



## Town of Medway

### FINANCE COMMITTEE

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Wednesday, July 14, 2021 – 7:00 PM  
Sanford Hall, Town Hall  
155 Village Street

Present: Todd Alessandri, Chair; Ellen Hillery, Clerk; Brian Cowan; Chris Lagan; Will Lane; Jeff O'Neill; Jim Sullivan.

Absent: Sue Segarra, Michael Schrader.

Staff Present: Michael Boynton, Town Manager; Julie Harrington, Director, Parks and Recreation.

Others Present: Deb Rossi, Chair, Parks and Recreation Commission.

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At 7:00 PM Chairman Alessandri called the meeting to order, reporting seven members present, two members absent. As no one was participating remotely, roll call votes will not be required. He shared the items on tonight's agenda.

#### **1.0 Welcome New Member to Committee**

Mr. Chris Lagan briefly introduced himself. He is a former member of the Finance Committee, and is now replacing Frank Rossi who was elected to the Select Board.

#### **2.0 Reorganize Finance Committee for FY22**

Chairman Alessandri stated he was willing to stay on Chair but will vacate if someone else wants it. After brief discussion, **Mr. O'Neill made a motion to nominate Todd Alessandri as Chair; Mr. Sullivan seconded the nomination. There were no other nominations. VOTE: 7-0-0.**

Mr. Sullivan expressed interest in serving as Vice Chair. After brief discussion, **Chairman Alessandri made a motion to nominate Jim Sullivan as Vice Chair; Mr. O'Neill seconded the nomination. There were no other nominations. VOTE: 7-0-0.**

At this time, Ms. Hillery stated she was willing to stay on as Clerk. **Chairman Alessandri made a motion to nominate Ellen Hillery as Clerk; Mr. O'Neill seconded the nomination. There were no other nominations. VOTE: 7-0-0**

### **3.0 Discussion of Turf Fields Revenues and Expenses**

*The following documents were received: Answers to the questions submitted by the Finance Committee, and a Report listing revenues and expenses.*

Present: Debi Rossi, Chair, Parks and Recreation Commission; Julie Harrington, Director, Parks and Recreation; Michael Boynton, Town Manager.

Ms. Rossi reminded the committee that she had previously indicated that there might be a fund shortage which, by the end of the year, did not occur. Due to EEE in the fall, a lot of revenue was lost in addition to COVID-19 impact. When the restrictions were relaxed, additional work was required to get up and running for every time the fields were opened. A lot of advance work needed to happen. The Parks program has done a great job which is evidenced by the information that was submitted.

Chairman Alessandri explained that the Finance Committee's concern was mostly whether there would be enough money in the fund to cover expenses for the new turf when replacement becomes necessary. Ms. Rossi responded that she tried to answer the questions that were submitted, and expanded on them with forecasting. She noted that she has also been tracking things on her own as a forecasting task. Referring to the category sheet in the handout, electricity is very expensive; three lighted fields at high school, two at middle school and the field at the VFW. That electricity cost did drop in 2020 because of non-use during the pandemic. She reported that the 2021 expenses shown are only through March 30; final numbers for both expenses and revenues will be higher. Grounds keeping costs are primarily for the grass fields for mowing, fertilizer and other costs. The cost, however, is spread out over all the fields, no matter if they are grass or artificial turf.

Chairman Alessandri asked for explanation of a category listed as contracted services. Ms. Rossi responded that it was for things like portable toilets. Mr. Boynton clarified that any time the Town has a contract for services, it would fall into this category. Discussion followed on other categories.

Ms. Rossi stated that having a maintenance program will extend the life of the fields. The fields are in good condition now, and the DPW folks keep a good eye on them. She theorized that the Town should get more than the typical 10 years out of them; right now three years remain in that ten-year life. She added that the track at Hanlon is in deteriorating condition and suggested that when the turf is ready for replacement, the track should be done at the same time. It can still be used but occasional repairs are done to keep it eligible for track meets. Brief discussion followed. It was noted that the Field Stabilization Fund is intended to be used for turf replacement at any of the fields when it becomes necessary. Chairman Alessandri reported that the committee had discussed repurposing unused funds in the Finance Committee Reserve Fund toward the Stabilization Fund. Discussion followed.

Ms. Hillery expressed concern that the track was part of the high school construction and funds for replacement might be connected with those monies. It was noted that the replacement of the track at the same time as the turf would save wear-and-tear on grass from equipment and other impacts. The track is assessed for quality every year, and depending on how severe the winter is, can last another three years with patching.

All the grass fields are in really good condition. It was noted that, when possible, use of the fields is rotated to allow a field to "rest" which, over time, extends the use of the field.

Mr. Sullivan asked if the maintenance program includes parks. Ms. Rossi responded that it was her understanding that the cost of park maintenance comes out of the DPW budget. The commission has asked that the pavilions in those parks could be reserved/rented by residents for a fee; the fee would go toward cleanup or damages. Ms. Harrington noted that the reservation can be reflected online so that people can also see what a particular space might be available. Field use is also reflected in this manner.

Ms. Rossi noted that, when she was preparing the documents for tonight, she went back to 2018 when Ms. Harrington came to work at the Town, and when the department began using MUNIS more. The Finance Director sends out a quarterly report which is very helpful for the commission to see and track things. There were a number of outstanding invoices in 2018 which skewed the numbers, and that is no longer happening because invoices and expenses can be tracked better. Often an outstanding invoice was paid in a different fiscal year which impacted the true numbers.

Mr. Sullivan asked if the current fee structures in line with what other communities are charging. Ms. Rossi responded that the field rate is \$200/hour for out-of-town users no matter which field is used, and that rate is pretty much what others are charging. Because tournament groups often need or want three fields, that gives Medway an edge. Grass fields have a different rate structure.

Responding to a question from Mr. Lagan, Ms. Harrington noted that most of the field time during the week is occupied by Medway groups. Should there be small open times, the schedulers try to backfill with other small groups. Brief discussion followed during which a potential culture and recreation center was mentioned as many residents would like to have one.

It was suggested that forecasting be done on the fees based on potential use in order to determine if the fees are appropriate. Concern was expressed that this will help earmark necessary funds. Ms. Rossi responded that it is difficult to see "trends in use" but they know anecdotally what has occurred, and they are constantly looking to fit in requests to maximize usage. It was noted that hosting tournaments are lucrative as those groups use the fields for three days, but that is also time that other users are not able to be accommodated.

Mr. Boynton stated that the future of the VFW property would be included in discussions by the Facilities Study group. He spoke briefly about field revenues and how those revenues are being used. Regarding replacement of artificial fields, he indicated he was optimistic that significant revenues will be coming in and debt service is falling off. He cautioned that the Parks Revolving Fund should not be depended on to fund things than the programs it already supports. Chairman Alessandri pointed out that the fees collected for use of the turf fields in effect subsidize the grass fields because the turf fields can be used more extensively.

Mr. O'Neill reiterated that the committee should advocate for unused funds to be repurposed into the Field Stabilization Fund.

Ms. Rossi and Ms. Harrington exited the meeting at 8:08 PM.

#### **4.0 Budget Updates**

*There were no background materials.*

Present: Michael Boynton, Town Manager.

Mr. Boynton reported that he had no specific updates on FY21 year-end balances as invoices were still coming in. There were different expenses related to COVID, many of which can be reimbursed from various eligible funding sources. FY23 budget planning has started. Mr. Boynton spoke briefly about the budgeting process as it relates to state funding. FY22 is looking positive; FY21 is being closed out. He theorized that a portion of certified free cash could be applied to field stabilization/replacement. Brief discussion followed.

Chairman Alessandri asked about health care costs and whether reimbursed funds could be used to cover any increases. Mr. Boynton responded that there were no spikes in health care costs, and if there were, reimbursed funds could not be applied to them. He explained that there are some formulas that are employed in the insurance industry, and due to low rates during the pandemic, the industry wanted to increase rates to cover claims from people returning to doctor visits. Though there were some high cost claims that came in, that increase has not occurred. Discussion followed.

Mr. Boynton exited the meeting at 8:23 PM.

### **5.0 Liaison Assignments for FY22**

Chairman Alessandri encouraged members to consider changing to different groups to increase their knowledge of departments or groups. He had contacted Mr. Schrader and Ms. Segarra about their preferences. The committee reviewed the list of assignments, making some changes, with the following results:

General Government (Select Board)	– Todd Alessandri and Jim Sullivan
Public Safety: Police and Fire	– Susan Segarra and Jeff O’Neill
Schools	– Brian Cowan and Todd Alessandri
Health and Human Services	– Ellen Hillery and Susan Segarra
Culture and Recreation:	– Will Lane and Brian Cowan
Parks, Public Library and Camp Sunshine	
Annual Town Meeting Booklet	– All Finance Committee Members
Department of Public Works	– Michael Schrader and Susan Segarra
Planning Board	– Chris Lagan and Will Lane
Community Preservation Committee	– Ellen Hillery and Chris Lagan
Capital Improvements Planning Committee	-- Susan Segarra and Will Lane
Economic Development Committee	-- Jeff O’Neill and Michael Schrader
Redevelopment Authority	– Todd Alessandri and Jim Sullivan
EPFRAC Committee	-- Ellen Hillery and Will Lane
Affordable Housing Trust	-- Will Lane and Brian Cowan
Facility Study Committee	-- Brian Cowan
Bylaw Committee	-- Ellen Hillery
Master Plan Committee	-- Ellen Hillery

### **6.0 Set Committee Meeting Dates for FY22**

Chairman Alessandri noted that the August meeting will likely be cancelled. It was noted that Fall Town Meeting will be on November 8; the Finance Committee public hearing could be scheduled in conjunction with the October 13 regular meeting. The FY22 meeting dates are as follows:

**Wednesday, August 11, 2021**  
**Wednesday, September 8, 2021**

Wednesday, October 13, 2021  
Monday, November 8, 2021 (Fall Town Meeting)  
Wednesday, December 8, 2021  
Wednesday, January 12, 2022  
Wednesday, February 9, 2022  
Wednesday, March 9, 2022  
Wednesday, April 13, 2022  
Wednesday, May 11, 2022  
Wednesday, June 8, 2022

## **7.0 Other Business**

Chairman's Report – At this time, Chairman Alessandri asked Ms. Hillery to report on the activities of the Master Plan Committee; she is the Finance Committee representative. Ms. Hillery noted that Chairman Alessandri had emailed the PowerPoint presentation from the most recent Master Plan Committee meeting; the presentation was prepared by Ms. Jenn Goldson, consultant from JM Goldson. Ms. Goldson is very efficient and organized, having recently set up an informational table at Choate Park recently. The information is well presented and a good overview of what is happening. Ms. Hillery encouraged members to share information with their neighbors via the Meeting in a Box tool. There will be another Community Forum in the fall. All information is on the Town website on the Master Plan Committee page. Ms. Hillery noted that a main concern is to let residents know of this initiative to update the Master Plan as much as possible so that everyone is informed.

Chairman Alessandri spoke briefly on the update from the Select Board on allowing Zoom meetings. He had emailed the update to members earlier in the day. The Select Board is encouraging in-person meetings and not to hold meetings remotely purely for convenience. It is important to have meetings broadcast or recorded as much as possible. The Select Board had concerns for comments being submitted via the Chat function on Zoom, and whether the submitter's identity can be verified. Discussion followed during which members agreed that discussions are better in person as well as getting to know each other within a group. Could we have a backup Zoom in case of inclement weather? Zoom meetings do offer increased transparency as people can log in from home, but there were often technical difficulties with the audio. Perhaps public hearings could be held via Zoom. The conference phone is always an option for members. Comments from residents could be timed and limited.

For now, the Finance Committee will continue to meet in person, add Zoom to the public hearing for Fall Town Meeting, and if we need a Zoom meeting at some point, we can do so with advance notice to get the Zoom info on the agenda when it is posted. It was agreed to revisit this in December.

**Mr. Cowan made a motion to that effect, specifically, to meet in person for all meetings and to add a Zoom function for public hearings, and, if necessary, due to several members' inability to attend. Incumbent in this motion is that the Finance Committee will evaluate this process again in December. Mr. O'Neill seconded the motion. No further discussion. VOTE: 7-0-0**

Clerk's Report – Ms. Hillery reported there have been no expenses since the new budget year has started. However, there are two bills to be paid: \$210.00 for Association of Town Finance Committees from the FY22 Finance Committee budget, and a bill from FY21 from GateHouse Media for the public

hearing advertisement for Annual and Special Town Meetings. The Finance Committee Reserve Fund has a starting balance of \$100,000 for FY22.

Chairman Alessandri will get the dates for the fall meeting of the Association of Town Finance Committees with the workshops.

Review/Approval of Meeting Minutes

*The following documents were reviewed: Draft minutes from June 9, 2021.*

**Mr. O'Neill made a motion to approve the June 9, 2021 minutes, as amended; Mr. Sullivan seconded. No discussion. VOTE: 6-0-1 (Lagan, abstain).**

Miscellaneous Discussion

Mr. Cowan reported that Facilities Study materials are being distributed next week. Mr. Sullivan noted that the Planning and Economic Development Board will be reviewing the battery storage facilities topic. He added that there are lots of things happening in Holliston, and Medway should get more information on things such as impact on traffic and other factors affecting livability in Medway.

At this time, Chairman Alessandri reported he attended a meeting recently with State Representative Jake Auchincloss. There is a lot of push in Washington to make COVID funds as flexible as possible. Some federal funding will be available for road repairs.

**8.0 Upcoming Meetings**

The next meeting will be at 7:00 PM on Wednesday, August 11. Chairman Alessandri reiterated that it will likely be cancelled if there are no urgent agenda items.

**9.0 Adjourn**

**At 9:13 PM Mr. O'Neill made a motion to adjourn; Mr. Sullivan seconded. No discussion. VOTE: 7-0-0.**

*Respectfully submitted,  
Jeanette Galliardt*