Rowe Finance Committee
April 21, 2020
6:30 P.M. via Remote Participation

Present: Vice-Chair Loretta Dionne, Christopher "Selmi" Hyytinen, Paul McLatchy III, Laurie Pike
Absent: Chair Wayne Zavotka
Board of Selectmen: Chair Charles Sokol, Vice-Chair Jennifer Morse, Executive Secretary Janice Boudreau
Audience of Citizens: Joanne Semanie, Assessors Chair Frederick Williams

Note: Due to the national COVID-19 pandemic, this meeting was held via remote participation as authorized by executive order of the governor. All votes are taken via roll-call vote.

Call to Order: Vice-Chair Dionne called the Finance Committee meeting to order at 6:33 P.M., with a quorum of the committee present.

Special Projects: The Finance Committee met to review the special projects that were being proposed for FY21. Selectman Morse pointed out that with the COVID-19 pandemic, it may be prudent to avoid appropriating from free cash as this may be needed for operational expenses in case town meeting is not held before June 30th. The town also receives about $430,000 from the state, and with the expected revenue shortfall, this might limit how much aid is being provided for.

Members agreed that projects would be ranked based on urgency. Projects with a "1" will be proposed for the Annual Town Meeting warrant, "2" are somewhat urgent but can wait for a fall town meeting, and a "3" can be delayed until another year if needed.

Free Cash Projects: The following projects were reviewed as free cash projects using the above ranking system:

Assessors Legal ($50,000): For legal consulting related to the valuation and appeals process of the utilities. Assessor Williams said this should come out of free cash. Members ranked it as a one as hearings with the Appellate Tax Board might occur as early as this summer.

Assessors Revaluation: Assessor Williams recommended that this should actually be moved into the operational budget, since it will be a recurring expense.

Park Projects ($26,000): Mr. Hyytinen and Ms. Pike recused themselves as they are Park Commissioners. It was agreed that the request for a new structure and beach sand could wait until next year, as the beach/structure may not be highly utilized during the summer due to the pandemic, and gets little use during the fall or winter.

School Oil Tank (Price Unknown): It was felt that this can be rated a three as it's not a critical need. This project is on the list as it will need to be done at some point as the town is not supposed to have a buried fuel tank.

School Fire Pump Controller ($7,000): Members rated this as a one due to the need to ensure the fire suppression system is functioning appropriately.

School Dishwasher Booster ($3,050): Rated as a one as the existing booster is not expected to last until the new school year, and if it fails, the school cannot wash dishes. It was agreed to take out of free cash.

School Security Upgrades ($9,000): This has been recommended, but is not absolutely vital, especially with school not being reopened until the fall. Rated as a two.

School Parking Lot Paving ($5,000): As this is not an urgent need, this was rated as a three.

Town Hall Carpet Cleaner ($400): Mr. McLatchy recused himself as he works for administration. Members appeared to agree to remove this as the school has a machine they'd be willing to share.

Attic Staircase ($10,000): Mr. McLatchy recused himself as he works for administration. While desired, this is not urgent. Rated a three.

Capital Stabilization Projects: Capital Stabilization may not be available as an option to draw from if the town does not approve a budget before June 30th. Therefore, the goal of holding off on projects isn't as applicable for this fund. The following projects were reviewed using the same rating mechanism:

Park Structure ($26,000): After discussion, members concurred that this does fit the most recent CIRPP (Capital Improvement, Repair, and Property Plan) guidelines.

DPW Front Loader ($200,000): Questions were raised about the need to do it now versus in the fall, but Mr. McLatchy pointed out that if it should break down and snow begins falling early, there would be no way to sand or salt the roads. Rated as a one.

Highway Parking Lot Paving ($78,000): Agreed to hold off on, ranked as a three. Some questioned whether this was needed at all.

Transfer Station Paper Compactor ($15,000): This new paper compactor was rated as a one as there are multiple state grants helping to fund this, which would be forfeited if delayed.

Road Infrastructure (No Amount Proposed): Mr. Hyytinen questioned whether plain overlaying of the road as opposed to grinding first was a good idea. He noted that on Cross Road, where no grinding was done, cracks have already reappeared less than two

years after it was repaved. Members discussed the draft Highway Plan, but no decisions were made. It is possible that Pond Road might be able to be ground down and paved out of FY20/FY21 Chapter 90 funds. The committee will meet with DPW Superintendent Lance Larned in the near future.

Cemetery Legal Services ($3,500): These funds are needed to go through the legal hurdles of purchasing property for the North Cemetery expansion (funds for the actual property have already been appropriated). This was ranked as a two and decided to pull out of free cash rather than capital stabilization.

School Tractor (~$35,000): After discussion, members ranked this as a three as the existing equipment can get the school through the fall and maybe even the rest of the fiscal year. There are talks between the park and school about possibly sharing this equipment.

Town Administrator: Mr. McLatchy recused himself as he works for administration. The Board of Selectmen will be meeting on Thursday and will hopefully finalize the job descriptions for a proposed town administrator and an as-of-yet untitled assistant. Then they will sort out time and the finances. Chair Sokol desires to have all of these things figured out before advertising the job.

Ms. Pike asked about whether the Board has discussed the Department of Revenue report and how they plan on involving the public in this discussion. Chair Sokol asked when would be a good time to present this to the public, but no answer was given.

Mr. Hyytinen asked about the implications of potentially bringing someone new in during the middle of a pandemic- how can this person be trained with social distancing in effect? He suggested waiting until the pandemic subsides. Ms. Pike opined that this is premature at this time. Vice-Chair Dionne felt it would be inappropriate to post anything until the job descriptions and salaries are set, especially since this is contingent on the town approving it.

Chair Sokol pointed out that because the budget is currently split between two separate lines (Executive Secretary and Administrative Assistant to the Boards), the Board cannot make these changes without town meeting approval even if the dollar amount doesn't change. Ms. Pike also felt it was worth noting that the two people currently holding their positions might have to leave for other employment if it becomes clear that they are not being hired, and this could leave no one to train incoming staff.

Departure: The Board of Selectmen adjourned their meeting at 8:30. Assessor Williams, Selectman Morse, and Executive Secretary Boudreau left the meeting.

Minutes: The minutes of March 31st, April 7th, and April 14th were submitted. A motion was made by Mr. Hyytinen and seconded by Ms. Pike to approve all the minutes as presented. The votes were as follows:

Christopher Hyytinen	Yes	Laurie Pike	Yes
Paul McLatchy III	Yes	Loretta Dionne	Yes

Park: The park budget has been put off due to Mr. Hyytinen and Ms. Pike being unable to vote, and with Chair Zavotka's absences, it has only left two remaining members. As both Mr. McLatchy and Vice-Chair Dionne are in favor of the park budget, it was agreed to approve the budget as it stands, rather than continue to delay it.

Unemployment Insurance: Mr. McLatchy suggested waiting until the Board of Selectmen decides whether they want to change to a pooling option of unemployment coverage, or continue the current method of paying out the claims directly.

Next Meeting: The committee will meet at 6:30 on Tuesday, April 28th. The meeting may get pushed back as the Library Trustees are meeting at 5:00 and may need the use of the Zoom account. Until further notice, these meetings will be held remotely.

Adjourn: A motion was made by Mr. McLatchy and seconded by Mr. Hyytinen to adjourn the meeting at 8:49 P.M. The votes were as follows:

Christopher Hyytinen	Yes	Laurie Pike	Yes
Paul McLatchy III	Yes	Loretta Dionne	Yes

Respectfully Submitted,
Paul McLatchy III, Secretary

Approved: April 28, 2020

Paul McLatchy III, Secretary

Unable to be signed by entire committee due to COVID-19 pandemic.