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TOWN OF AYER
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Town of Ayer

Executive Bi-Board Meeting Minutes
Thursday, March 25, 2021, 2:00pm

Ayer Town Hall – 1st Floor Meeting Room
1 Main Street, Ayer, MA 01432

Remote Public Participation Meeting Due to the COVID-19 Pandemic in Accordance with the Provisions of the Governor's Emergency Order Pertaining to the Open Meeting Law

Attendance: Scott Houde (Select Board Member); Patrick Diamond (Fin Com Chair); Barbara Tierney (Treasurer/Tax Collector); Robert Pontbriand (Town Manager)

Absent: Mark Smith (Fin Com Vice-Chair); Lisa Gabree (Finance Manager); Carly Antonellis (Assistant Town Manager)

Call to Order: The Executive Bi Board was called to order at 2:00pm using remote public participation (Zoom Meeting) due to the COVID-19 Pandemic in accordance with the provisions of the Governor's Emergency Order Pertaining to the Open Meeting Law.

R. Pontbriand read the following statement into the record: Due to the ongoing COVID-19 Pandemic, Governor Baker issued an Emergency Order Temporarily Suspending Certain Provisions of the Open Meeting Law. Public bodies otherwise governed by the OML are temporarily relieved from the requirement that meetings be held in public places, open and physically accessible to the public, so long as measures are taken to ensure public access to the bodies' deliberations "through adequate, alternative means." This meeting will be broadcast live on Channel 8, Zoom. The public may participate remotely by following the call-in information on the bottom of the live broadcast screen.

Approval of Meeting Minutes:

The Bi-Board reviewed the DRAFT Meeting Minutes from March 25, 2021.

Motion: A motion was made by S. Houde and seconded by P. Diamond to approve the meeting minutes for March 25, 2021. Roll Call Vote: S. Houde, Y; P. Diamond, Y; B. Tierney, Y; R. Pontbriand, Y. **Motion Passed 4-0.**

FY 2021 Budget/CARES Funding Update:

R. Pontbriand advised that the FY 2021 Budget status remains status quo. Additionally, he advised that there is going to be a need for a Special Town Meeting before the Annual Town Meeting for the purposes of resolving a shortfall in the FY 2021 Ambulance Enterprise Fund due to decreased revenues because of COVID-19. The shortfall is approximately \$8,000 at this time but the recommendation will be for a Warrant Article authorizing up to \$20,000 from Ambulance Retained Earnings to resolve the shortfall. If the full amount is not needed it will revert back.

B. Tierney advised that revenues continue to come in on track.

FY 2022 DRAFT Omnibus Budget Update/Discussion:

Outstanding FY 2022 Budget Items:

R. Pontbriand advised that at this time the only outstanding FY 2022 Budget Items are the Police Patrol and Dispatchers Contracts and final numbers on the General Insurances. The contract negotiations should be completed in time for the approval of the budget and warrant for Town Meeting. There have been no other changes to the current (DRAFT #3) of the FY 2022 Budget.

Discussion on Recommended Uses of Free Cash for the FY 2022 Budget:

R. Pontbriand advised that the certification of Free Cash this year was very late in the budget process due to delays at the Department of Revenue because of COVID-19. The Town received the certified Free Cash number of \$1,553,607 right before the Second Budget Public Forum in March. As a result, the Finance Manager and Town Manager put together the following potential recommendation for the uses of Free Cash for FY 2022 as follows:

Free Cash Certified (as of June 30, 2020):	\$1,553,607
UDAG Replenishment – Worthendale Lawsuit	(\$230,000) final
GASB 45 – OPEB	(\$178,000)
Forward Funding of Pension Proposal	(\$300,000)
Compensated Absences Special Revenue Fund	(\$50,000)
Capital Stabilization	(\$790,000)
Stabilization	(\$5,607)

R. Pontbriand stated that this was just the initial recommendation of the Finance Manager and Town Manager but wanted to discuss in detail with the Bi-Board regarding their input and recommendation for consideration by the Select Board for inclusion on the Town Meeting Warrant. Specifically, the allocations of Free Cash to Stabilization and Capital Stabilization.

R. Pontbriand advised that the current balances for the Town are as follows:

Stabilization Balance (as of Dec. 2020):	\$2,646,241
Capital Stabilization Balance (as of Dec. 2020):	\$2,725,595
Certified Free Cash (as of June 30, 2020):	\$1,553,607

R. Pontbriand advised that per the Town's Financial Policies, the Stabilization Fund should strive to be a minimum of 7% of the operating revenue which would be a balance of \$1,131,593 for FY 2022. The Town has achieved and continues to maintain its Stabilization Fund Balance. Over the last several years, the Town has been increasing Capital Stabilization in preparation for any significant capital emergencies and/or future capital needs. Thus, the significant amount of Free Cash has been going into Capital Stabilization with the minimum amount to Stabilization to maintain the 7% balance.

R. Pontbriand outlined three potential FY 2022 Scenarios for the Bi-Board to consider:

Scenario #1:	Scenario #2:	Scenario #3 (Any combination of \$795,607)
Capital (\$790,000)	Capital (\$690,000)	Capital?
Stabilization (\$5,607)	Stabilization (\$105,607)	Stabilization?

The Bi-Board reviewed the various scenarios.

S. Houde stated that he liked Scenario #1 in that it is consistent with our ongoing policy to maintain the 7% Stabilization while continuing to build up the Capital Stabilization in the event of a capital emergency but also in planning for future capital projects such as a new elementary school and Senior Center.

P. Diamond stated that he agrees with S. Houde and would be in support of Scenario #1.

B. Tierney stated that she is in support of Scenario #1.

There was consensus to recommend/support Scenario #1 to the Select Board for the purposes of the Stabilization Article for Town Meeting.

Discussion on Budget Presentation and Budget Book for Town Meeting:

R. Pontbriand stated that at the next Bi-Board meeting (prior to Town Meeting) he would like to review and discuss the proposed Budget Presentation for Article 4 (FY 2022 Omnibus Budget) as well as the 2021 Budget Book for Town Meeting. He asked if there was any initial input.

S. Houde stated that using the same format as last year for the Budget Presentation and Budget Book would be fine.

P. Diamond stated that he agreed with S. Houde.

Discussion on the ASRSD High School Field Project and Future Planning for the Elementary School Project:

S. Houde updated that Bi-Board that the debt exclusion for the Fields Project will be on the Shirley ballot for May 4. If it passes the project proceeds. If it fails it is unclear what the next steps should be. He further advised that Jim Quinty a member of the School Committee and Shirley resident is in the process of gathering signatures for a petition to change the Regional School Agreement specifically the way the School District can borrow/incur debt.

S. Houde furthers stated that the concern is if the passes how does that impact the Fields Project and the Elementary School Project?

R. Pontbriand stated that if the petition is successfully submitted, we will get all the accurate information on not only the procedure at Town Meeting but what the substantive change would do/not do.

S. Houde stated that with respect to the future Elementary School Project for Ayer, he would like the Bi-Board to formulate an official message and plan for the Elementary School Project and the Letter of Intent for the School Committee. Additionally, the Bi-Board should put together a plan, proposal, and narrative for the project by late this Fall in preparation for the District to submit the Letter of Intent to MSBA for the January 2022 deadline.

The Bi-Board concurred with this approach and agreed to have this as a standing item on future meeting agendas moving forward.

New Business:

There was no new business.

Scheduling of Next Meeting:

The Bi-Board scheduled the next meeting for Thursday, April 15, 2021 at 2pm on Zoom.

Motion: A motion was made by S. Houde and seconded by P. Diamond to adjourn the Executive Bi-Board Meeting at 2:50pm. Roll Call Vote: S. Houde, Y; P. Diamond, Y; B. Tierney, Y; R. Pontbriand, Y. **Motion Passed 4-0.**

The Bi-Board adjourned at 2:50pm.

Minutes recorded and submitted by Robert A. Pontbriand, Town Manager

Minutes reviewed and approved by the Executive Bi-Board on: April 15, 2021

Signed: Robert A. Pontbriand 4/15/2021
Robert A. Pontbriand, Town Manager