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By KWilber/Assistant Town Clerk at 11:17 am, Nov 03, 2023

TOWN OF NORTHBOROUGH Community Preservation Committee

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Community Preservation Committee

ZOOM Meeting Minutes

October 5, 2023

Approved November 3, 2023

Pursuant to Chapter 2 of the Acts of 2023, An Act Relative to Extending Certain COVID-19 Measures Adopted During the State of Emergency, signed into law on March 29, 2023, this meeting was conducted via remote participation. No in-person attendance by members of the public was permitted. The meeting was broadcast via Live Stream link YouTube on a link provided on the agenda.

Members Present: John Campbell, Chair; Peter Martin, Andy Dowd, Andy Clark, Andy Clark, Sean Durkin

Members Absent: Todd Helwig, Millie Milton, Jeff Leland

Others Present: Laurie Connors, Town Planner; Jason Little, Finance Director

The meeting opened at 7:17pm after an introduction by the Chair.

CPA Accounts Status with Appearance from Town Accountant—Mr. Little planned to address the revenue budget, status of reserves and available funds, and annual obligations under the CPA accounts.

Mr. Little first shared the revenue budget spreadsheet. He explained that the Town has received roughly \$3.2M from the State trust fund, which is a 36% match for FY25. The budget was increased conservatively to be \$660,000 in the net tax levy and he estimated a 25% match on the state share which equaled \$820,000, which is what the 10% threshold will be based on. \$882,000 will need to be spent or reserved for each of the three core purposes in Affordable Housing, Open Space, and Historic Reserves, although the debt service for White Cliffs fulfills the requirement for historic resources, so if nothing else was spent on historic resources, that requirement will have been met by paying the debt service.

Mr. Little next shared the reserves and available funds. At the end of FY23, the unreserved fund has \$1,060,714. With the contribution from an article in FY24, another \$77,000 was voted into the affordable housing reserve which leaves \$280,000 approximately available. These amounts, with the estimated revenue, mean that \$2.2 million is available to appropriate for at Town Meeting this coming year.

Annual obligations were next discussed. At least 10% for Open Space, Historic Reserves and Affordable Housing are required. The 5% for administrative fees equals \$41,000. An amount needs to be appropriated for the White Cliffs debt service; he estimated that, using a 5% interest rate, \$176,000 will be needed for the White Cliffs debt service, but only \$164,000 needs to come from the CPA because there are premium reserves related to former debt issues associated with White Cliffs. That appropriation and transfer from the premium reserve has been done once before and Mr. Little shared a slide to show what a sample article would look like in that circumstance.

Mr. Campbell thanked Mr. Little for his presentation. He asked him to reiterate the method used to estimate the net tax levy and if that method has been approved or is conventional for the CPA in

Massachusetts. Mr. Little said that was correct; his method has been to look at what was budgeted for the prior year and then increase that to an amount that works. They don't know what the match is going to be yet so there should be some flexibility and budgeting in a conservative manner should they find out that the trust fund doesn't have enough to fund a 25% match or less so that numbers can be adjusted, and the tax rate can still be set in the fall.

Mr. Campbell said he'd seen a memo from the Coalition that the request to add to the state fund was not part of the fiscal budget and that historically the Coalition lobbies for an additional supplement which has been successful in that in recent years. He said it was unknown if that would happen this year, but given there has been a drop in the state's incoming revenue somewhat due to less real estate transactions, they estimated a 20% match but, as has been seen over the last couple of years, the Town received a supplement for that; the reserves are high partly due to conservative planning and that some of the projects did not go through.

Mr. Campbell asked Mr. Little if the debt service number might need to be adjusted when they get closer to Town Meeting. Mr. Little acknowledged that if those numbers were to change drastically, they should be informed but as of now, they use 5% as the estimate.

Mr. Campbell thanked Mr. Little for his service to the Town as he soon will be leaving the position of Town Accountant for the Town of Northborough.

CPC Applications Received to Date or Expected for FY24—Mr. Campbell asked Ms. Connor if any applications had been received or if she expected any. Ms. Connors had no information. Mr. Campbell said the Open Space Committee planned to submit an application for the addition of funds to the Conservation Fund, they want to continue to work toward the stated goal of a reserve of \$1M or more.

Mr. Durkin said Recreation may submit an application regarding restoration of the fences/courts for Melican Middle School's tennis and basketball courts. There were thoughts of submitting an application for fencing and dugouts for Melican's ballfields, but the commission wasn't comfortable with submitting applications for both. Discussion followed.

Mr. Campbell asked if Ms. Harrison was aware of CPC applications that may be coming from the Historic District Commission. Ms. Harrison said they were in the process of evaluation right now.

Mr. Campbell believed an application will be coming from Affordable Housing in the form of potential additional units on Boundary Street. Ms. Connors thought that would be postponed because they are still trying to negotiate the sewer and water connection with Marboro.

Old/New Business

Consideration of Minutes from September 7, 2023—Mr. Campbell had emailed a correction to staff in which he clarified that he was willing to continue as Chair, he was not resigning. Mr. Martin made a motion to approve the minutes as amended. Mr. Dowd seconded the motion. Roll call vote was taken, all were in favor.

Discussion of Vice Chair Position—Discussion will be deferred to another meeting when more members are present.

Next Meeting—Stuart Saginor, Community Preservation Coalition, will be joining the CPC meeting in person on November 2, which will be held in the Selectman's Meeting Room and will be televised. Ms.

Connors confirmed that meeting space has been reserved for November 2, December 7, and January 4 and that all those meetings will be televised. Appropriations will begin using that space in January so subsequent CPC meetings after January 4 may have to be held in a different space. Mr. Campbell said Mr. Saginor requested the use of a/v equipment for his presentation. Mr. Campbell said he'd asked Mr. Saginor to focus on updates in CPA applications and provide education on what is allowable in the area of historic restoration; he wanted to get at the root of what might be allowable with regard to White Cliffs so they are able respond to the next phase, should that come before this committee. The remainder of the meeting can entail discussion of any applications that have been submitted as well as any other business before the Committee.

Ms. Harrison asked for clarification on the deadline to submit CPC applications. Mr. Campbell said they are accepted on a rolling basis, Ms. Connors confirmed that the deadline is November 1st.

Ms. Harrison made a motion to adjourn. Mr. Martin seconded the motion. Roll call vote followed, all were in favor.

The meeting adjourned at 7:34pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Michelle Cilley
Recording Secretary