



CHELMSFORD FINANCE COMMITTEE
MINUTES

January 20, 2022

MEETING: A virtual meeting was held on Thursday, January 20, 2022, at 6:30 PM using Zoom Video Communications software.

PRESENT: J. Clancy, D. Goselin, E. Chambers, A. Tanini, J. Thibault, and S. Chase

ABSENT: K. Duffett

ALSO PRESENT: P. Cohen, J. Sousa, G. Persichetti, D. Hedison, T. Williams, P. Haverty, M. Robbins, D. Lussier, M. Baranski, E. Belansky, P. McDougall, D. Dumais, D. Fumato, S. Sanger, V. Crocker-Timmins, and public

HANDOUTS: Sent via Email: Special Town Meeting Warrant for February 24, 2022, 255 Princeton Zoning Overlay Map, Request for Transfer from Reserve Fund from DPW, Special Town Meeting PowerPoint presentation

The meeting was called to order at 6:30 PM.

Approval of Minutes:

September 16, 2021:

S. Chase made a motion to accept the minutes of September 16, 2021, as written. J. Thibault seconded the motion. S. Chase, J. Thibault, D. Goselin, E. Chambers, and J. Clancy voted in favor of the motion. A. Tanini abstained from voting as she was not present at the meeting. The motion passed. The minutes were approved as written.

Request by DPW for Finance Committee Reserve Funds:

P. Cohen stated that G. Persichetti was on the call, and they had a reserve fund transfer request to address boiler issues at the Byam and Harrington Elementary Schools. G. Persichetti stated that when the boilers were purchased 20 to 22 years ago there were three boiler companies that were manufacturing high performance 95% fully modulated boilers. He explained that the life expectancy for these boilers wasn't fully established as they were just recently in the market. The expectation at the time was that they may last some 20 – 25 years, but as time went on the industry "locked in" at a life expectancy of 15 – 20 years. G. Persichetti stated that Chelmsford was at that mark on some of the boilers and what has happened is that both a boiler at the Byam School and at the Harrington School have marginalized to the point of the cost of repairing them is almost as much as the cost of replacing them. G. Persichetti said that the smart way to handle this issue is to replace the boilers in one school (Byam) with new boilers and take the three older boilers at that school offline. He said that one of the offline boilers still in good shape would

then be installed at Harrington replacing the one having issues. He explained that this would provide for one spare backup boiler being available, if needed. He pointed out that the boilers at the high school were the oldest and the Finance Committee had already appropriated funding for these boiler replacements. He added that when the boilers were installed at the high school they saved \$81,000 in the first year and expected a \$1.6 million lifetime savings due to the efficiency of the boilers. He noted that the more boilers you have the longer they will last because they cycle less often. G. Persichetti reported that they would like to do this work over the February school vacation week to make sure there was enough boiler power for colder days for the remainder of the season. He added that the cost would be \$245,000 for the three new boilers. E. Chambers asked if it was confirmed that the boilers were available. G. Persichetti replied in the affirmative. J. Clancy commented that this would leave the Finance Committee Reserve Fund at \$155,000 for the remainder of the year. He called a vote on the reserve fund transfer. All voted in favor. (6 in favor, 1 absent) The reserve fund transfer is approved.

Presentation and Review of Special Warrant Article 1 – Ledge Road – Esther Drive

Easement:

P. Cohen stated that the town officials had been trying to address the safety concerns on Ledge Road for some time. He said that at April Town Meeting a bus turnaround easement had been approved. He explained that the property owner had proposed an alternate plan using an easement on Esther Drive which was a private drive. He said that they had worked with Town Counsel and the DPW to develop an easement plan and cost estimate. He said that they were seeking approval at Town Meeting of the easement for the bus turnaround. He said that the town would surface the roadway on Esther Drive and would be responsible for maintenance including snow and ice removal. He said that under this arrangement there would be benefit to both the town and the property owner and it would improve the safety to the school children residing on a roadway that has significant truck traffic. E. Chambers commented that there was nothing regarding a cost or funding for this article. P. Cohen replied that they were not seeking additional funding as there was sufficient funding from the road budget, Chapter 90 funds, and the \$1 million appropriated last fall. He explained that this work could be incorporated into the existing road construction budget. He said that the article was seeking legal authorization to secure the easement. D. Goselin asked why this article couldn't wait. P. Cohen replied that he didn't want to be in a situation where an accident happens that could have been avoided. He added that residents who have anticipated this work being done have been patient, so they wanted to get out there as soon as the weather conditions allow.

D. Goselin stated that he did not understand why the town was having a Special Town Meeting given the current pandemic conditions. He added that there were numerous Town Meeting Representatives who were over the age of 65 who could be exposed to additional risk. P. Cohen replied that the driving force behind this Special Town Meeting was the rezoning of the UMASS West overlay district and the affordable housing project. He said that the Planning Board, Select Board, abutters, and project proponent had been working for months to reach an agreement on a pathway forward. He said that while there has been a spike in Covid-19 cases in the last few weeks it appears that the peak has past, and he was hopeful that in 5 weeks when Town Meeting convenes they will have a safe environment. He added that if it wasn't, the Town Meeting would not move forward. He explained that circumstances were changing rapidly and that as the time was closer to the meeting there would be an assessment as to if the meeting would be held. D. Goselin asked what the criteria was which would be used to determine if the meeting would

take place. P. Cohen replied that as the date of the meeting approaches the Town Moderator would consult with the Health Director and make a determination. He added that if the meeting moves forward the ultimate decision rests with the Town Meeting Representatives as to if there is a quorum or not. D. Goselin noted that he has discussed this with the Town Moderator who indicated that it wasn't his decision. He said that he would like to go on record as being very concerned about scheduling a meeting in the middle of a pandemic with no clear criteria which would determine if the meeting was to be held or postponed.

Presentation and Review of Special Warrant Article 2 – Fourth Avenue Acquisition:

P. Cohen stated that Article 2 was a ministerial action. He said that this parcel of land abuts another town-owned parcel of land. He turned the meeting over to J. Sousa who has worked closely with Town Counsel to advance this possibility. J. Sousa reported that this action came about after a meeting with a resident property owner in town. He said that the property owner did not want to keep and continue to pay taxes on this small parcel of land. He explained that this land abuts a small parcel that the Town acquired through tax possession back in 2014. He explained that when a property owner no longer wants to own a piece of property and pay taxes on it there were two paths that they can take. He explained that the Town could acquire the property such as done in this article, or the Town can do a "tax taking" where the Town must file a foreclosure case in land court which can take 2-3 years. He said that the parcel in question has an assessed value of \$4,500 and was 1,620 square feet. He said that to accept the land it is a two step process which includes the approval of the Select Board and a positive vote at Town Meeting. He said that this was brought before the Select Board on October 25th, and they voted unanimously to accept the donation. He explained that the next step was to seek approval at Town Meeting.

Presentation and Review of Special Warrant Article 3 – Collective Bargaining Agreement Funding:

P. Cohen reported that Article 3 is a request to fund a collective bargaining agreement for the police dispatcher's union. He stated that the amount to fund the agreement was \$82,050 and the funding source would be the general stabilization fund. He said that the agreement was a three fiscal year contract which would run through June 30, 2022. He reported that the terms of the agreement were a 0% increase for FY2020, a 4% increase for FY2021 and a 2% increase for FY2022. He added that there would be a one-time payment for those employed on July 1, 2020. P. Cohen explained that the contract could only fund the current and previous fiscal year, so they had to include a 4% increase for FY2021 and 0 for FY2020 in order to come out with the 2% annual increase which is consistent with other departments in town. He added that since they can't provide the retroactive pay for FY2020 they estimated what it would have been which is how they came up with the \$1,500 payment. He said that this agreement would bring these employees' current. He reported that the Select Board had supported the agreement. E. Chambers asked if the additional \$1,500 one-time payment wasn't doubling up on the increase for that year. P. Cohen replied that they calculate the retroactive pay each year individually, but since they can't provide anything for FY2020 the \$1,500 is the estimate of what they would have earned that first year had the 2% increase happened at the time. J. Clancy asked how many members were in this bargaining unit. P. Cohen replied that there were 9 members.

Presentation and Review of Special Warrant Article 4 – Forum Ice Rink Refrigeration System:

P. Cohen reported that the Forum ice rink refrigeration system which was purchased and installed in 1985 needs to be replaced. He explained that before the holiday the system had a total failure and was shut down for a week. He added that they believe that this was caused by a power surge, and they were pursuing an insurance claim for the damages. He said that G. Persichetti and M. Joyce worked with the facility and rink management to achieve a reoperation of the current system, but it was on “borrowed time” and needed to be replaced. P. Cohen said that funding was being sought now rather than in April because the time to replace the ice system would be from May to August when the Forum was shut down. He added that they had been looking into replacing the system including the option of adding solar for the past few years. He said that they had worked with a solar company as well as they wanted to put solar panels on the roof of the building to off-set costs. He said that the committee working on this determined that they should move to an electric chiller which would need 480 volts rather than the current 208 volts which they had requiring a complete upgrade from National Grid. He said that the plan had been to pay from 70% to 80% of this through a 20 year lease of a solar system on the building roof. He reported that unfortunately the structure of the roof will not support such a system. He said that they were currently going back to the solar company to see if there was an option for a ground-mount solar system to offset some of the costs. G. Persichetti reported that he was able to get in touch with the gentleman who originally installed the chiller system in 1985 and the technician was able to get the system back up and running. He explained that if this hadn’t happened the alternative would have been to rent an outside chiller at the cost of \$40,000 per month plus an additional \$1,000 per day in fuel. He reported that he believed that they would be able to limp through the remainder of the season, but then they would need to upgrade the system noting that some of the equipment was more than 60 years old. He added that they had been working with CIMCO on a package system, would upgrade to brand new transformers going to 480 volts, and would have a system allowing for redundancy and the ability to control everything by computer. He said that the goal was to have this work done in the summer of 2022, though it would probably extend into October. He noted that they had already pushed it out so if it had to be extended out further he was not sure that they could fit in the work during the off-season. He said that it had taken several days to get the chiller back up, and they lost only one week from this failure due to it being a warm period and needing the time for the ice to become usable. G. Persichetti stated that the requested amount for this article was \$1,538,000.

Presentation and Review of Special Warrant Article 5 – UMASS West Multifamily Overlay District:

P. Cohen stated that Article 5 was a zoning article to adopt an overlay district at the UMASS West location. He said that this was a result of the months of work between the Planning Board, Select Board, and developers for the site. He turned the meeting over to E. Belansky, the Community Development Director, to provide the Finance Committee with an overview of the article. E. Belansky reported that Trammell Crow Residential has been engaged with the Planning Board and Select Board since March of 2021. He added that they had also been involved in neighborhood outreach regarding the property development. E. Belansky reported that the Planning Board had completed their required Zoning Public Hearing and voted 6 to 1 to recommend approval of this article. He turned the meeting over to M. Robbins and M. Baranski from Trammell Crow to walk the Finance Committee through the presentation which they have made to various town boards as well as neighbors and abutters. M. Baranski stated that he would

walk the Finance Committee members through the project noting that project consultants were available should they have questions. He stated that the location in question is the UMASS West campus at 255 Princeton Street in Chelmsford. He reported that all of the buildings at the site have been demolished. He stated that the original project plan was for two 4-story structures comprised of 282 units, two 3-story walk-ups comprised of 48 units, ten townhomes, and the Choice SCG 3-story structure with about 54 units. He said that they had made changes to the original design based on feedback from abutters such as moving the sewage treatment plant further away from the abutter lot lines. He added that based on the feedback and preference of the fire chief the 3-story structures had been combined into a single structure with the addition of an elevator to support the structure. He added that a wetlands area on the property would also be preserved for wildlife and migrating birds. He said that one item of concern from abutters was the maintenance of healthy vegetation. He said that they had committed to preserving all of the trees that were currently there and integrating a 6 foot plus fence system to separate the property from abutters. He reported that the Town had requested that a playground for children be added to the plan which they incorporated along with adding a “pocket park” which would allow neighbors and abutters to view the wildlife conservation area. M. Baranski stated that they had numerous meetings with the Planning Board, Select Board, department heads, and neighbors and abutters to modify the project to respond to the needs and concerns of the town.

D. Dumais from MDA Transportation Consultants reported that a traffic study had been done with a focus on the intersections of 3A/Route 4, Brouillette St., and Wood Street. He said that they estimated the number of trips generated from the development to be between 135 and 165 peak hour trips. He said that the majority of the peak hour trips would be on Wood Street and North Road headed to Route 3, some headed on Princeton Blvd. to Lowell, and a small number on 3A heading North. A. Tanini asked what year’s data was used for the study. D. Dumais replied that they used 2021 data with an adjustment to bring everything back up to pre-pandemic conditions. He said that in looking at the baseline traffic compared to the numbers with the project there was less than a 5% increase in trips at all key gateways showing that the project was well supported within the area.

D. Dumais reported that as part of the project they included a crosswalk to get the patrons across to the existing sidewalk system. He said that the crosswalk would have ADA compliant ramps and would have rapid flashing beacons with push buttons. He said that they would also include numerous transportation demand management (TDM) programs to reduce trips such as having onsite coordinators, joining rideshares and carshares, having bicycle racks and offering secure covered bicycle parking within the building. D. Dumais reported that alternative transportation was at about 17% based on residents that exist in the census noting that they did not take any reduction for this in the project, and it resulted in limited roadway impact and no change in the level of service compared to baseline conditions. He reported that the Traffic Advisory Committee had provided a letter in support of the project. J. Clancy asked if there was any discussion regarding concerns over the upcoming work on the Rourke Bridge in the next few years. G. Persichetti replied that he did not think any concerns were expressed regarding this. He explained that the plan was to keep the bridge open the entire time and it would be no different from any other construction happening in town. J. Clancy asked for clarification that the trips towards Route 3 were split evenly between Wood Street and Route 4. D. Dumais replied that this was correct, and the two routes were pretty much close to 50/50. D. Hedison commented that when they first looked at this parcel there were concerns regarding the traffic due to the 100

plus seating restaurant which was across the street. He said that there were about 440 less trips per day since the Glenview closed which this study does not take into account.

M. Baranski reported that concerns had been expressed regarding water movement on the site. He stated that any new project being developed within the Commonwealth of Massachusetts would need to be compliant with stormwater management programs such that no water that lands on the site may leave the site. He said that they planned to accomplish this by engineering solutions such as parking lot islands and underground stormwater basins.

M. Baranski said that with the moratorium on sewer connections they incorporated a wastewater treatment plant into the project. He said that initially abutters expressed concerns regarding this, but they provided them with the locations of other close by plants in order for them to see that there would be no odor and little to no sound from the treatment plant. D. Furrato from Onsite Engineering stated that implementing a wastewater treatment plant was a lengthy two-step process with the state. He said that it involved assessing the site to show any impacts to groundwater or sensor receptors. He explained that once the site was cleared a design needed to be done for a treatment facility for the level of treatment which would be needed to service the project. He said that it was a very comprehensive process. M. Baranski commented that they were required by the state to escrow 25% of the overall development cost such that if they were not immediately responsive to deficiencies with the plant the state could step in and draw on these funds. D. Furrato added that these were manned and staffed treatment plants with licensed operators at the site 5 days a week.

D. Goselin asked what the life cycle was on this type of plant. D. Furrato replied that it would be about 30 plus years with various equipment being replaced during that time period. D. Goselin asked if there was a warranty on equipment. D. Furrato replied that typically equipment would have a 1 year warranty, but other components may have a 10 to 15 year warranty. D. Goselin asked what exposure, if any, there would be to Chelmsford for this plant. D. Furrato replied that it was a state permit so if there was an issue the state would step in. He added that the town would not have any level of involvement in this. D. Goselin asked what the largest capacity was for this treatment plant. D. Furrato replied that it would be 66,000 gallons per day.

M. Baranski reported that the topography and mature and healthy tree cover was an asset to this site, and they plan to use this as a sound buffer. S. Sanger agreed adding that the topography has 15 to 20 feet grade changes. He said that the large trees which were mostly in good health and the topography grade changes would offer robust buffers between the abutters. He said that they had quite a few one-on-ones with neighbors and addressed concerns of people walking through to their property by adding attractive barriers along the edges which were seamless when done correctly. J. Clancy asked what the highest point was on the proposed buildings. M. Baranski replied that the pitched roofs would be about 55 feet. J. Clancy asked what the topography change was from this location to Windemere or Princeton. M. Baranski replied that there was about a 15 to 20 foot delta.

M. Baranski reviewed the financial benefits to Chelmsford from this project. He pointed out that Fougere did a financial impact analysis which resulted in numbers slightly different from the numbers in the TCR Model. He reported that the total 10-year financial impact estimate for

Fougere was \$13,850,590 compared to \$14,897,170 calculated by TCR. He said that this included real estate taxes, community preservation, excise tax, and permit fees. He reported that the 10-year forecast for expenses included \$900,000 for the Police Department, \$1,152,000 for the Fire Department, \$96,380 for the Council on Aging, \$394,000 for general fund impacts, and \$3,500,000 for schools for a total expense of \$6,042,380. He said the resulting net benefit to the town would be \$7,808,210 based on the Fougere analysis and \$8,854,790 based in the TCR estimates. A. Tanini commented that capital costs were not included in these estimates. For example, she said that the schools used modular classrooms which did not show any additional expense here. M. Baranski replied that in a meeting with J. Lang it was estimated that this project would result in an additional 35 to 49 students into the school system. He noted that the underlying zoning was anticipated to generate 35 additional students, so the net impact from the project would be a surplus of 0 – 14 students into the school system. He noted that there would be significantly more income to offset the costs that they would incur. A. Tanini replied that when you look at the cost per pupil the result is about \$1 million in incremental cost which would be borne by the current taxpayers. She added that the schools were old and would have to be redone soon. She said that this was an incremental average of 10 students. She questioned if there were other infrastructure costs not captured in this analysis. M. Baranski stated that J. Lang had indicated that additional studies needed to be done regarding the schools, but they could not put a number to additional costs at this time. He added that they were contributing \$180,000 towards these studies. J. Clancy noted that in a prior meeting it had been discussed that the feeder schools for this project would be Harrington, Parker, and the high school. He asked where the discussion was regarding the impact at these school. M. Baranski replied that he had not heard anything further.

M. Robbins reported that they started meeting with the Planning Board and Select Board on May 13, 2021. She said that they had worked with both boards as well as abutter groups and other interested parties over the last 8 months to address concerns and modify plans. She said that the meetings and incorporating revisions has taken some time, but they now had the warrant article and the development agreement drafted and the final meeting with the Select Board was scheduled for next week. She said that the Planning Board had already voted in favor of this article and the Special Town Meeting was scheduled for February 24, 2022. She said that the first issue that comes up with this overlay is how it satisfies the MBTA Community Site. She said that there were two prongs to this. She continued that the first is that if you are an eligible location and you are creating multi-family housing it changes the voting threshold to a simple majority rather than a super majority vote. She said that the other section would require the town to comply with the MBTA regulations. She reported that these draft regulations were still in the comment period, but that the regulations would require zoning districts with at least 15 units per acre by right. She said that the overlay does allow for 15 units per acre by right even though the development agreement proposes less than that. She said that she believes that this would still satisfy the MBTA requirement and if not would certainly be a huge step in the right direction. She noted that if a town was not in compliance with the MBTA regulations they would not be eligible for certain state grants. J. Clancy asked P. Haverty if there was any obligation breakdown of the plan requirements for communities adjacent to the MBTA such as Chelmsford rather than those being served by it. P. Haverty replied that they would be more proposed guidelines rather than requirements. He said that currently there was a 50 acre minimum for anything zoned as multi-family and there had to be at least one area of at least 25 acres. He said

that this project was about 34 acres so would satisfy the one prong, but not the 15 units per acre prong.

D. Goselin asked why this article couldn't wait until April. M. Baranski said that it could, but originally they had planned for this article to be a part of the Fall 2021 Town Meeting. He said that they were now coming up on 12 months since they started. He said that when it wasn't ready for the Fall Town Meeting it was suggested that a Special Town Meeting could be held. He said that the meeting didn't have to be held in February, but it would be their preference to get the project moving forward. He said that even with an approval in February there would be a 6 month lag in additional approvals and work to be done. He said that they had no desire to put anyone at risk and they would defer to the Town Manager, Town Moderator, and Board of Health for guidance in this.

Presentation and Review of Special Warrant Article 6 – Affordable Housing – 255 Princeton St.:

P. Cohen stated that Article 6 was a funding request from the Community Preservation Committee to appropriate \$680,000 from the Affordable Housing Stabilization Fund and \$555,000 from the Community Preservation Fund General Reserve for the construction of the senior affordable housing at 255 Princeton Street. He reported that the Community Preservation Committee has met, and they voted to appropriate funds from the Community Preservation General Reserve Fund and the Planning Board would be meeting next week regarding the appropriation from the Affordable Housing Stabilization Fund. D. Hedison stated that they were looking for a total of \$1.235 million for the development of 54 new senior housing units at the former UMASS West Campus. He said that this would be about \$22,870 per unit and they were looking to access at least \$11 million in federal and state funding dedicated for affordable rental production in Massachusetts. He commented that the development would be similar to the CHOICE Center in North Chelmsford where they had an average wait of 3 – 5 years for a unit. He said that this development would enter the funding round in 2023 to 2024 with the hope of starting construction within 3-4 months of an award.

D. Hedison said that they have been involved with the UMASS West site for over 20 years now and they now were at a place where they didn't control the site but were fortunate enough to have a developer who was willing to work with them. He said that they were looking at a building that was three stories high with a pitched roof. He said that all of the units would be one bedroom ranging from 625 square feet to 705 square feet in size with the larger units being handicapped accessible. He stated that there would be a mix of affordability levels ranging from 30% to 60% of the area median income and local preference will be given to 70% of the applicants with approval by the state. D. Hedison stated that this would be a gorgeous building with 3 stories situated along the curve of the road leading into the market rate development.

E. Chambers commented that the last meeting minutes had the Affordable Housing Stabilization Fund showing a balance of about \$620,000 yet this article was looking for \$680,000. He questioned if the fund had increased by that much in the last three months. J. Sousa reported that the fund balance as of December was \$637,857. J. Sousa suggested receiving an allocation of \$40,000 to \$50,000 before the Town Meeting vote or to change the allocation as to the amounts coming from the Affordable Housing Stabilization Fund versus the Community Preservation Fund General Reserve. D. Hedison stated that the article started out as taking whatever was

available from the Affordable Housing Stabilization Fund with the remainder of the request coming from the Community Preservation Fund General Reserve. D. Lussier stated that the general reserve fund did have enough for the \$555,000 amount to be increased by the amount that would be needed. J. Clancy asked if the dollar amount was in the warrant. P. Cohen replied that the article just said, “sum of money” and did not include the amounts.

Review, Discuss, and Vote on February 2022 Special Town Meeting Warrant Articles:

The Finance Committee voted on the Special Town Meeting warrant articles as follows:

Article 1 – Ledge Road – Esther Drive Easement:

E. Chambers made a motion that the Finance Committee recommend approval of Article 1 for the Town to authorize the Select Board to acquire for the purpose of obtaining a secure and public right of way along Esther Drive containing 11,140 square feet as depicted on a plan of land entitled “Roadway Easement, Ledge Road – Esther Drive, Chelmsford, Massachusetts” prepared by Chelmsford Department of Public Works Engineering Division, dated October 2021. The subject parcel is identified by the town assessors’ office as Map 7, Block 4, Lot 32. The subject parcel contains frontage on Ledge Road, Esther Drive and Oak Hill Road and contains 1.37 acres and shown as Lot 2 upon a plan recorded with the Middlesex North Registry of Deeds in Plan Book 171 Plan 145. The purpose of this taking is to allow for the construction and roadway safety improvements to provide safe access from the homes located on Esther Drive and Ledge Road as set forth in the right of way plan and to further permit school bus access to the dwellings on Esther Drive. And further to authorize the Select Board to acquire these parcels or easements through any and all means available under the General Laws of the Commonwealth including without limitation by donation, purchase and/or eminent domain. J. Thibault seconded the motion. All voted in favor. (6 in favor, 1 absent) The motion passed. The Finance Committee will recommend approval of Article 1.

Article 2 – Fourth Avenue Acquisition:

E. Chambers made a motion that the Finance Committee recommend approval of Article 2 for the Town to authorize the Select Board to acquire by purchase, gift, eminent domain, or otherwise, a parcel of land containing .04 acres, more or less, which is identified as Fourth Avenue, shown as Lot 4 on Assessor’s Map 18, Block 75, and more fully described in a deed recorded in the Middlesex North Registry of Deeds in Book 4976, Page 317, said parcel to be held under the care, custody, and control of the Select Board for general municipal purposes; and further authorize the Select Board and Town Manager to take all actions necessary to acquire said parcel. D. Goselin seconded the motion. J. Clancy commented that this continued the recent pattern of taking on small parcels of land rather than waiting and undergoing an expensive tax title taking. He called the vote. All voted in favor. (6 in favor, 1 absent) The motion passed. The Finance Committee will recommend approval of Article 2.

Article 3 – Collective Bargaining Agreement Funding:

E. Chambers made a motion that the Finance Committee recommend approval of Article 3 for the Town to transfer \$82,050 from the General Stabilization Fund to fund an employee contract agreement between the Town and AFSCME Local 1703, Council 93 Dispatchers for the period of July 1, 2019 – June 30, 2022. D. Goselin seconded the motion. J. Thibault said he still thought that this was a “double dip”. J. Clancy said that the way it was explained in the presentation is that they can only fund back one fiscal year so the \$1,500 was for those who were

employed on July 1, 2020. D. Lussier stated that they could not do retroactive pay for FY2020 so they did a quick calculation on base salary of what the extra would have been for that year which is estimated at \$1,500. She said that the \$1,500 covers the retroactive pay. She explained that the 4% increase was based on the FY2019 pay schedule so the end result is a 2% increase for each of the three years and it was not “double dipping”. J. Clancy called the vote. All voted in favor. (6 in favor, 1 absent) The motion passed. The Finance Committee will recommend approval of Article 3.

Article 4 – Forum Ice Rink Refrigeration System:

E. Chambers made a motion that the Finance Committee recommend approval of Article 4 to appropriate \$1,538,000 for the Forum Ice Rink Refrigeration System as presented. S. Chase seconded the motion. S. Chase stated that his understanding from the presentation was that the work would have had to be done anyway at some point in the near future. P. Cohen replied that this was accurate. J. Clancy commented that the process has been accelerated but luckily they were able to find the original technician and get the chiller back up. S. Chase gave kudos to G. Persichetti for going the extra mile and doing that. J. Clancy called the vote. All voted in favor. (6 in favor, 1 absent) The motion passed. The Finance Committee will recommend approval of Article 4.

Article 5 – UMASS West Multifamily Overlay District:

E. Chambers made a motion that the Finance Committee recommend approval of Article 5 for the UMASS West Multi-Family Overlay District as presented. S. Chase seconded the motion. S. Chase asked what the development possibilities were for this site under the current zoning if this article did not pass. P. Cohen replied that it was zoned for single-family residential. E. Belansky stated that this would allow for roughly 22 single family homes dividing the 34 acres into roughly 40,000 square foot lots. He said that the other option would be a cluster subdivision of the 22 single family homes on the non-wetlands section of the property. P. Cohen suggested listing other uses exempt under any zoning. E. Belansky replied that this would include religious use and educational use which were very broadly defined and had limited zoning review.

J. Thibault said that he did not get a sense that the information on the financials of the schools was all that well thought out or clear. P. Cohen replied that the schools had not yet been able to make a determination as to where their facilities planning is going. He said that they would continue to have discussions on this topic. He added that the schools were outside of his scope of jurisdiction. He added that the request as to the amount the schools would need in assistance had gone out a second time and what is in the presentation is the amount that the schools came back with.

A. Tanini stated that she had an issue in that the numbers may look good, but what was missing was what the residents were losing. She said that as a single family homeowner this would have the potential to devalue her home. She said that there was an opportunity cost here for the development of single family homes which wasn't being looked at. She reiterated her concerns regarding the costs for the additional students and the potential infrastructure costs such as from the modular classrooms. She suggested that having an article with this change should go along with an article for a new elementary school. She suggested using the \$180,000 for the schools to

do the study first and then coming back to Town Meeting made more sense. She said that this article has a lot of unknowns and a lot of risk to the existing taxpayers.

D. Goselin stated that he would be interested in hearing from abutters who may have issues that haven't been resolved. He said that the town was maxed out on the sewer, had a problem with the water, and this would be bringing in a huge project that could impact schools. He said that the plan had to be very well thought out to make absolutely sure that this was in the best interest of the town. D. Goselin stated that he was sure that P. Cohen would not be here if he had not done his homework. P. Cohen clarified that he and E. Belansky were not advocates for this project. He said that they did not bring these projects to town, but rather facilitated the process and provided information to the town.

S. Chase commented that if this article passes the town sets the stage for this project or a similar project on that site. He said that if it is not approved there was the option for 22 single-family housing units. He said that the land was going to be developed one way or the other. S. Chase asked E. Belansky how likely it would be for the town to be approached for a 22 single-family development if the zoning stayed as is. E. Belansky replied that the economics for 22 single family homes would be fairly challenging. He added that another likely option would be a 40B project. He said that sometime in 2022 or early 2023 the state would issue the 40B housing numbers and Chelmsford is projected to be slightly under the 10% level. S. Chase stated that if the zoning is left alone it is far more likely to get a 40B project than a 22 single-family home development. He said that he was looking at this zoning change to result in the overall better outcome for the town whether it is this project or a similar project. He said that even though the committee is voting on a zoning change and not on this project, he noted that he does not ever recall seeing a situation where a developer has done more outreach and more discussion in order to allay the concerns of the abutters. He said that the project has been as well thought out as anything he has seen. He said that the developer has been more than accommodating. He added that he is in favor of the zoning change as he believes that it will result in the best long-term outcome for the town. J. Clancy reiterated that the vote was just for the zoning change. He added that a 22 single-family development did not economically make sense. S. Chase added that it would never happen. J. Clancy stated that he had asked a question at the October meeting regarding the value of homes and studies showed that this type of project actually increased the value of properties in the area rather than decreased the value. J. Clancy noted that he shared the concern regarding the schools. He asked P. Cohen if a school project was being submitted to the MSBA again this year. P. Cohen replied in the affirmative adding that they would be submitting for a middle school which all students would attend. He said that in this way all students across the community would attend rather than building an elementary school which would only service a segment of the town. He noted that they would run into the same problem that they had with the high school in that the Chelmsford schools were in relatively better condition than the other towns that apply for these projects. E. Chambers asked if the zoning remained as is if 40B could be developed on the site without any say from the town. S. Chase replied that under 40B state law overrides most of the local zoning control. He said that projects would not go before the Planning Board but would go directly to the Zoning Board of Appeals. He explained that the law provides for the override of local zoning laws in order to achieve the objective of creating affordable housing. P. Cohen added that the concern was that the state could override a denial at the local level. E. Belansky commented that under 40B there was limited negotiation and limited gifts or donations by the developer. He added that none of the steps seen in the presentation

tonight such as significant abutter engagement and addressing concerns with individual property owners would take place under a typical 40B process. He said that the benefit to the town under 40B is that by law 25% of the units must be deemed affordable. S. Chase added that the other benefit was that all of the units counted whether they were affordable or not. E. Belansky replied that this was correct. E. Chambers asked if Town Meeting voted in favor of the zoning change but for some reason the project fell through if there would still be the 40B exposure. E. Belansky replied that there would still be exposure but there would be a development agreement which goes along with the land and that has value. He said that it would provide a road map to what the town is amenable to for that land. A. Tanini asked what the shortfall was under 40B. E. Belansky replied that there was a shortfall of 44 units and this project would provide 60 affordable units. A. Tanini asked if this article passes if the town would then be covered regarding 40Bs. E. Belansky replied that it was all a matter of timing. He said that Trammell Crow had indicated that they would be in front of the Planning Board within three to six months. He explained that as long as the zoning permit has been issued the Town can then submit the documentation and then those affordable units would count towards the 10% threshold.

J. Clancy called the vote. S. Chase, E. Chambers, and J. Clancy voted in favor of the motion. J. Thibault voted against the motion. A. Tanini and D. Goselin abstained from voting. (3 in favor, 1 against, 2 abstentions, 1 absent) The motion passed. The Finance Committee will recommend approval of Article 5.

Article 6 – Affordable Housing – 255 Princeton St.:

E. Chambers made a motion that the Finance Committee recommend approval of Article 6 for the Town to appropriate a sum of money from the Affordable Housing Stabilization Fund and the remainder coming from the Community Preservation Fund General Reserve for the construction of senior affordable housing at 255 Princeton Street, Chelmsford. P. Cohen stated that he believed it would be \$635,000 from the Affordable Housing Stabilization Fund and \$600,000 from the general reserve to get to the \$1,235,000. E. Chambers amended his motion to reflect the amounts provided by the Town Manager. S. Chase seconded the motion. J. Clancy stated that the Community Preservation Committee supports this article and he assumed that the Planning Board would as well. P. Cohen pointed out that if Article 5 is not approved this article would not move forward. J. Clancy called the vote. All voted in favor. (6 in favor, 1 absent) The motion passed. The Finance Committee will recommend approval of Article 6.

Discussion of Future Meetings, Timeline for Warrant Book Production:

J. Clancy stated that he would look to get his letter out within the next week. He asked if J. Thibault could provide talking points regarding his negative note on Article 5. He replied in the affirmative.

J. Clancy asked P. Cohen when he would have his budget ready for presentation. P. Cohen replied that he was scheduled to present to the Select Board on January 31, 2022. J. Clancy suggested that the next meeting would be the first or second week in February where the committee would see the budget presentation, hear about the capital plan, and vote on committee reorganization. J. Clancy stated that he thought that the committee would continue to have Zoom meetings based on the current climate and the accessibility that it provides.

Public Comment:

None

S. Chase made a motion to adjourn. E. Chambers seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

The meeting adjourned at 9:39 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Pamela A. Morrison