

At a Special meeting of the Town Council holden in and for the Town of Gloucester on May 6, 2024

I. Call to Order

The meeting was Called to Order at 7:00 P.M. by Councilor W. Worthy, Town Council President.

II. Roll Call

Members present: Cheryl A. Greathouse; Jonathan E. Burlingame; Walter M.O.Steere, III., Stephen W. Arnold, Vice President; William A. Worthy, Jr., President

Also Present: Jean Fecteau, Town Clerk; Christine Mathieu, Deputy Town Clerk; Jane Steere, Tax Collector and Interim Finance Director; Elizabeth Beltram, Finance Director; Gary Treml, Director Public Works; Chief J. Delprete, Gloucester Police

III. Pledge of Allegiance

Councilor W.Worthy asked everyone to please stand and join in the Pledge

IV. New Business

Councilor W. Worthy stated that at this time, the Clerk has requested Council move items around on the agenda to allow the Finance Director to have time to calculate out the final number to be included in the ballot question.

MOTION was made by Councilor J. Burlingame to MOVE Item B. Adoption of FY 2024/2025 Budget - Discussion and/or Action 1.Final amendments to proposed budget prior to adoption; seconded by Councilor S. Arnold

Discussion: None

VOTE: AYES- C. Greathouse, J. Burlingame, W. Steere, S. Arnold, W. Worthy
NAYS-0

MOTION PASSED

B. Adoption of FY 2024/2025 Budget - Discussion and/or Action

1. Final amendments to proposed budget prior to adoption, if needed

Councilor W. Worthy stated that the following are additional proposed amendments to the budget for FY 2024/25 for Council consideration, these items were previously discussed by Council:

MOTION was made by Councilor S. Arnold to amend Building/Zoning Official, Salaries/Wages/Fringe Benefits, Building/Zoning Official; to level fund at \$73,055 (**Decrease to budget of \$2,922**); seconded by Councilor J. Burlingame

Discussion: None

VOTE: AYES- C. Greathouse, J. Burlingame, W. Steere, S. Arnold, W. Worthy
NAYS-0

MOTION PASSED

MOTION was made by Councilor C. Greathouse to amend Aid Requests, Gloucester Heritage Society/Historic Cemeteries, decrease to \$500 (decrease to budget \$5,700); seconded by Councilor S. Arnold

Discussion: Councilor S. Arnold stated his appreciation for all the work that this group does. Councilor S. Arnold stated there is about \$12,000 in obligated ARPA funds that have not been spent. Councilor S. Arnold stated that the ARPA funds must be spent within a set time and feels this amendment is a good idea and to leave the \$500 as a place holder for next year.

Discussion: None

VOTE: AYES- C. Greathouse, J. Burlingame, W. Steere, S. Arnold, W. Worthy
NAYS-0

MOTION PASSED

MOTION was made by Councilor C. Greathouse to amend DPW, Highway Division, Expenses, to ADD Paving \$100,000 (increase to budget \$100,000); seconded by Councilor J. Burlingame

Discussion: Councilor J. Burlingame stated that all funds with the state grant are tied into a few set roads so that would leave no money available for any other paving projects. Councilor J. Burlingame stated a suggestion to de-obligate or move ARPA funds in order to increase the amount for paving and be used on many more roads.

Councilor W. Steere stated that the committed capital funds and ARPA funds have been applied towards the grant which leaves very little left for paving on other roads. Councilor W. Steere stated that an option could be to forego the grant which would then release those funds for any project.

E. Beltram, Finance Director, stated that the amount of money available is determined by how it is calculated in and that there are ARPA funds and capital funds committed to the grant. E. Beltram stated that not using the grant match would free up all of those funds for any project.

G. Treml stated that the state grant is for a few specific projects. G. Treml stated his opinion that he does not see why the town can't back out of the grant especially as the town has not received any money.

Councilor S. Arnold stated that he had spoken with K. Scott, Town Planner, who said that it

should not be a problem to back out of the grant. G. Treml stated that they would be changing projects mid stream but stated that the projects could be finished even if the grant were not taken.

Councilor S. Arnold stated he likes the idea of flexibility as to projects if the grant were not taken. G. Treml stated that if the grant money is not taken then it frees up money for more projects. E. Beltram, Finance Director, stated that by not taking the state match of \$130,000 that it would the town would be short the \$30,000 difference between this proposal and the state grant proposal. E. Beltram stated that the funds could be used wherever it is wanted.

G. Treml stated that backing out of the grant means that \$100,000 does not need to be found because all of the grant money would be available to be used anywhere which allows for flexibility.

Councilor W. Steere stated that another option is to add \$100,000 to the budget and asked E. Beltram what that would leave in the surplus account. E. Beltram stated that she can't answer that right now as that figure depends upon any changes that are being considered. Councilor S. Arnold stated his opinion that flexibility for any project trumps giving up of the grant. Councilor C. Greathouse stated her opinion that she likes the flexibility to take care of any emergency. Councilor J. Burlingame stated he liked the flexibility and asked the process to give up the grant. Councilor S. Arnold stated he had spoken with K. Scott and she feels it will not be an issue. Councilor W. Steere stated that he hates to lose the \$130,000 from the grant but \$100,000 is not a lot when it comes to paving and added that flexibility is good.

Councilor J. Burlingame withdrew his second.
Councilor C. Greathouse withdrew her motion.

No action taken

MOTION was made by Councilor J. Burlingame to amend Personnel Office, Consultant Service, level fund at \$30,000 (decrease to budget of \$2,000); seconded by Councilor S. Arnold

Discussion: None

VOTE: AYES- C. Greathouse, J. Burlingame, W. Steere, S. Arnold, W.Worthy
NAYS-0

MOTION PASSED

MOTION was made by Councilor C. Greathouse to amend Public Safety, Animal Control, Salaries/Wages/Fringe Benefits, Animal Control Officer with a 4% increase to salary (**decrease of \$1,543.28**); seconded by

No second made

MOTION was made by Councilor J. Burlingame to amend Special Appropriations, For Grant Matching, decrease to \$30,000 (**decrease of \$20,000**); seconded by Councilor S. Arnold

Discussion: Councilor W. Steere stated that this was a line item in the budget. E. Beltram stated that there is \$50,000 already in the account so \$30,000 will come from surplus and be added to this account.

VOTE: AYES- C. Greathouse, J. Burlingame, W. Steere, S. Arnold, W.Worthy
NAYS-0

MOTION PASSED

MOTION was made by Councilor J. Burlingame to amend Special Appropriations, add Future Operations for Gloucester Schools, in the amount of \$100,000 (**increase of \$100,000**); seconded by Councilor S. Arnold

Discussion: None

VOTE: AYES- C. Greathouse, J. Burlingame, W. Steere, S. Arnold, W.Worthy
NAYS-0

MOTION PASSED

A. A.R.P.A. Funds

1. De-obligation of allocated funds - Discussion and/or Action

Councilor W. Worthy stated that as this year's D.E.M. Recreation Grant isn't coming to Gloucester, therefore, Council is choosing to de-obligate ARPA Project #30 in the amount of \$75,000.

MOTION was made by Councilor J. Burlingame to De-Obligate Project #30 Recreation Matching Grant Fund in the amount of \$75,000; seconded by Councilor S. Arnold

Discussion: Councilor W. Steere stated that the reason for this action is that the town did not score high enough points to get the grant. Councilor J. Burlingame stated that the town could not score high enough to receive funds this round.

VOTE: AYES- C. Greathouse, J. Burlingame, W. Steere, S. Arnold, W.Worthy
NAYS-0

MOTION PASSED

2. Reallocation of allocated funds - Discussion and/or Action

Councilor W. Worthy stated that Council may now propose the funds previously obligated to project #30 be re-obligated.

MOTION was made by Councilor S. Arnold to Re-Obligate \$50,000 to New Project #52, Legal Fund, & \$25,000 to Project #31, Sansoucy Appraisal; seconded by

Councilor J. Burlingame

Discussion: None

VOTE: AYES- C. Greathouse, J. Burlingame, W. Steere, S. Arnold, W.Worthy
NAYS-0

MOTION PASSED

Councilor W. Worthy called for a five minute break in order to allow the Finance Director to make the changes and finalize the numbers.

B. Adoption of FY 2024/2025 Budget - Discussion and/or Action

1. Final amendments to proposed budget prior to adoption, if needed

Councilor W. Worthy stated that this item was acted upon earlier on agenda.

3. Adoption of FY 2024/2025 Ballot Questions

Councilor W. Worthy stated that the following questions will appear on the ballot on May 21st, 2024 for the all day referendum. Councilor W. Worthy stated that the questions have been checked by the Finance Director and must now be adopted by Council:

MOTION was made by Councilor J. Burlingame to ADOPT the ballot language for Question #1 for the May 21st, 2024 Financial Referendum as follows:

Question #1 :Shall the Town Budget for fiscal year 2024/25 appropriate a sum of **\$ 34,181,062.00** which includes Municipal Services & Capital Expenses; Gloucester School Dept. Operating & Capital Expenses; Gloucester's share of the Foster/Glocester Regional Operating & Capital Expenses; and includes a Levy of Property Tax (not including Motor Vehicle taxes) of not less than **\$25,095,097** or more than **\$ 26,098,900** ?

Seconded by Councilor W. Steere

Discussion: E. Beltram stated confirmation of these numbers in response to Councilor W. Steere's question.

VOTE: AYES- C. Greathouse, J. Burlingame, W. Steere, S. Arnold, W.Worthy
NAYS-0

MOTION PASSED

MOTION was made by Councilor J. Burlingame to ADOPT the ballot language for Question #2 for the May 21st, 2024 Financial Referendum:

Question #2: Shall the Town Budget include an appropriation of **\$ 88,349.00** , from the surplus, for capital expenses?

This appropriation will come from existing surplus and will not increase the amount to be

raised by taxes.

Seconded by Councilor S. Arnold

Discussion: None

VOTE: AYES- C. Greathouse, J. Burlingame, W. Steere, S. Arnold, W.Worthy
NAYS-0

MOTION PASSED

MOTION was made by Councilor J. Burlingame to ADOPT the ballot language for Question #3 for the May 21st, 2024 Financial Referendum:

Question #3 : Shall the Town Budget include an appropriation of \$ 30,000, from the surplus, for Grant Matching funds?

This appropriation will come from existing surplus and will not increase the amount to be raised by taxes.

Seconded by Councilor W. Steere

Discussion: None

VOTE: AYES- C. Greathouse, J. Burlingame, W. Steere, S. Arnold, W.Worthy
NAYS-0

MOTION PASSED

MOTION was made by Councilor J. Burlingame to ADOPT the ballot language for Question #4 for the May 21st, 2024 Financial Referendum:

Question# 4: Shall the Town Budget include an appropriation of \$ 100,000, from surplus, for future operational expenses of Gloucester Public Schools? **This appropriation will come from existing surplus and will not increase the amount to be raised by taxes?**

Seconded by Councilor S. Arnold

Discussion: None

VOTE: AYES- C. Greathouse, J. Burlingame, W. Steere, S. Arnold, W.Worthy
NAYS-0

MOTION PASSED

2. Adoption of Budget to present to voters

MOTION was made by Councilor J. Burlingame to ADOPT the 2024/2025 budget presented at Public Hearing on April 22nd, as amended by Town Council as of May 6, 2024, for presentation

to the voters at the Financial Town Referendum to be held on May 21, 2024; seconded by Councilor C. Greathouse

Discussion: None

VOTE: AYES- C. Greathouse, J. Burlingame, W. Steere, S. Arnold, W.Worthy
NAYS-0

MOTION PASSED

3. Adoption of FY 2024/2025 Ballot Questions

Councilor W. Worthy stated that this action was taken earlier on the agenda.

Councilor W. Worthy stated that this final budget will be posted on the website and no additional changes can be made. Councilor W. Steere stated that this is the budget that will be voted upon. Councilor S. Arnold stated his thanks to all who worked on the budget. Councilors W. Steere, W. Worthy and C. Greathouse also stated their thanks.

V. Adjourn

MOTION was made by Councilor to ADJOURN at 7:55 P.M.; seconded by Councilor J. Burlingame

Discussion: None

VOTE: AYES- C. Greathouse, J. Burlingame, W. Steere, S. Arnold, W.Worthy
NAYS-0

MOTION PASSED