

Lenox Finance Committee Meeting Minutes

Date: February 18, 2021

Members Present: Joan Bruno (JB), Kristine Cass (KC), Michael Feder (MF), Mindi Morin (MM), Elliott Morss (EM), Andrea Pignatelli (AP),

Guests: Chris Ketchen (CK), Katie O'Neill (KO), Darlene McCauley (DM), Clarence Fanto (CF)

Absent: Mark McKenna, David Carpenter, David Neubert

Meeting called to order at 5:03 PM. The Zoom meeting was recorded.

FY2022 Library Budget

CK provided a budget overview. Salaries increased due to cost of living adjustments, but salaries overall decreased due to lower cost of new youth librarian. Library budget is slightly down relative to usual budget run rate.

JB asked about payroll savings due to reduced hours. Library is now open 6 days/week and library plans to open as possible. Though library is not open to the public for full hours, staff is working while library is closed to manage COVID protocols and take on work that would usually be completed by library volunteers. Budget reflects hours library would open in normal year. If library cannot open as normal, payroll expenses may come in below budget. Budget assumes that Tanglewood Lectures will not be able to operate as normal due to COVID.

MA Library Commission sets required spending on books and materials – 19.5% of municipal appropriation = \$74k. This year telephone expenses increased, so the fixed LLA contribution of \$132,000 covers less of the books and materials spending. As a result, the town contribution to spending on books and materials is increasing. LLA funds most library programming as well.

MF noticed that the LLA contribution is static and asked whether the LLA contribution should be increased. EM agreed. CK noted that the \$132,000 contribution was agreed upon in the LLA memorandum of understanding as an estimate of the amount the LLA would reliably and sustainably be able to support on an ongoing annual basis. CK agreed to discuss the idea of increasing the annual contribution with the LLA. KO noted that the LLA makes substantial contributions to the library's programming that is not reflected in the budget, and the LLA is also making a substantial contribution to the library's upcoming capital project.

Capital budget includes request for roof and ceiling rehabilitation for dome room of library. MF asked if the town could borrow to support this project and CK said yes. CK estimates the cost of the project at \$300k-\$1M, and is working to refine estimate. CK noted that some work may be done beyond the 2022 budget year. CK is working on MA Cultural Council grants, CPC funding, and additional funds from the LLA to support the capital costs.

FY2022 Community Center Budget

CK noted that Community Center has made many changes to adapt to COVID. Additional salary is due to hiring Assistant Director instead of Youth Service Coordinator, as Youth Service Coordinator position experienced high turnover over recent years. Seasonal salaries are increasing due to beach season length. FY2021 salary line is artificially low due to reduced activity during summer 2021.

DM explained that Community Center services have continued but look different during COVID. Community Center is offering grab-n-go meals for seniors M-F. Appointment services and other programs for seniors (exercise, health services, tax, legal, etc.) have continued during COVID. Community Center organized town's free meal program during summer 2020 and provided free masks to the community. Beach opened with safety protocols in summer 2020.

MM noted that Community Center benefits are flat in 2022 budget, and CK reported that benefits will be flat this year across all town departments.

DM noted that she hopes to resume youth programming this summer and after-school programming in September. CK confirmed that budget assumes youth programming will resume. Last year's extra funding for summer programming was re-deployed to the town ambassador program during summer 2020.

CK discussed the schedule for future meetings.

Meeting adjourned at 5:54pm.

Respectively Submitted,
Kristine Cass, Acting Secretary