

MINUTES
FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT TEAM
Town Hall 2nd Floor Conference Room
January 31, 2023

Present: Mac Anderson, Kathy Logue, Jennifer Rand, Bruce Stone, Joan Chavez and also Skipper Manter

Meeting was called to order at 2:03 PM.

Minutes of 1/3/2023 meeting were approved unanimously.

PFAS. Jen led off the meeting by reporting that seven days ago, she received a Notice of Responsibility from Mass DEP, because PFAS (known as a 'forever chemical') has been found in two private wells, and the source has been determined to be WT Fire Station #1 on the Edgartown-West Tisbury Road. This means that the Town is required to engage a professional consultant by February 24th and have prepared an immediate response action plan by March 24th. She checked with Rehoboth and Stowe who have experienced this; Stowe has what is likely to be a much larger issue, and is four years in, and are approaching a cost of \$1 million. The deadlines mean that we cannot wait for Town Meeting to hire the consultant and begin the work.

Kathy asked about whether insurance can be called upon for any of this. Jen said she would ask, but she doubted it. She did note that there is already a national class action lawsuit underway, which MA has joined. We would try to join that lawsuit, which would not mean bearing any legal costs ourselves.

After some discussion, it was the FMT consensus was that we recommend to the Select Board that ARPA funds that we had previously anticipating applying to the Howes House design completion instead be set aside for these PFAS costs. It is hoped that by next year at this time, we will have much better idea of likely future costs, but Jen noted that this was likely an indefinite liability for the Town.

Library HVAC. Jen reported that the Library has been having massive issues with their HVAC failing. We are already \$80,000 in and that has only been band aid solutions. said she finally received a report from a consultant on how to address the problem, and the recommendation is a complete replacement of the system, with a newer/different type, except for the ductwork. Unfortunately, this is likely to cost upwards of \$1 million. Kathy will work on a warrant article to authorize borrowing, together with Prop 2 ½ ballot question. She will explore which is better, rolling BANs over five years, or one five-year note. Mac noted that while the current five-year rate might be higher, if rates continue to rise it might well be better over the five years, and less annual hassle.

There was a brief discussion of the Personnel Board's proposed warrant article to do a one-time across-the-board 10% increase. As proposed, this would be on top of the annual wage adjustment and step increases for those eligible, which could mean a 19.4% increase for some employees. It was the FMT consensus that this is not based on any data, comparative or otherwise, and was indefensible.

Kathy filled the FMT in on the Capital Improvements committee's discussion of the UIRSD space needs warrant article, which led to a recommendation for a priority 3 and against proceeding with that article at this time. Given all of the other projects in the pipeline for both the administration in the school system, the MSBA, as well as all three member towns, and the fact that fairly substantial renovations and repairs were completed on the WT school less than 15 years ago, that committee felt that the project would not likely be moving forward for 8-10 years. Therefore, doing the space needs assessment seems very premature at this time. Bruce also pointed out that it was an exploration of energy improvements that got this ball rolling, and not the dire necessity of renovations. Further, he pointed out that the Principal reported a 90-student increase in the student body over the last ten years, but failed to note that the population was still 50 students lower than it had been 15 years ago, so it was hard to see an overcrowding issue. The FMT agreed with this assessment.

The next meeting was tentatively scheduled for Thursday February 9th at 1 PM.

The meeting was adjourned at 2:45 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Kathy Logue

Approved February 9, 2023