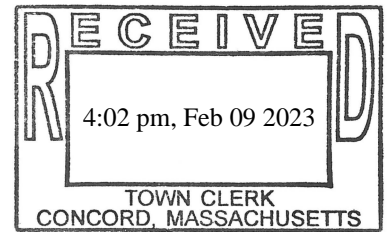


**Finance Committee
Meeting Minutes – January 19, 2023**



Present: Ray Andrews, Suresh Bhati, Peggy Briggs, Eric Dahlberg, John Garofalo, Don Kupka (joined at 7PM at commencement of Special Town Meeting), Lindsey Lis, Dee Ortner, Parashar Patel, Christine Reynolds, Brian Taylor, Lois Wasoff

Absent: Greg Guarriello, Kathy Cuocolo, Armith Kumar

Others Present: Gail Dowd, Town Finance Director, Bob Lelacheur, Town Finance Consultant

The meeting was held in-person at CCHS in conjunction with the Special Town Meeting (STM).

Having determined the presence of a quorum, Peggy Briggs called the meeting to order at 6:20PM. Lois said she would act as the scribe for this meeting.

Since this was the first entirely in-person meeting for some time, Peggy asked the people attending to introduce themselves. She then explained that there was no detailed agenda for this meeting, since it had been scheduled as a precaution in case the 90% design estimate for the middle school construction came in high enough so that the project was no longer within the scope of Article 5. That estimate has now come in. It was \$1MM above the 60% figure, but because of the contingencies that had been included in setting the figure in the warrant for STM, the budget was still within the scope of Article 5.

Peggy reported that in anticipation of seeking construction bids the school building committee has started the process of pre-qualifying general contractors. Five contractors have indicated interest in pre-qualifying which should mean that there will be competitive bidding when the bidding process begins in about a month.

Parashar will be doing the Finance Committee presentation on Article 5 at STM. The slides he will be using are being made available as a handout to meeting attendees.

Peggy asked if anyone had any concerns about her request that the Finance Committee speak with “one voice” during STM. There was a brief discussion during which both Chris and Lois noted that they felt it would be appropriate for individual members to speak, depending upon what was said at the meeting.

There was a general discussion of next steps if Article 5 is approved, including the timing of the borrowing. Bob said that the current expectation is that about one-half of the borrowing could be done this spring and the rest in about one year, although delays in construction if supply chain problems do not improve could mean that the second portion of the borrowing happens later. If costs are lower than expected, less money might be borrowed. If money is already borrowed and there are subsequent savings, so not all the borrowed funds are necessary for the project, the excess could be reassigned to other town uses by town meeting.

In response to a question from Dee, Bob and Gail explained how the terms are set for each bond offering. Some provisions (like the term of years) will be determined by the Treasurer with input from the Select Board; others (like the actual interest rate) will be determined by the market at the time of the offering. Since there are certain fixed costs incurred each time a debt offering is made, it isn't advisable to break the borrowing up into too many small portions.

In response to other questions, Bob and Gail explained that the successful bidder does not "own" the final number in the bid and that there can be changes and overages. The process requires careful supervision throughout. They also explained that the construction contract will have to be awarded to the lowest bidder, which is one reason why the pre-qualification process for the general contractor, and all sub-contractors, is so important.

This portion of the meeting ended at 6:50PM, but the meeting remained in session in case there was an amendment made on the floor during the STM that required the Committee to meet and make a recommendation.

There was no need for the Committee to reconvene during the STM, so the meeting was adjourned when the STM adjourned at 8:40PM.

Respectfully submitted

Lois Wasoff, Clerk