

**COMMITTEE ON FINANCE,
SITTING AS A COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE
JUNE 7, 2018 AT 6:00 PM
COMMITTEE ROOM
WOBURN CITY HALL**

Voting Members:

Attending: Chairman Michael Concannon, Alderman Edward Tedesco, Alderman Michael Anderson, Alderman Mark Gaffney, Alderman Richard Gately, Alderman Lindsay Higgins, Alderman Joanne Campbell, and President Richard Haggerty

Absent: Alderman Darlene Mercer-Bruen

Chairman Concannon thanked all the department heads for attending the meeting and said he hopes the committee can move through the agenda fairly quickly. He said this is the fourth of a four nights of budget hearings and that the public hearing on the budget will be held on Monday, June 11.

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Public Works – Appearing were DPW Supt. John Duran and Deputy Supt. Leonard Burnham. Alderman Concannon said the DPW budget can be found on pages 32-44 of the mayor’s version of the budget. Supt. Duran said he budget has remained roughly the same for the past 7-8 years. He said there have been some minor cuts but it is generally the same budget. Chairman Concannon asked if Supt. Duran has enough money to pay for everything his department will need. Supt. Duran said he does. Alderman Gately said Mayor Galvin cut Supt. Duran’s requested overtime budget from \$360,000 to \$335,000, and the line item for police details was cut by \$5,000. Supt. Duran said he does the best he can to try to maximize police details. Alderman Gately said a line item on page 38 for ADA compliance was reduced from \$20,000 to \$15,000. He said a line item for supplies and tools was reduced by \$5,000. Supt. Duran said projections for the last three years were taken into consideration when this year’s budget was composed. He said there has been carry-over in some line items. Alderman Gately said the mayor is trying to nickel and dime the DPW budget. He said the DPW budget takes a beating every year, and in spite of that the DPW does a good job. President Haggerty asked about items that would be paid for in a capital budget. Supt. Duran said a new truck was just ordered and he is about to order a new front end loader. He said he would also like to order sidewalk tractors. He said the department currently has three sidewalk tractors plus a Bobcat and that clearing the sidewalks is an on-going problem. Alderman Gately said the DPW used to have five or six sidewalk tractors. Supt. Duran said he has never had five or six sidewalk tractors during his tenure. Supt. Duran said the pending development in the Commerce Way area is going to be issue from a public works perspective. Alderman Gaffney asked if the DPW plows all of Commerce Way. Supt. Duran said plowing the sidewalks can be dangerous because of the utility poles than do no allow for 53-inches of clearance for the sidewalk plows. Alderman Campbell noted the price of gasoline is increasing and asked if there would be enough money in the line item. Supt. Duran said the budget reflects past usage. Alderman Campbell asked about a \$5,000 cut in the lighting line item Supt. Duran said the city is seeing a savings with new LED lighting. Alderman Campbell asked if the DPW will have enough personnel with the new residential housing

development near Anderson station. Supt. Duran he is trying to plan for future public works needs but he can't say whether he will need another 20 employees. Chairman Concannon said the Dept. of Public Works does a great job and he appreciates everything Supt. Duran and his department does, and that the Finance Committee will see him again when a capital budget is submitted.

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Motion made by Alderman Tedesco and seconded by Alderman Campbell to take the Board of Health budget out of order; approved, 8-0.

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Board of Health – Appearing was Board of Health Agent John Fralick. Chairman Concannon said the Board of Health's budget is located on pages 47 and 48 of the mayor's version of the budget. Agent Fralick said this year's budget is level-funded as usual with one exception, an increase for the cleanup of an old storage depot from the 1970s. He said that by spending an additional \$20,000 in one year, it is going to accelerate how much time it will take to solve the problem. He said there is contamination within 1,500 feet of the drinking water supply and the mayor has agreed to fund another enterprising remedial step this summer. Agent Fralick said everything else in his budget is level-funded. He said there is a \$10,000 cut in landfill maintenance but he has a \$12,000 rollover. Alderman Higgins said she has received a couple of calls about yard waste collections. Agent Fralick said he expects the price to the solid waste contract will increase by 10 percent because the bottom recently fell out of the recycling market, along with the closure of a glass plant in Milford. He said he expects the actual increase in the contract will be between \$100,000-\$110,000. He said yard waste is a separate collection and costs about \$20,000, and that the state mandates at least 12 yard waste collections per year. He said the next things that will require collections are textiles and garbage. He said there is a dearth of landfills and a moratorium on incinerators. He said the state of Washington had to petition its DEP to throw away recyclables as trash. He said the city maintains a good solid waste program that allows residents to throw away more than one barrel. He said each time the city goes back for a trash contract it is a fight to save money. He said the only other option is to reduce service, which is not palatable to the community. Alderman Gately asked how much longer the remediation project on Sturgis Street will continue. Agent Fralick said it will be years to finish the cleanup, but the plume is not expanding and it is in fact going down. He said it is under control. Alderman Campbell said the grass on Sturgis Street doesn't look good. Agent Fralick said he has been in contact with DPW Deputy Supt. Burnham to get the boxes out of there and hopefully they will be removed. Alderman Campbell said there are five dead arborvitaes on Sturgis Street. Agent Fralick said he hopes he can take those out later in the summer. President Haggerty asked how the mayor's proposal for retiree health insurance will affect the Board of Health employees. Agent Fralick said he is a short-timer and in 3-4 years he will reach 80 percent of his salary for pension purposes.

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Motion made by Alderman Tedesco and seconded by Alderman Campbell to return to the regular order of business; approved, 8-0.

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City Clerk – Appearing was City Clerk William Campbell. Chairman Concannon said the City Clerk’s budget is on pages 10 and 11, and the License Commission’s budget is on pages 12. Clerk Campbell said the City Clerk’s office is a revenue-generating department and revenue is expected to exceed \$300,000 this year. He said his office is working with IT Director David Mastronardi to devise a new in-house dog registration program. He said early voting will be a concern. He said Mayor Galvin would prefer to keep early voting at City Hall but the office can’t accommodate 5,000 people over two weeks. He said an option it to use the Council Chamber and the Committee Room for early voting. Chairman Concannon asked if there will be early voting during the September primary. Clerk Campbell said he is not sure if that has been passed by the state Legislature. He said if there is early voting, he will have to schedule overtime for his staff. Alderman Tedesco said Clerk Campbell’s reservations about early voting were 100 percent accurate. He said it did little to change participation. Chairman Concannon said the same people voted, but some of them voted early. Clerk Campbell said he will need money at some point to find alternate voting locations after the consolidation of the Hurd and Wyman schools, to acquire new voting machines and for preservation of records. Clerk Campbell said some line items in his budget increased modestly, and that every little bit is appreciated. Alderman Higgins asked how the City Clerk’s office is doing with supplies. Clerk Campbell replied his supplies are in good shape and that a new copier which is much more efficient was recently acquired. Alderman Campbell asked Clerk Campbell if he has approached the mayor about funding for new voting machines. Clerk Campbell replied the funding will be in the capital plan. Alderman Gately told Clerk Campbell he and his staff accomplish the duties of the office with smoke and mirrors, on a budget of just \$335,000. Chairman Concannon asked if any of the city’s records would be available for display at the new public library when it opens. Clerk Campbell said he is reluctant to display some of the city’s one-of-a-kind items that date to 1670, but he expressed some interest in making available some of the city’s historical data, because he made a recent trip to Italy and was able to view records there dating to the 1300s. Motion made and seconded to accept and make part of the permanent record a document from Clerk Campbell entitled “City Clerk FY 2019 Budget Presentation;” approved, 8-0

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Information Technology - Appearing was Information Technology Director David Mastronardi, who said it has been a busy year. He said the city’s new website has attracted 40 percent more visitors and there is a 44 percent increase in page views. The IT Dept. was involved in a major upgrade to the phone system at Rabbitt Police Headquarters, and future projects include an upgrade to the city’s water management system. Director Mastronardi said there a \$2,000 increase in the training line item in his budget, for employee security training. Director Mastronardi said there is a new system in the offing called “Clear Gov” which is said is easier to use and provided more of the city’s financial information. He showed several features of the Clear Gov system during a presentation with his laptop. He said he requested an IT operations specialist but it didn’t not pass mayoral approval. He said outsourced police and fire services could be brought in-house, and the public library will need help coming on line. Chairman

Concannon asked if Director Mastronardi if he is working closely with the schools. Director Mastronardi said he is getting the RCN connection ready to go. Alderman Tedesco said he is glad Director Mastronardi brought up hiring an additional IT specialist because he thinks adding a new staff member will be a cost-efficient hire. Alderman Gately said there were two unfunded items in this year's budget – MSM Suite and People GIS. Director Mastronardi said those two items were moved to his budget from Engineering, and the accounts are managed by that department. He said the majority of his budget goes to pay for items in other departments. For instance, he said, there is a \$60,000 line item for cell phones, which accounts for every cell phone in the city. President Haggerty asked how the IT Dept. will work with the new library once it opens. Director Mastronardi said it is hard to determine right now and that a lot of the IT facilities are part of the building contract. He said the library will need someone who knows how to operate the IT facilities, however. Alderman Anderson asked if the Open Checkbook program still exists or if Clear Gov will replace it. Director Mastronardi said Clear Gov allows the user to drill down even more and it will provide information about where municipal funding is going every year. Alderman Gaffney asked if the city's servers have been upgraded. Director Mastronardi said he is constantly working to upgrade the servers. Chairman Concannon asked about progress on the water meter servers and whether the city is gathering data. Director Mastronardi replied there has been a lot of work on his end to try to get a better handle on supply and demand but he would refer all questions about the data itself to the Water Dept. President Haggerty asked about updates to the projection screen in the City Council Chamber. Director Mastronardi said funding was just approved to add new equipment to City Hall and it is just a matter of getting it going. Chairman Concannon said the city waited a long time to hire an IT director and now that Director Mastronardi is here, the city is glad to have him.

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Law – Appearing was City Solicitor Ellen Callahan Doucette, who said her budget was reduced by \$1,000, a cut that is reflected in the claims and damages line item. She said there is an increase of \$25,000 in the legal assistance line item as the city heads into contract negotiations with the city's various labor unions. He said her department's budget is pretty straightforward. Alderman Concannon thanked City Solicitor Callahan Doucette for her assistance throughout the years and said the City Council is very pleased with the job she is doing.

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Substance Abuse Coordinator – Appearing was Substance Abuse Coordinator Richard Jolly, who said his budget is pretty simple and consists of the same amount of money he has gotten in the past. Coordinator Jolly said the majority of the money he spends is on speakers for forums in the public schools. He said he usually conducts one program at each middle school and then two programs at the high school, with two grades in each session. He said the programs usually cost between \$1,200-\$1,500. He said he is pleased the minimum age to purchase tobacco was raised from 18 to 21 and his biggest concern remains the presence of the four vape shops in the city. Alderman Concannon noted one of the vape shops is right next door to an elementary school. Coordinator Jolly said he hopes the maximum number of vape shops will remain four and now that the minimum purchase age has been raised to 21, the shops will start to close. Alderman Gately said he thinks Coordinator Jolly does a great job. He said the vape shop in the South End seemed to be pretty busy for a while but now business seems to have dropped off. Alderman

Gately said he hopes the shop will close its doors soon. Alderman Gately said Coordinator Jolly's youth at-risk programs have been successful. Coordinator Jolly said the DPW has funded the employment of two middle school students, one of whom will start working with Paul Medeiros at the Woburn Senior Center. He said the other participant will begin working when he turns 14 on July 8. He said the participants work three hours a day for \$10 per hour, five days per week. President Haggerty asked if there are any other dedicated tobacco stores in the city. Coordinator Jolly said there is the Cigar Emporium at the Woburn Mall, but the store's permit was not renewed because the mall is being redeveloped. President Haggerty said he would support an effort to limit vape and tobacco shops like the city did with pawn shops. He said that is something the city should take a hard look at to send a message the city is not interested in having them. Chairman Concannon said he has attended most of Coordinator Jolly's programs, including the recent forum with former New England Patriots player Chris Sullivan and they have all been informative. Coordinator Jolly said he would like to host more programs. Chairman Concannon told Coordinator Jolly to keep up the good work.

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Conservation – Appearing was Conservation Administrator Theresa Murphy, who said her budget is level-funded, at the request of the mayor. Chairman Concannon asked Administrator Murphy if she has any glaring needs. Administrator Murphy said she would like a full-time clerk. She said she has requested a full-time clerk as long as she has been employed in the Conservation Dept. but she has not received one. She said she has a part-time clerk she pays with fees she collects. She said having a part-time clerk is helpful but she would like a full-time clerk. She said she does the best she can with the resources she is given. She said the DPW and Patricia Bergeron-George in the Board of Health were of great assistance during Conservation Day, as was Bill & Bob's. She said there are a lot of people in the city who do good work. She said she sold 80 trees to Woburn residents during the recent tree day. She said she would also like more space for storage of records, and there are a lot of other things she could accomplish with unlimited funding. Alderman Gately asked how the community gardens program is doing. Administrator Murphy said she believes there is a waiting list and that it has been a really good program. She said the city might have to replace the water faucets at the gardens at some point soon. She said the program is run by two volunteers and that she thinks the charge for a plot is \$20-\$30. She said there are between 80-100 plots and there is now a small organic section which was included at the request of the gardeners. Alderman Gately said the community gardens program is a great program. President Haggerty asked Administrator Murphy if she is aware of any car breaks at the community gardens. Administrator Murphy said one of the members has spoken to police about car breaks and it is her understanding the incidents are fairly recent. Administrator Murphy encourages anyone using the gardens to lock their doors, secure their valuables, and call police if they see anything suspicious. President Haggerty asked if it would be a good idea to install security camera. Administrator Murphy said she would defer to the police chief about the best security measures for the gardens. Chairman Concannon said he has heard there is a problem with rabbits at the community gardens. Administrator Murphy said she has not heard about that but would not be surprised if it was true. Alderman Campbell said she believes a full-time clerk is needed in the Conservation Dept. and she is surprised there not already one there. Chairman Concannon said he wishes there was some way the council to help Administrator Murphy with her staffing issues.

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Assessors – Appearing were Chief Assessor Andrew Creen, Senior Appraiser John Connolly, Board of Assessors Chairman Robert Maguire, and Board of Assessors member Lori Medeiros. Chief Assessor Creen said the personnel in the Assessors Dept. is top notch and the department includes two residential appraisers licensed by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, which he said is not common among municipal departments. He said Senior Appraiser Connolly is qualified to apprise any type of property and he himself also holds a certified general license. He said there was a triennial certification undertaken in FY '18 and the state Legislature has changed the certification period to once every five years. Chief Assessor Creen said the real estate market is not perfect and if you want to know how much a house is worth, you have to wait until it is on the market. He said there is a saying that uniformity is more important than accuracy. He said there is an appropriation in the capital budget for a program called Mobile Assessor which will allow the appraisers to better do their job in the field. He said the program will be in use this summer and it will free up the appraisers greatly and will help end inaccuracies. He said the program will also be more efficient and reduce the use of paper and toner. He said the technology is used in 80 counties and nationwide there are more than 1,000 users working with this technology. Chairman Concannon said the city counts a lot on geography to attract businesses and that businesses bear a bigger share than residents of the tax burden in the city. Chief Assessor Creen said the city's dynamics are changing and he thought he'd never see the W.R. Grace property on Washington Street developed into anything, and now there is a hotel and three restaurants going in there. He said he thought he'd never see both sides of Shannon Farm being built. He said the Woburn Mall site is in an ideal location. Alderman Gately asked about new growth. Chief Assessor Creen said it's going to be an off-year for new growth. Senior Appraiser Connolly said a lot of new projects are just getting started and thus won't be calculated among this year's new growth figures. He said new growth is not happening now, but it's coming. Alderman Anderson said the Assessors do a great job of staying on top of valuations. He asked if there is a real estate downturn looming. Chief Assessor Creen said a downturn is inevitable and the first place it shows up is in occupancy levels of hotels. He said there is downtown about every 10 years, but that appears not to be happening this time.

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Council on Aging – Appearing was Senior Center Director Joanne Collins. Motion made by Alderman Campbell and seconded by Alderman Anderson and seconded by Alderman Tedesco to receive and make part of the permanent record a document from Director Collins entitled "Woburn Council on Aging Fiscal Management;" approved, 8-0. Director Collins said there is not a lot of variation to her budget, which she said has stayed the same for many years. She said a major change is the hiring of new custodian Paul Medeiros, who she said is working out really well. She said there is also a new Transportation Coordinator. She said the rest of the staff is doing well and one staff member recently returned from medical leave. She said she does not know what she would have done without volunteers. Alderman Anderson said the Woburn Senior Center is one of the best resources in the city. Director Collins said it is really important to her that that the building is taken care of, and the DPW was of great assistance until Mr. Medeiros took over full-time. Alderman Gately asked how the roof over the kitchen is doing. Director Collins said there have been no major leaks. Alderman Gately asked how the heating system. Director Collins said two months ago the mayor had a team of people look at municipal buildings about the possibility of changing to gas but for the amount of money it will take to

convert the senior center, she doubts it will change. President Haggerty said the heating system at the senior center is the largest heating system he's ever seen. Director Collins said the COA's big focus is on a safe at home initiative with a carbon monoxide and smoke alarm program in conjunction with Woburn Rotary and Woburn Fire Dept. She said the COA received a grant to fund the carbon monoxide monitors. Alderman Gately asked if the senior taxi program is still on track. Director Collins said it is still going well and she would like to promote it more. She said demographics among seniors have changed and these days everyone wants to keep driving and living at home as long as they can. Chairman Concannon asked if seniors are using ride sharing services like Lyft or Uber. Director Collins said seniors are a little leery of Uber. She said she has a really good transportation staff under the direction of Meghan Rodriguez, who is young and energetic and wants to work. Alderman Campbell asked how many seniors use the taxi program. Director Collins said 218 people have paid for registration and there are probably 250 who use the service. She said she would like to get more people to use the taxi service. Alderman Campbell asked how Director Collins is getting out the word for the safe at home initiative. Director Collins said there was an event in May and there will be another event in September. She said there is also information in the monthly newsletter, on local cable and the senior center's website. Alderman Campbell said she appreciates all the work that Director Collins and her staff do. Chairman Concannon said the Council on Aging runs one of the first programs in the city. Director Collins credited her staff and Mr. Medeiros for their efforts. President Haggerty asked if the COA vans are in good shape. Director Collins said there are three vans in service and they are in good shape. President Haggerty asked who the Meals on Wheels coordinator is. Director Collins said Meals on Wheels is handled by Minuteman Senior Services. President Haggerty asked if there are any capital needs. Director Collins said she usually doesn't need anything unless something breaks.

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Chairman Concannon said Director Collins is the last department head with whom the Finance Committee will meet. He said he spoke to Cemetery Commission Chairman John Sawyer and confirmed the Cemetery Dept.'s budget is level-funded. Chairman Concannon said Chairman Sawyer asked him to ask the City Council to approve the departmental budget as submitted.

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Motion made by Alderman Tedesco and seconded by Alderman Anderson that the meeting be ADJOURNED, all in favor, 9-0. Chairman Concannon adjourned the meeting at 8:06 p.m.

Attest: _____
Gordon Vincent
Clerk of Committees