

Minutes Holden Finance Committee, January 4, 2023, Town Hall

Members Present: Paul Challenger, Dave White, Don Graves, Al Berg, Jane Titcomb, Stephanie Adams, Donna Wallace, Marilyn Foley

Member Absent: Chris Lucchesi

Also Present: Peter Lukes, Town Manager

The meeting was called to order at 6:30 P.M.

Peter updated the Committee on the status of the lawsuit against Worcester and the DCR. Holden was awarded \$14,600,000.00 but Worcester has petitioned for the judge to reconsider the decision. While this matter is pending, interest will accrue on the original amount, which could add significantly to the amount received.

The Committee discussed the sub-committee goals report. Paul reviewed what we have done so far.

Each year the Committee will revisit goal #3, which is having the general stabilization fund be 15% of the general fund budget, to see if the current situation warrants a change.

The Committee discussed the use of free cash. A motion by Al 2nd by Marilyn to use free cash – spend 50% and save 50% - was voted in favor 6-2 (opposed Don, Jane).

The Committee discussed goals #6 and # 7. The goal is to try to accurately estimate new growth and non-property tax revenue using statistics and current knowledge. We need to avoid just increasing the prior year by a percentage without considering relevant factors.

The Committee discussed whether to add goals on setting a maximum percentage of the General Fund revenue to be used for debt service, and a similar goal for the Enterprise funds. Peter will provide what he considers a reasonable goal for these two items.

Chris and Paul will summarize the Committee's discussions for a final report.

The Committee inquired as to why free cash certification was so late each year. Other communities have it in October and November. Peter indicated that it was a matter of priorities for the Accountant. We don't make use of the number until developing the following year budget, so there is no advantage to rushing to get certification.

The Committee would like updates from the Manager on the staffing salary study, 2023 capital budget expenses, the SAFER grant proposal, the ARPA federal and state money grants and Chapter 90 funds. A meeting is planned for February 8 to hear these updates

Peter reported that the EPA will spend \$800,000.00 for the cleanup of the ECC property. He will also have a recommendation for the Adams Road property, which currently has a fire sub-station in dis-repair on it.

A motion by Donna 2nd by Don to approve the minutes of November 30, 2022 were voted unanimously.

A motion by Donna 2nd by Al to approve the minutes of December 7, 2022 were voted unanimously (abstained Stephanie).

The meeting adjourned at 8:35 P.M.

Respectfully Submitted,
Marilynn Foley, Clerk