



The Town of Barnstable

Comprehensive Financial Advisory Committee (CFAC)

367 Main Street, Village of Hyannis, MA 02601

v. 508.862.4654 • f. 508.862.4717

www.town.barnstable.ma.us

Email: cfac@town.barnstable.ma.us

CFAC Committee:

Chair:

Lillian Woo

Members:

Vice Chair, Ralph Krau
Clerk, Hector Guenther
John Schoenherr
Melanie Powers
Tracey Brochu
Wendy Solomon

Staff Liaison:

Mark Milne
Nathan Empey

Councilor Liaison:

Paula Schnepf

MEETING MINUTES

10.26.20

6:00 PM

Zoom Meeting : <https://zoom.us/j/93810414687>

Meeting ID: 938 1041 4687

Roll Call:

Lillian W. called the CFAC Zoom meeting to order at 6:00 PM. Hector G. called the roll call.

- CFAC Members Present: Lillian Woo , Melanie Powers , Hector Guenther, John Schoenherr, and Ralph Krau
- CFAC Members Absent: Tracey Brochu and Wendy Solomon
- Councilors Present: Gordon Starr and Paula Schnepf
- Staff Present: Mark Milne; Finance Director, Nathan Empey; Finance/Budget Analyst
- Other Present: None

Act on Minutes:

The following minutes were approved by unanimous vote:

10.13.2020

Public Comments:

None

Correspondence:

None

Staff Report:

None

Old Business:

Committee reviewed the drafted FY 2021 Financial Overview Report.

Melanie P. noted under the COVID-19 response paragraph within the second sentence an “it” is needed before unclear. Melanie P. thought the COVID-19 response was good, but is a little past tense and should include that the town would be applying for and ready to make use of any additional stimulus opportunities.

Melanie P. asked about the overspending on snow & ice, which the spending last year was low. Ralph K. responded it can be very difficult to predict mother nature. Mark M. noted several years ago we developed a strategy to increase the snow & ice budget in order to reduce the deficits we’ve been incurring. Mark M. noted we could have years with very little snow & ice spending because weather is so unpredictable, but our goal is to get that budget up to what we have been spending on from a historical average. Mark M. noted it is the one area in the municipal budget the state allows us to incur a deficit. Melanie P. commented it is a strategy to have the snow & ice budget more inline and increase our surplus. Mark M. responded we benefit in good years for having low expenditures because it is a large appropriation, and if we don’t spend it, we generate surplus.

Melanie P. asked we’ll notice a reduction in property tax revenue because of the pandemic. Mark M. responded that in FY 2020 we did not see that happen with last quarter tax payments in May. Mark M. also noted we’re not out of the woods yet because mortgage forbearance has been extended to December, which many homeowners have their property taxes escrowed. Tax paying services still make the property tax payments to the town. Melanie P. responded that property tax payments are not a straight indicator. Mark M. responded only the taxpayers who don’t have mortgages or don’t escrow their taxes make direct payments to the town, so if they are having difficulty we’ll see it. Mark M. noted it is still something to keep an eye on because of high unemployment and potential threats of more lockdowns. Paula S. asked could you tell the percentage of property owners that pay through escrow? Mark M. noted it may be half, but not sure the exact number.

Hector G. noted on page 1 of the Financial Overview Report he thought it might be helpful to insert after FY21 “running from July 2020 to June 2021”.

Hector G. noted on page 2 to fix the typo compromise

Hector G. noted he wasn’t sure what we are saying in the sentence “This conservative approach provides a greater certainty that surplus can be generated to offset surplus used to balance the budget and for a softer landing when the economy turns for the worse.”. Is the idea you create a surplus in a future year to offset a prior year? Mark M. responded the more conservative with your estimated budgeted revenues the greater chance of generating surplus.

Hector G. the word in the COVID-19 response reconnoitered should be changed to explored. Lillian W. suggested it could be changed to monitored. Melanie P. noted it could be changed to reconsidered.

Hector G. noted under governmental structure the third sentence from the bottom of the page should be reworded. Ralph K. use the word separated from and delete the word on.

Hector G. noted the median price of a home in fiscal 2020 should say the median assessed value; change the word price to assessed value. Hector G. noted in the next sentence delete the word priced within the median priced home qualifying for the residential exemption sentence.

Hector G. noted on page 7 enterprise fund budget, the last sentence can also be assessed an indirect cost charge? Mark M. noted we could drop the word cost. Hector G. asked and what about the word indirect? Mark M. responded the indirect cost is the term we use in municipal finance.

Ralph K. noted on page 11 under the heading get involved it says seeking a candidate, but we're actually seeking two candidates, so it should be pluralized.

Mark M. noted he selected questions in the report from the list provided, if there was anything missing that the committee would like to add? Melanie P. and Hector G. said the list in the report was good.

John S. noted we should add a link on the FQ&A page to the larger list once it's available on the town website.

New Business:

Committee reviewed their Comprehensive Wastewater Management Plan questions and answers. Melanie P. thought the list was setup well as it starts with the general need and then goes into the financial questions. John S. noted the list is very high level and could be difficult to read for the public. John S. noted it would be helpful to provide definition links or a supporting glossary with the document. Lillian W. noted the document was originally intended for Town Council, and asked if we want to expand it to a town wide document? John S. responded he would like to see one document that all readers can follow. Ralph K. responded the Town Council strategic meeting is three days from now and the questions are strictly for Town Council. Ralph K. noted he supports getting a glossary for the document once Town Council has agreed what they are going to do with the questions moving forward. Melanie P. noted that there is going to be a need for this document for the town down the road, and that this issue affects us all. Paula S. responded that this question list is a fabulous document to distribute to Town Council. Paula S. noted that the communication strategy about the financing the CWMP is going to require a lot of strategic thinking, and that this document is beyond CFAC and the ownership of this document ends once it gets handed off. Paula S. noted there would be plenty of opportunity for the committee to have some input in the future.

Committee voted and unanimously approved the Financial Questions & Answers document to be submitted to Town Council.

Paula S. asked how does the committee feel it wants to standby any particular recommendations? Lillian W. noted if Town Council would like us to follow-up on an issue, they would let us know. Hector G. noted the committee felt that all taxpayers should have skin in the game even if they are not directly impacted by the CWMP. Hector G. noted the committee felt that everybody in the town should be supportive of the CWMP. Ralph K. responded he agrees that every resident in the town of Barnstable should benefit to get everybody onboard.

Matters not reasonably anticipated by the chair:

Adjournment:

Meeting adjourned at 8:00 p.m.

List of documents handed out

1. 10.13.20 draft minutes
2. CFAC's FY 2021 Financial Overview Report
3. CFAC's questions on CWMP