

Town of Saugus Finance Committee

Kenneth DePatto, Chairman

Ronald Jepson
Stacy Billingsley
Theresa Katsos

George DeDomenico, Vice-Chairman

Steve Verone
Frank Perella
Steven DiVirgilio
Stephen Horlick

April 3, 2019 7:00 P.M
TOWN HALL CONFERENCE ROOM

The regular meeting of the Finance Committee was held on Wednesday evening, April 3, 2019, at 7:00 P.M. in the Town Hall Conference Room.

Members present: Chairman Kenneth DePatto, Vice-Chairman George DeDomenico, Terry Katsos, Steve Horlick, Stacy Billingsley, Frank Perella, and Steve Verone.

Absent from the meeting: Rocky Jepson and Steven DiVirgilio.

Minutes: Ms. Katsos clarified that the minutes of March 20, 2019 should read “eutrophication,” not “nutrification.” She also asked that the word “water” be added into a sentence.

Chairman’s Update: Chairman DePatto told the Committee that the group is doing really well following through on the budget review. Tonight, he said, is a relatively condensed budget. Next week is regional school, which will be longer. The Chairman added that Mr. Jepson is not feeling well, and Mr. DiVirgilio has business commitments. He also noted that Mr. Verone will be late.

Manager’s Update: The Manager said we will be having the Topping Off ceremony for the new Middle-High School on Friday, April 12, 2019 at 11 a.m. at the middle-high school site. He said workers will put up the last steel beam. The beam will be painted, and people can sign it and there will be a ceremony. He elaborated that workers put a Christmas tree on top of the beam to give the project good spirits. The Manager said his office will get a release out. He added that he would like to have as many people come as possible.

FY2020 Budget Review

Town Manager’s budget

Salaries – Chairman DePatto noted there is a slight increase, but not significant. Chairman DePatto asked how many people are in this line item. The Town Manager said there are four full-time employees. He said the truancy officer position is included in this line item as well, but that he may be looking at outsourcing a PI for this role.

Expenses – Chairman DePatto asked if the Repair and Maintenance of Office Equip was in a different budget before. Ms. Hatch said no.

Mr. Perella asked about the telephones. The Town Manager said they are in his budget. Mr. Perella asked if this included other departments. The Town Manager said yes, it has always been in his budget.

Mr. DeDomenico asked who is the carrier. The Manager said Comcast.

Accounting

Salaries – Chairman DePatto asked how many employees are in this department. The Town Manager said 7. Chairman DePatto asked what the asterisk is for in this line item. Finance Director Wendy Hatch said

tit means that there is a benefits analysis position that was added. The Manager clarified that the new position will be between HR and accounting, but that they thought accounting may be the better budget to keep it in.

Ms. Katsos asked if we added another person. The Town Manager said yes – the benefits analyst who would try to reconcile insurance. Chairman DePatto further explained that there have been people receiving benefits who shouldn't be receiving benefits in the past, and that this person would work to rectify that. The Town Manager said this position would pay for itself.

Expenses – The Chairman said expenses are level-funded.

Assessors

Salaries – Vice-Chairman DeDomenico asked when Deputy Assessor Ron Keohan is retiring. Ms. Hatch answered the end of June. Mr. Perella asked if the Town has hired someone to replace him. The Town Manager said yes, she started this week. The Manager said he will likely have Mr. Keohan stay on as a consultant during the first year as an outside vendor to help set the tax rate, etc.

Treasurer/Collector

Salaries – The Town Manager said he's looking to bring in a couple part-time positions to help in busy times so that they could help handle the inflow of residents who come in during bill paying times so other workers can continue doing their work, otherwise it gets very distracting.

Ms. Katsos asked if the overtime is new. Ms. Hatch said that's been there for quite a few years, but that they haven't had a use for it. She said they spent some in fiscal 2016, but keep it there in case there's a need.

Expenses – Chairman DePatto noted there is a slight increase in expenses.

Legal

Salaries – Chairman DePatto announced that salaries include just the cost of living adjustment.

Expenses – The Town Manager reiterated that legal is the cost of doing business. He said it prevents and saves money in the long run by giving advice to boards and commissions. The Town Manager said he is a firm believer in getting people the resources they need in order to make decisions in the best interest of the town. Chairman DePatto said he has always advocated for and supported outside counsel specialists. He said it's important for us to have the right representation. Vice-Chair DeDomenico asked if this includes arbitration. The Town Manager said labor and legal are in the same line item. The Manager said everything is so specialized, and that you need an attorney who specialized in the topic at hand and can go to court and litigation if necessary. Chairman DePatto said the litigation line item is helping these committees know the law.

Information Technology

Chairman DePatto said IT is outsourced - all the licenses, software, and everything. Vice-Chairman DeDomenico asked if we have the same vendor. The Town Manager said yes.

Town Clerk

Salaries – Chairman DePatto asked how many FTEs there are. The Town Manager answered that there are two right now.

Elections and Registrations

Town Manager Crabtree said the voting machines have worked out great.

Salaries – Chairman DePatto asked if there's one employee in there now. The Manager said yes.

Chairman DePatto asked if all election helpers are considered temporary. The Town Manager said yes.

Expenses – Chairman DePatto said there is just a very small increase.

Planning and Development

Salaries – Chairman DePatto asked if this is for two positions. The Town Manager said yes.

Chairman DePatto asked if we have any candidates. The Town Manager said people have been applying, but it's a struggle because of either inexperience or too much experience and a demand for a higher salary. Chairman DePatto said these are important positions.

Expenses – The Chairman said expenses are level funded.

Chairman DePatto asked the Town Manager when the Annual Warrant is going to be ready. The Town Manager responded tomorrow. He said there will be a Special the same evening.

Chairman DePatto told the Manager that if the Committee could review Special Articles next week, that would be great to get a head start.

The meeting adjourned at 7:26 pm.