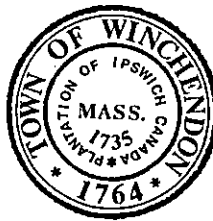


Approved: 4/23/24

6/15

# TOWN OF WINCHENDON



WINCHENDON TOWN CLERK  
RCUD APR 24 2024 AM 10:53

## Finance Committee

Telephone (978)-297-5419

### Regular Meeting/Public Hearing

Finance Committee Minutes

April 9, 2024 6:30PM

Town Hall 2nd Floor Auditorium

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**Members Present:** Chair Thomas J. Kane Jr., Vice-Chair Dr. Maureen Ward, Charles C. Corts, Doug Delay, Anthony Dickson, James Reid

**Guests:** Town Manager- Bill McKinney

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### List of Documents Presented at Meeting:

- April 9, 2024 Meeting Agenda
  - Warrant Review
  - YTD Reports
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**6:30PM:** Chair Thomas Kane Jr. called the Finance Committee meeting to order followed by the Pledge of Allegiance. Audio/video recording disclosure was announced, hearing none.

Dr. Maureen Ward requested to move the agenda items out of order and start with the warrant review first.

**Warrant Review:** Town Manager Bill McKinney began reviewing the warrant articles.

The first article is the reports and committees, to include anything the Finance Committee would like to present at the town meeting, it is a usual and customary article.

Article 2 has to do with the opioid settlement authorization. The governor through the legislature passed a law that the opioid settlement funds, that they have been receiving the past few years, can go into a special revenue account and are to be treated separately from the other monies. Last year they created a stabilization fund for the opioid funds but after receiving further guidance it should just be a special revenue account, so they are unsure if that needs to go through town meeting or not yet. This article is a place holder until they receive the actual language to input.

Article 3 has to do with the annual revolving funds authorization. There will be some changes to that as they make sure all the funds are actually tied to specific bylaws. One of the parts of the municipal

modernization act that the governor has proposed would allow once a revolving fund is set up at a certain threshold, unless its being changed, it would not require for it to be brought up at the town meeting.

Article 4- senior tax work off. It is the same as last year.

Article 5- nonprofit assistance to the CAC. It is the same as last year.

Article 6- the general government fund. It shows some of the funding sources, they will have to put free cash and ARPA into it as well. The cemetery trust, title V liens, the infrastructure investment fund, and the homeless transportation. Those numbers are the same as last year. The water, wastewater, transfer station, and for the first time this year the PEG access and direct costs are all different based on the budget amounts.

In regards to all the different departments, it was a length list last year so the town manager combined some of the items such as legal under town manager.

Article 7- water enterprise is similar to last year.

Article 8- wastewater enterprise.

Article 9- transfer station.

Article 10- cable public access.

Article 11- school budget.

Article 12- vocational school assessment for Monty Tech.

Article 13- to reappropriate funds. There was a borrowing authorization to fix the DPW roof that came in under budget almost \$43,000. The way it was written, it can't be used for anything except the DPW roof. This article was to request that money be reappropriated to fund other DPW building repairs that are needed.

Article 14- appropriate some of the retained earnings for the transfer station enterprise funds to put into this years budget.

Article 15 & 16 have to do with a purchase of a six wheel dump truck. It is approximately \$220,000 and will be used for both the water and wastewater enterprise funds. The wastewater enterprise funds retained earnings came in at over \$300,000, whereas the water enterprise account only had about \$40,000 in retained earnings.

Article 17 is asking for about \$77,000 for two capital items, a vehicle in DPW and library exterior repairs.

Article 18 is to take money from the 911 grant and pay for a police cruiser replacement. The chief has an annual plan to replace one cruiser one year, and two the next, alternating between one and two every year.

Article 19 is the transfer of free cash back to stabilization. They want to make sure the \$200,000 that was "borrowed" back in December is paid back.

Article 20 is in regards to the \$80,000 in opioid funds that will end up coming from free cash. The next article did not have a number yet. It was to change the borrowing term authorization for prior year projects. They determined that some of them were set to 5 year borrowings, when they could be extended to 10 or 15 years. It would be beneficial for the town to extend them over more years so it won't be as much of a hit in fiscal '26.

Article 21 is the creation of a youth commission. There is a group of youth in town that has been working with the CAC that want to get more involved in government. After speaking with other towns in the area, some of them have a youth commission and they are interesting in getting one started for Winchendon.

Article 22 is for the commission on disabilities.

Article 23 is a pilot agreement for a solar project.

Article 24 is to allow the tax collector to increase the demand fees. The state law allows you to set the demand fee anywhere up to \$30. It has been set at \$5 for a long time and the request was to increase it to \$15 to support the increased costs due to inflation.

The next article has to do with the land we had tried to convey in December from the town to the redevelopment authority. Unfortunately the wrong information was put down on the map block and lot number on Lincoln Ave.

Article 26 is the flood zoning bylaw.

There were four citizen petitions submitted yesterday that were certified by the town clerk. The first one was to now allow any projects or any COMM-97 material or contaminated soil to be brought, stored, or dumped in the town of Winchendon.

Article 30 has to do with changing the state flag and seal.

T. Kane wanted the public to know there will be a public hearing on April 23rd at 7PM and the town meeting will be on May 20th.

**Minutes:** March 12, 2024, March 21, 2024, March 26, 2024

Dr. M. Ward motioned to approve the March 12th minutes as presented, 2nd by C. Corts  
**Corts (Y) Delay (Y) Dickson (Y) Reid (Y) Ward (Y) Kane (A) 5-0-1 Abstention**

Dr. M. Ward motioned to approve the March 21st minutes as presented, 2nd by D. Delay  
**Corts (Y) Delay (Y) Dickson (A) Reid (A) Ward (Y) Kane (Y) 4-0-1 Abstentions**

Dr. M. Ward motioned to approve the March 26th minutes as presented, 2nd by C. Corts  
**Corts (Y) Delay (A) Dickson (Y) Reid (Y) Ward (Y) Kane (Y) 5-0-1 Abstention**

**YTD Reports:** T. Kane reviewed the Finance Committee accounts and stated they had \$44,000 reserved for the audit.

Dr. M. Ward voiced her concern with the audit happening and receiving the report after the warrant has gone to public meeting and been approved because some of the issues that get brought up need to be addressed on the budget.

T. Kane pointed out the cable access enterprise fund has still not been set up yet, so there are still charges and budgets that are in the operating budget that will be transferred.

Health insurance was running high at 85%, 10% over.

The state assessments and state revenues were all at about 50%. Tax revenue was at about 40%. The water enterprise rates have not been fixed yet and they did not include what they expect to collect, it was set at 0, so it looks like its above estimate.

For Veolia, the sewer line item was at 76% but the water was at 44%.

School tuition seems to be under the wrong line item and there seems to be a few more errors under the school line items.

T. Kane mentioned they have not met with the school department to review their budget. They do not have control over their decisions, but they would like to be aware of what is going on.

**Other Committees with Finance Representation Updates:** James Reid stated there were no updates with the Fire Department. The Capital Planning Committee has met, but Dr. M. Ward mentioned she has not seen any recordings or minutes. D. Delay stated there were a few capital items that will go before Robinson Broadhurst, if they fund them they will move forward, if not they will be held off, including the Old Murdock Senior Center repairs.

**Town Meeting Finance Committee Report:** T. Kane stated the report has not been completed yet. He wanted to have a discussion with the committee members in regards to what they would like to include and emphasize this year. One question T. Kane wanted to mention was, what was driving the increases in the expenses, particularly in the health insurance and retirement. Secondly, where the money/increases are going, how much percentage for the school and town.

D. Delay was concerned they were balancing a final 25 budget without making any contribution to stabilization, OPEB, etc. and relying on free cash and ARPA, not reoccurring revenues.

The committee planned to meet at 6:30PM on 4/23/24 before the 7:00PM public hearing to review the town meeting warrant.

**Committee Comments:** Dr. M. Ward thanked Adrian Guerrero for his time on the committee. She appreciated his input and dedication to the committee.

**Public Input:** Jane Lapointe wanted to find out how the town got into their current financial predicament and questioned their plan on how it will get addressed.

7:42PM- Dr. M. Ward motioned to adjourn, 2nd by C. Corts  
Corts (Y) Delay (Y) Dickson (Y) Reid (Y) Ward (Y) Kane (Y)

Respectfully submitted:

*Brianna Lindahl*

Brianna Lindahl, Finance Committee Recording Secretary

*Thomas Kane Jr.*

Thomas Kane Jr., Chair

Dr. Maureen Ward, Vice-Chair

Charles C. Corts

Douglas Delay

Anthony Dickson

James Reid