

Approved: 4-8-2024

TOWN OF WINCHENDON
JOINT BOARD OF SELECTMEN AND FINANCE COMMITTEE MEETING
TUESDAY, MARCH 26, 2024
Town Hall, 109 Front Street, Winchendon, Mass.

Board of Selectmen Present:

Rick Ward, Acting Chair
Danielle LaPointe

William McKinney, Interim Town Manager
Debra Dennis, Administrative Assistant

Melissa Blanchard

Absent: Audrey LaBrie
Barbara Anderson

Finance Committee Present:

Thomas Kane, Chair
Dr. Maureen Ward, Vice-Chair
Charles Corts
Doug Delay
Adrian Guerrero
James Reid

List of Documents Presented at Meeting:

- Final FY25 Budget
- Power Point Presentation of FY25 Budget

6:30 P.M. Acting Chair Ward and Finance Committee Chair Kane called the meeting to order at 6:31pm. Pledge of Allegiance. Finance Chair Kane asked if anyone would be audio or video recording this meeting tonight to which there was no response heard.

Town Manager, Bill McKinney gave an overview of the final budget and presentation. Finance Committee Member Ward asked about principal payments. McKinney said about \$350,000 if loan is for ten years. That's just the principal portion. Finance Committee Member Ward asked about the Department of Public Works line items which have increased over the last few years. McKinney said we are buying liquid salt that has saved us money. DPW Director Brian Croteau said we have used it this year twice. We can't use it if it is going to rain due to it being washed away. It costs about \$700 to treat the main roads compared to \$3,500 to treat the roads. Finance Committee member Guerrero said what about long term? Croteau said yes, in the long term it will curve the salt prices.

McKinney went over the changes in the budget. He said the salary for the Park & Recreation Coordinator is now in the budget. Last year it was funded by Robinson Broadhurst. Monty Tech is down slightly, transportation down. The debt is decreasing, property liability claims are going up, retirement has been increased by 10%. The budget has a total increase of about 1.4 million.

McKinney said free cash has been certified which is roughly around \$900,000. \$200,000 needs to be placed back in stabilization since used it to pay a Health Insurance invoice from FY23.

- **Expenses \$35,842,401**
- **Revenues \$35,842,401**
 - **Revenues \$35,077,204**
 - **ARPA \$200,000**
 - **Cannabis Revenue \$50,000**
 - **Free Cash \$350,000**
 - **Treasurer's Miscellaneous \$165,107**
 - **Total \$35,842,401**

McKinney went over the challenges going forward in FY26:

- Health Insurance 10% increase = \$265,000
- Pension contribution 10% increase= \$230,000
- Debt ten year borrowing = \$350,000 principal and \$200,000 in interest
- Water and sewer funds have run a deficit in some of the past few years
- \$9.5 million water line project to be paid for with water rate increase

Finance Committee Chair Thomas Kane said this is not a balanced budget this is a budget that is almost a half of a million dollars in a deficit. We are using free cash and ARPA money. It is important we come up with a plan for next year. We are going to have a serious revenue problem next year. We will have to cut either expenses or salaries. This is a serious issue. McKinney said this is a big problem. He said he wanted to let people know we need to start thinking about it now.

Finance Committee Member Ward said it's also the school that needs to think about it. Finance Committee member Guerrero questioned the use of ARPA funds. He said he thought they could only be appropriated for certain items. McKinney said we have lead way to spend it. Finance Committee Chair Kane said it was limited at first but over the last couple years they have let towns spend it the way they want. Croteau said when we have this money and our auditing firm certified it as free cash.

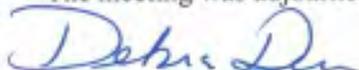
Selectwoman Blanchard said she has concerns. She questioned why some department heads have substantial increases and clerical doesn't. Selectwoman LaPointe pointed out that the costs of street lights haven't gone up. She asked about the increase for the Building Inspector. McKinney said it has increased because he is retiring and that is why you are seeing the larger increases.

Jane LaPointe asked what is next. Finance Committee Chair Thomas Kane said the public hearing is April 23rd on the warrant articles.

Finance Committee Member Ward moved to adjourn the Finance Committee meeting at 7:06pm. Charles Corts seconded. Vote: All aye.

14. ADJOURNMENT- LaPointe moved to adjourn. Blanchard seconded. Vote: All aye.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:07pm.



Respectfully submitted
Debra Dennis, Administrative Assistant