

Approved: 2/11/25

# TOWN OF WINCHENDON



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## Finance Committee

Telephone (978)-297-5419

**Regular Meeting**  
Finance Committee Minutes  
January 14, 2025 6:30 PM  
Town Hall 2nd Floor Auditorium

**Members Present:** Chair Thomas J. Kane Jr., Vice-Chair Dr. Maureen Ward, Chuck Corts, Doug Delay,  
Mike Giovannucci

**Absent:** Diane Coulter

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**List of Documents Presented at Meeting:**

- January 14, 2025 Public Meeting Agenda
- December 10, 2024 Minutes
- YTD Reports

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**6:30PM:** Chair Thomas Kane Jr. reconvened the Finance Committee meeting to order followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

T. Kane announced Anthony Dickson has resigned from the Committee for personal reasons. The members thanked him for his service to the board and he will be greatly missed. There was now an open position on the Committee.

**Minutes:** December 10, 2024 Minutes

Dr. M. Ward motioned to approve the December 10, 2024 Minutes, 2nd by D. Delay  
**Corts (Y) Delay (Y) Giovannucci (Y) Ward (Y) Kane (Y) 5-0**

**YTD Report Review:** T. Kane had a chance to sit down with Katie to go over some questions. Their main topic of discussion was regarding the Enterprise Funds. He still had some questions and may need to sit down with Brian to discuss further. Water Personnel Overtime was a little ahead of schedule at 73%, while the budget is currently at 50%. On the revenue side of the Water Department, it was clear they were seeing numbers reflecting that not all of the rates have been collected/entered into the revenue accounts. It was showing 29% of expected user rate revenue, and reflecting that certain water liens have not been collected yet. Miscellaneous water review was budgeted at \$10,000 and currently has \$34,500, but T. Kane was unsure what that figure was from.

Sewer Expenses show there have been no payments for Sewer Debt Service and Interest Accounts. Typically there will be transfers from the General Fund early in the year but they have not taken place yet. Sewer Revenues are reflecting the same situation, 36% of user rates at 50% of the year. Connection fees and liens haven't been entered and Betterment Revenue is showing 4%.

Landfill Tipping Fees are budgeted at \$100,000 and so far they have been billed and paid \$158,000. T. Kane wanted to look into the driving force of why they were so high.

The new Cable and Enterprise Fund is still being entered into the budget numbers. The treasurer's office is aware but they have been backed up lately.

For Revenues, under Taxes, there have been 2 tax bills sent out this year and the collection days have passed, so it should reflect more in the numbers, but was currently showing 6.1%.

D. Delay brought up the Fire Department Overtime account being at 82%

**Update on Deficiencies identified in the FY23 Audit Report:** Reconciliation of cash- Bank reconciliation is reconciled through August 2024. The Old Vendor Account is reconciled through November 2024. New Vendor Account is reconciled through July 2024. Receivables- real property is reconciled, real estate is reconciled, motor vehicles are reconciled, personal property real estate for accounts to the current month are all reconciled. The BAN completed and converted it to bonds in August 2024. The Insurance Appropriation is completed and up to date. Interest Revenues are completed and up to date. ARPA spreadsheet is completed and up to date. The Grant spreadsheet has not been started yet. The IT security is in progress. The Receivable Collectibles went out in June 2024. The prior revenues will be done prior to closing the books. The OPEB liability needs to go to the actuary, that's in progress. Katie has completed the compensated absences. Fire Chief Tom Smith is working with FEMA to get the receivables. There are several fees and costs related to the Ambulance Service that have not been repaid. In regards to Stagnant Balances, Katie is in progress of creating a list and reviewing all the accounts. Tom Smith is working with a 3rd party biller regarding the ambulance collectibles. The Town Manager is hoping to have Free Cash certified by the end of February, which is later than usual but an improvement from last year.

**Budget Trends, Fiscal Forecast, Tri-Board Meeting:** Fire Department personnel is at 43% over 5 years, averaging 8.6% each year. They have not added staff, so it raises some questions. When looking at the budgets and actuals, 4 out of 5 years have been over spent. In regards to the expenses, they get cut every year. This year they increased to \$122,000, but the expenditures are well under the amount budgeted. A lot of the money gets transferred at the end of year into the personnel side to cover the overages.

There has been reorganization in Public Works in terms of where people work, making it confusing to follow. There were 4-5 different categories of personnel. The DPW director now oversees the school grounds, making his salary split between the town and school department. For snow and ice expenditures, the same amount of money has been budgeted for years. Some money was added in the Finance Committees reserve account as a way of knowing they would need that money for snow and ice. Snow and Ice is one of the few items in the town budget allowed to be overspent and can charge to the next year. If you raise the snow and ice account amount, you can't decrease it the following year. The state does not allow for sanding anymore, only rock salt, increasing the expenses. The \$150,000 budgeted is just not a reasonable base now, in 2021 it cost \$474,000 and in 2023 it cost \$576,000.

Monty Tech, school transportation, debt principle, debt interest, state school assessments, other assessments on the cherry sheet, regional assessments, Worcester County pension, workers comp,

unemployment insurance, health insurance, life insurance, Medicare tax and liability insurance are all expenses that a 3rd party tells them what they need to pay.  $\frac{1}{3}$  of the budget are fixed costs.

Monty Tech has dropped in the last 5 years by 23%. That was not due to the cost decrease, but due to the decrease in students from Winchendon attending Monty Tech. It went from a time when a lot of towns were not sending kids to Monty Tech, increasing the number of seats available to Winchendon, to now almost every town fills its quota. T. Kane anticipated going forward that number to increase and not decrease.

School transportation has increased 4% which was pretty reasonable. Transportation is funded by the community. T. Kane stated he would like to look into how the bills are put together and see if there are ways to decrease the costs. It cost \$1.6 Million to fund the school transportation.

The Worcester County Pension System increased 47% over the last 5 years. It's been under funded over the years, the pension system let the town know a few years ago that there's a 20 year plan to get it to the point where its solvent. The Towns debt services have not been handled correctly over the years, constantly coming in well below budgeted, yet increased in the budget every year.

Health Insurance has gone up 50% in the last 5 years, averaging 10% a year. Unemployment Insurance has steadily increased as well.

The Tri-Board meeting will be on February 6, 2025 and is being chaired by the School Department.

**Other Committees with Finance Representation Updates:** D. Delay stated Capital Planning met last week for the first time this fiscal year. There was reorganization and Audrey LaBrie was elected as Chair and Les Goodrich as Vice-Chair. They have another meeting tomorrow night and Mr. McKinney planned on presenting a 5 year capital expenditure plan.

M. Giovannucci planned to meet with the Fire Chief Tom Smith tomorrow to discuss the project and overtime. They also plan on starting the Zoom meetings again.

M. Ward stated the Ad Hoc Committee meets next Wednesday at 4PM.

**Public Input:** None.

**Member Comments:** Dr. M. Ward wanted to reiterate and thank Mr. Dixon for his service to the Committee, he will be missed and wished him the best of luck in his personal endeavors.

**Adjourn:** 7:21PM- Dr. M. Ward motioned to adjourn, 2nd by C. Corts.  
**Corts (Y) Delay (Y) Giovannucci (Y) Ward (Y) Kane (Y) 5-0**

Respectfully submitted:

*Brianna Lindahl*

Brianna Lindahl, Finance Committee Recording Secretary

*Thomas J. Kane*

Thomas Kane Jr., Chair

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Dr. Maureen Ward, Vice-Chair

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Charles C. Corts

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Diane Coulter

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Douglas Delay

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Mike Giovannucci