

Finance Committee
March 4, 2024
7:00 PM

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I. Call to Order

The March 4, 2024 meeting of the Finance Committee was held via remote participation and was called to order at 7:02 pm by Paula Daniels, Chair of the Finance Committee.

Finance Committee members present: Kevin Bugaj (arrived at 7:05), Paula Daniels, , Tracy Mahan, Sandra Ollerhead, Frank Joe Parker, William Rotondi Paul J. Schleicher, Cody Thompson, Zack Tsilis and Bonnie Yezukevich

Absent: Steve Evans

II. New Business

Discussion of FY25 Budget, Capital, and/or Town Meeting Requests

FY2025 Budget

Mr. Yunits reviewed the following details pertaining to State aid for FY2025:

- A few months ago, the governor made 9C cuts.
- Revenue is a billion dollars under projections and since benchmarks have not been met, it is likely the governor will be making additional cuts.
- He referred a UGGA Funding graph, showing State funding was significantly cut midyear in 2008 and continued through 2010. Since then, funding has slowly increased; but still has not reached the dollar level it was at in 2008 despite inflation.
- Revenue in Local receipts are \$730,000 above last year, mainly due to higher interest rates. Since borrowed funds for projects are held in the bank until they are spent. The interest earned on those funds is \$602,000.
- Licenses and building permits revenue is \$318,000 below last year's level at this time.
- He does not predict Free Cash will be nearly as much as the last two years because of this and also the Health Care Holiday received last year.
- The Stabilization Fund earned \$34,000 in interest in FY2024. The current balance is \$3.1 million and it should be about \$3.7 million.
- The OPEB Fund earned \$36,000 in interest in FY2024.
- Free cash was almost \$5 million last year. This year under \$2 million is forecasted.
- He referred to the Revenue and Expenditure draft. Currently it reflects all department's wish lists and there is still much work to be done on these budgets.
 - The overall increase requested for the Town is 6 percent and the Schools is twelve percent, which is a deficit of \$5.5 million.
 - There are still pending numbers to be added to this draft (Hicks Fund, Bristol Agricultural, Water/Sewer reimbursements, etc.).
- He will provide the Finance Committee a Revenue and Expenditure draft at 4 percent next week.

Mr. Thompson and Mr. Tsilis questioned and commented that the interest earned in the Stabilization and OPEB funds. OPEB earned at a higher rate than Stabilization and overall, both are low compared to current interest rates and OPEB

Mr. Yunits will check with the Town Treasurer on this information.

Draft Warrant

Mr. Yunits referred to the draft warrant and asked the Finance Committee to review and let him know if they have questions on any of the Articles.

Ms. Daniels asked for a timeline for the warrant.

Mr. Yunits reviewed the Spring Annual Town Meeting warrant is closed. The Special Town Meeting warrant is open. The warrant needs to be posted 14 days prior to the Spring Annual Town Meeting on May 13, 2024.

Ms. Ollerhead asked for clarification on the Year End Management report showing \$600,000 not spent by the Schools as of June 2023.

Mr. Yunits and Mr. James Puello, Town Accountant, explained the majority of those funds were encumbered for remaining FY2023 bills. Mr. Puello shared the last couple years the Schools have turned back some funds to Free Cash to put towards the interest on the TRANE project notes.

Ms. Ollerhead asked if all departments across the Town return unused funds to Free Cash.

Mr. Puello explained the turn back process and offered to share a detailed Turnback report by department.

Mr. Thompson asked for a breakdown of FY2025 budget requests by department.

Mr. Yunits confirmed he will be sending that information out to the Finance Committee once it is finalized.

Mr. Schleicher rejoined the meeting after losing connection.

Future Meetings

Ms. Daniels asked the Finance Committee how they would like to conduct meetings (virtual, in-person, hybrid etc.).

Mr. Schleicher suggested to keep the meetings virtual.

Mr. Rotondi agreed.

Mr. Parker commented virtual meetings make accessing the meeting materials easy during the meetings and reduces the amount of paper used.

Motion was made by Mr. Parker for the Finance Committee to meet virtually for the next fiscal year. Seconded by Mr. Rotondi. Vote: Unanimous 10-0. Motion Carries.

III. Open session for topics not reasonably anticipated 48 hours in advance

IV. Review/Approve Minutes

The following minutes were reviewed and updated as needed:

- September 25, 2023
- October 2, 2023

Motion made by Mr. Schleicher to approve the Finance Committee meeting minutes for September 25, 2023. Seconded by Mr. Rotondi. Vote: 8 Yes 2 Abstain. Motion Carries.

Motion was made by Mr. Schleicher to approve the Finance Committee meeting minutes for October 2, 2023. Seconded by Mr. Rotondi. Vote: Unanimous 10-0. Motion Carries.

V. Adjournment

Motion was made by Ms. Yezukevich to adjourn the meeting at 7:27 pm. Seconded by Mr. Parker. Vote: Unanimous 10-0. Motion Carries.

The meeting is adjourned at 7:27 pm.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=p6TttfNiirI>
Respectfully submitted by:

Anne Simpson

Minutes Approved by Committee on:

3/18/2024

Signature:

Paula Sano