



City of Amesbury
Office of the City Clerk
62 Friend St.
Amesbury, MA 01913

Ad Hoc Budget Committee of the Whole Meeting Recommendations

June 4, 2023

at 7:00 PM

Chairman Steven Stanganelli called the meeting to order at 7:06

Roll call was taken, and present were Councilor Anthony Rinaldi, Councilor Owen Corcoran, Councilor Nicholas Wheeler, Councilor Scott Mandeville, Councilor Jessica Redfern, Councilor Michael Hogg, Councilor Claudel Frederique, Councilor Pamela Gilday, and Councilor Steven Stanganelli

Also present: Mayor Gove, Chief of Staff Ann Marie Casey, Asst. City Clerk Justin Kaiser

Chairman Stanganelli offered a note regarding public comment. He further offered a comment on the process regarding approving the school budget.

Approval of Minutes

- Councilor Wheeler noted on the 5/16 and 5/29 budget hearing minutes there were hyperlinks and that they should be stricken since the links are not permanent. Councilor Wheeler further noted that the minutes were lacking information.

Councilor Wheeler offered a motion to reject the minutes from the Ad Hoc Budget Committee of the Whole meetings of 5/16, 5/22, 5/23, and 5/29. Seconded by Councilor Mandeville.

- Councilor Corcoran asked if this motion would be to include more info. Councilor Wheeler answered that he is looking for more information in these minutes.
- Councilor Rinaldi asked if a transcript of the meetings were available. Justin answered that an audio recording was available.
- Point of order by Councilor Mandeville if this was a motion to amend the minutes or a motion to reject the minutes. It was answered that it was a motion to reject the minutes.
- Corcoran asked that the minutes have more details.

The motion to reject the minutes failed with a vote of 2-7 with Councilor Mandeville and Councilor Wheeler voting yes.

Councilor Gilday offered a motion to accept the minutes from the Ad Hoc Budget Committee of the Whole meetings of 5/16, 5/22, 5/23, and 5/29 as presented and to request the clerk's office provide additional detail going forward. Seconded by Councilor Wheeler.

Councilor Wheeler offered a motion to amend the minutes to strike the hyperlinks from the 5/16 and 5/29 meetings. Seconded by Councilor Mandeville.

- Wheeler reiterated that he does not believe that these minutes have enough detail.

The motion to amend the 5/16 and 5/29 minutes passed 7-1-1 with Councilor Stanganelli opposing and Councilor Wheeler abstaining.

The motion to approve the minutes from the Ad Hoc Budget Committee of the Whole meetings of 5/16, 5/22, 5/23, and 5/29 passed 6-2-1 with Councilor Wheeler and Councilor Mandeville opposing and Councilor Corcoran abstaining.

2024-001 An Order to adopt an Operating Budget for 2025- Mayor Sponsor

Chairman Stanganelli read Mayor Gove's FY25 proposed budget order and the following objections were offered:

Total Amesbury Public Schools (300)

- Councilor Wheeler and Councilor Mandeville offered objections to the Total Amesbury Public Schools line item.

DPW (422)

- Councilor Wheeler offered an objection to the other expenses line item.

Library (610)

- Councilor Mandeville offered objections to the library personal services and library other expenses line items.

Reserves (946)

- Councilor Wheeler offered an objection to the total reserves line item.

The following are the recommendations for the objected items:

Amesbury Public Schools (300)

- Councilor Wheeler read a memo from Joan Liporto for the record that stated that there was a discrepancy in the heating line item. Councilor Wheeler noted that this discrepancy is half way in between the mayors proposal and the school committee budget.
- Rinaldi noted that these cuts are for student facing staff and not administration. Hogg echoed this and Councilor Stanganelli noted that the only jurisdiction that the council has is to impact the amount, not the specific line items.
- Councilor Gilday noted that she received three letters regarding the school budget. She further asked that the document read aloud by Councilor Wheeler be attached to the minutes.
- Councilor Redfern stated that these cuts feel too deep and expressed appreciation to Councilor Wheeler for finding a way to partially close the gap.

- Councilor Rinaldi asked if the budget implemented the proposed changes in chapter 70 of the proposed state budget. Ann Marie Casey was not certain. Councilor Wheeler stated that the item for school assessments did build in what was put in chapter 70 of the proposed state budget.

Councilor Wheeler offered a motion to increase the Amesbury Public schools line item by 80,000 to a total of \$38,125,439. Seconded by Councilor Mandeville.

- Councilor Wheeler noted where these funds could come from
- Councilor Stanganelli noted that the levy capacity is under \$34,000 and that the previous CFO had recommended not approaching that limit.
- Councilor Wheeler responded that other communities have less excess levy capacity than what he is suggesting.
- Mayor Gove answered a previously asked question by Rinaldi and stated that the CFO used the most up-to-date budget and that when it was built it was using the proposed house budget.

The motion to increase the Amesbury Public Schools line item by \$80,000 failed 4-4-1 with Councilors Corcoran, Mandeville, Wheeler, and Redfern voting in favor and Councilor Hogg abstaining.

Councilor Wheeler offered a motion to increase the Amesbury Public Schools line item by \$30,000. Seconded by Councilor Corcoran and the motion passed 7-2 with Councilor Stanganelli and Councilor Hogg opposing.

Councilor Wheeler offered a motion to positively recommend the new Amesbury Public Schools total line item of \$37,975,439 to the full city council. Seconded by Councilor Mandeville and the motion passed 7-2 with Councilor Stanganelli and Councilor Hogg opposing.

DPW Other Expenses

- Councilor Wheeler asked Casey about some line items that there were questions on regarding fuel. Answered by Chief of Staff Casey that there are four total line items that include fuel.
- Councilor Stanganelli noted that in this process that they could not cut from items to pay for other items as that is at the mayor's discretion.

Wheeler withdrew objection.

Councilor Gilday offered a motion to positively recommend the Department of Public Works Other Expenses line item as presented to the City Council. Seconded by Councilor Hogg, and the motion passed 8-0-1 with Councilor Wheeler abstaining.

DPW (422)

Councilor Mandeville offered a motion to positively recommend the total Department of Public Works budget. Seconded by Councilor Redfern and the motion passed 8-0-1 with Councilor Wheeler abstaining.

Library (610)

Councilor Mandeville recused himself for the Library portion of the agenda.

Councilor Wheeler offered a motion to positively recommend the Library personal services line item to the City Council as presented. Seconded by Councilor Hogg and the motion passed 8-0-1 with Councilor Mandeville recused.

Councilor Hogg offered a motion to positively recommend the Library other expenses line item to the City Council as presented. Seconded by Councilor Redfern and the motion passed 8-0-1 with Councilor Mandeville recused.

Councilor Gilday offered a motion to positively recommend the full Library line item to the City Council as presented. Seconded by Councilor Rinaldi and the motion passed 8-0-1 with Councilor Mandeville recused.

Reserves (946)

- Councilor Wheeler stated that he would prefer to decrease this line item by \$30,000 and have that amount be transferred into the school budget.

Councilor Wheeler offered a motion to decrease the Reserves line item by \$30,000. Seconded by Councilor Gilday.

- Mayor Gove expressed her displeasure at this proposal and that these funds were allocated if city staff salaries were increased.
- Councilor Wheeler noted that this would give the mayor discretion to transfer funds between line items.
- Mayor Gove answered that the reserve line has been used to balance the budget in previous years and that this proposal would be an inappropriate use of the line item.
- Councilor Mandeville asked what the reserve account is typically used for. Councilor Mandeville further asked why the budget didn't include staff salary increases and Mayor Gove answered that there needs to be a salary study. Councilor Mandeville asked if the reserves were to fund the study, the mayor answered that it was to fund the salaries that would be a result of the study.
- Stanganelli noted that there was a motion on the floor seconded by Gilday to reduce this line item by \$30,000.
- Frederique asked where the \$30,000 that was previously added to the school budget would come from if this motion failed. Mayor Gove answered it would come from the excess tax levy.

The motion failed 1-7-1 with Councilor Wheeler voting yes and Councilor Mandeville abstaining.

Motion to approve Reserves by Corcoran, seconded by Gilday. Passed 7-1-1 with Wheeler and Mandeville opposing.

Total General Fund

Councilor Mandeville offered a motion to positively recommend a total budget of \$79,444,528, seconded by Councilor Corcoran. Motion passed 6-1-2 with Councilor Hogg voting no and Councilors Wheeler and Frederique abstaining.

Total Appropriation

Point of order by Wheeler that the un-objected to items needed to be approved.

Councilor Wheeler offered a motion to recommend the items not objected to totaling \$39,365,689. Seconded by Councilor Hogg, and the motion passed unanimously 9-0.

Councilor Corcoran offered a motion to recommend the amended items that were objected to totaling \$40,078,839. seconded by Councilor Mandeville.

- Wheeler noted that he didn't feel this vote was necessary.

The motion carried 6-0-3 with Councilors Wheeler, Mandeville, and Gilday abstaining.

Councilor Gilday offered a motion to positively recommend the total general fund amount of \$79,414,528 as amended. Seconded by Councilor Mandeville.

- Councilor Frederique asked how the extra \$30,000 would affect the average taxpayer. Councilor Stanganelli stated that it would need to be divided out.
- Councilor Corcoran asked if Councilor Frederique would be willing to ask that question in an email.
- Councilor Mandeville estimated that it would cost approximately \$3 per household.

The motion passed 7-1-1 with Councilor Hogg opposing and Councilor Wheeler abstaining.

Councilor Mandeville offered a motion to positively recommend the amount of \$77,059,308 to be raised by taxation and an additional \$2,355,220 to be raised by other revenue sources to the City Council. Seconded by Councilor Gilday.

Councilor Wheeler offered an amendment to change the amount of \$77,059,308 to \$77,089,308 in the amount to be raised by taxation. Seconded by Councilor Mandeville and the motion to amend passed 8-1 with Councilor Hogg opposing.

The motion to positively recommend as amended passed 8-1 with Councilor Hogg opposing.

Councilor Mandeville offered a motion to positively recommend the Water Enterprise amount of \$4,350,000 to the City Council. Seconded by Councilor Frederique and the motion passed 8-0-1 with Councilor Wheeler abstaining.

Councilor Hogg offered a motion to positively recommend the Sewer Enterprise amount of \$2,458,729 to the City Council. Seconded by Councilor Mandeville and the motion passed 8-0-1 with Councilor Wheeler abstaining.

Councilor Gilday offered a motion to positively recommend the Water Enterprise amount of \$375,000 to the City Council. Seconded by Mandeville and the motion passed 8-0-1 with Councilor Wheeler abstaining.

Councilor Mandeville offered a motion to positively recommend a total appropriation amount of \$86,628,257. Seconded by Councilor Hogg and the motion passed 8-0-1 with Councilor Wheeler abstaining.

Councilor Wheeler offered a motion to adjourn. Seconded by Councilor Hogg and the motion passed 9-0. The meeting was adjourned at 9:11 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Justin Kaiser