW plans to reduce gasoline and diesel fuel usage. Mr. Clarke responded that trucks by administration will be transitioned to hybrid models when they are ready to be replaced, but much of the heavy equipment utilized by the department does not yet have hybrid or electric technology available to it yet.

Dr. Jones asked if police details are a legal obligation, or if civilian flaggers could be utilized during roadwork. Mr. Clarke responded that the state of Massachusetts requires police details.

- *Vote: Dr. Jones moved to approve the Public Works budget, reserving the right to amend the vote at a later time as discussions move forward. Ms. Mackin seconded. The motion carried unanimously via roll call.*

## **FY22 Budget Review: Town Manager & Finance**

### **TOWN MODERATOR**

The Town Moderator budget remains level-funded with a \$200 per meeting salary.

### **SELECT BOARD**

Elected salaries remain level-funded at \$3,400 per year.

The Executive Assistant position appears to have a 10.1% increase, but is actually only receiving a 2% increase in FY22. The remaining 8.1% is due to the salary being mistakenly entered as \$54,000 in the FY21 budget. Other line items were cut to cover the difference, and the salary has been entered correctly for FY22.

### **TOWN MANAGER**

Mr. Marino's salary will remain level-funded in FY22.

### **HUMAN RESOURCES**

The HR Director and HR Manager were each increased 2%, but funding was reallocated to show the Director position being paid by the Town, and the Manager position being paid by the Schools.

Payroll and Benefits is being done part-time, because HR and Accounting took on more payroll duties. Overall, the budget is down \$31,000 for FY22.

### **LEGAL SERVICES**

In FY20 Legal Services was budgeted at \$135,000. In FY21 it was reduced to \$125,000, and in FY22, Mr. Marino is seeking to return to \$135,000 to help cover Town Counsel and an increase in legal consultations related to 40B projects.

There is also a slight increase in printing and advertising costs related to Town Meeting and Public Hearings.

### **FACILITIES**

The Facilities Department will be merging with Purchasing. Staff will now be made up of the Facilities Director and full-time assistant, instead of a separate Purchasing Agent and part-time assistance. By reallocating duties, there is an overall budget decrease of \$41,000. There is a slight increase in mileage, conference registration, and association dues.

- *Vote: Ms. Mackin moved to approve the Town Manager and Finance budgets, reserving the right to amend the vote at a later time as discussions move forward. Mr. Whitmore seconded. The motion carried unanimously via roll call.*

## **FY22 Budget Review: Adult & Cultural Services**

### **COUNCIL ON AGING & ADULT SERVICES**

Sheila Taylor (Director of Council on Aging) presented the proposed FY22 budget. The Senior Tax Work-Off Program is budgeted for \$20,250, as a result of minimum wage increasing. Ms. Taylor stated that any monies not paid out are returned to the Town, and that it is unlikely all of the funds will be used in FY22 due to COVID.

### **RECREATION & CULTURE**

Kerrie Bates (Director of ReCreation and Culture) presented the proposed FY22 budget. The budget is level-funded besides a 2% salary increase. The department will be proceeding with projects by looking for outside funding. Key projects currently include expanding the downtown outdoor dining area, and the next phase of The Switch Rideable Artscape. The Ipswich Visitor Center will continue to be funded by grant money.

### **VETERANS**

Karen Tyler (Veteran Services Officer) presented the proposed FY22 budget. The biggest expense is Chapter 115, a benefit for low-income veterans or their surviving spouses which is paid out by the Town, and reimbursed by the Massachusetts Department of Veteran Services at 75%.

The VA stopped billing for medical services in March of 2020, disrupting the department's reimbursement program for medical and dental co-pays. Billing recently began again, and veterans are expected to be receiving bills accrued over the last year shortly.

### **LIBRARY**

Patty DiTulio (Library Director) presented the proposed FY21 budget. Salary increases are reflective of union contracts and a 2% increase for non-union staff.

Decreases include a move to in-house printing for promotional and marketing materials, as well as a decrease in mileage reimbursements.

\$5,000 is requested for materials and books. Ms. DiTulio explained that there is a minimum funding requirement for new materials each year, set by the State, in order to maintain certification. The minimum funding percentage is based on the overall budget. The remaining \$20,000 needed to cover the minimum percentage will be supplemented with donations and grants.

- *Vote: Ms. Mackin moved to approve the Adult & Cultural Services budgets. Dr. Jones seconded. The motion carried unanimously via roll call.*

## **Change Town Meeting Date**

Mr. Marino recommended holding Annual Town Meeting on Saturday, May 15, 2021. It was previously scheduled for Tuesday, May 11. This change would be done so as to allow an outdoor gathering on the football field.

- *Vote: Mr. Mootafian moved to hold Town Meeting on Saturday, May 15, 2021. Ms. Mackin second. The motion carried unanimously via roll call.*

Mr. Marino will consult with the Town Moderator on whether or not electronic voting will be used. The warrant closes on February 19. Four (4) citizen petition rough drafts have been shown to Mr. Marino, but nothing official has been submitted as of yet.

## **New Business**

None.

## **Old Business**

None.

➤ *Vote: Ms. Mackin moved to adjourn. Dr. Jones seconded. The motion carried unanimously via roll call.*

*Respectfully submitted by Eileen G. Page*