

Approved: 3/13/25
Thomas Kane

WINCHENDON TOWN CLERK
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TOWN OF WINCHENDON



Finance Committee

Telephone (978)-297-5419

Tri-Board Meeting with BOS, Finance, & School Committee

Finance Committee Minutes

February 13, 2025 6:30PM

Town Hall 2nd Floor Auditorium

Finance Committee Members Present: Chair Thomas J Kane Jr, Charles C. Corts, Diane Coulter, Doug Delay, Adam Gardner, Mike Giovannucci

Board of Selectmen Members Present: Chair Richard Ward, Vice-Chair Andrew Beauvais, Melissa Blanchard, Erika Eitland, Audrey LaBrie

School Committee Members Present: Chair Karen Kast-McBride, Mike Barbaro, Jake Catlin, David Iannacone, Eleni Marinelli

6:31PM: Chair Karen Kast-McBride called the School Committee to order. Chair Rick Ward called the Board of Selectmen to order. Chair Thomas Kane Jr. called the Finance Committee meeting to order. Karen Kast-McBride asked the audience if anyone would be audio or video recording, hearing none.

Marc Gosselin, Superintendent, presented the MSBA Accelerated Repair Program Overview. This program would help fund the replacement of the roofs, windows, and doors in the school buildings. Murdock Middle/High school was one year shy of the window and door replacement qualification of 30 years old, so they would only be able to replace the roof at that building, but the other school buildings will receive all the replacements.

Superintendent Gosselin continued with the preliminary Fiscal Year 2026 Budget presentation. The FY26 Budget priorities were: maintain class size within recommended ranges, provide support for students with complex educational, social, emotional, and behavioral needs, continue to advance literacy in grades PreK-12, develop effective curriculum and instruction initiatives that address needs of the district and provide appropriate professional development for staff, and provide access for all students to the most challenging curriculum, and focusing on closing the achievement gaps.

Chapter 70 is the primary source of state aid, making up 66.5% of the general fund revenue projection at \$14,394,811, followed by required local contribution at 31.7%- \$6,850,740, and prior override with inflation at 1.8%- \$393,627. Estimated indirect costs (school employee benefits, school contribution to

'town services, unemployment, town-wide audit, etc.) is estimated to cost \$3,588,108. The estimated general fund total is \$18,051,070 (3.54% increase). Chapter 70 establishes minimum spending requirements for each school district and each town's share of school costs. Required local contribution is the minimum amount a community is required to pay toward the foundation budget and is based on the community's ability to pay for its schools. It is calculated by using property values and town residents' income. Total other revenue sources total \$3,984,246.

The District Leadership Team developed three budget models: Level Service, Level Service Plus, and Program Improvement. The Level Service Model would maintain services based on enrollment/legal requirements, no new programs, and staffing would remain the same. The total cost would be \$18.68M, an increase of \$1.25M 7.19%. The Level Service Plus Model would invest in our schools, new programs funded by alternate sources, and new positions to address the most immediate identified needs. This level would be an \$1.4M increase at 8.24%. The Program Improvement Model would contain new programs, staff across multiple departments, increase funding for instructional supplies, increase funding for building maintenance costs to get out of the break-fix cycle of building maintenance. The total cost would be \$19,287,470, an increase of \$1,854,544 10.64%.

Town Manager, Bill McKinney, began his presentation of the FY26 Budget.

Expenses			
Category	FY25 Amount	FY26 Amount	Difference
School Dept	\$17,432,926	\$19,287,470	\$1,854,544
Police	\$2,094,210	\$2,151,950	\$57,740
Fire	\$1,613,375	\$1,804,190	\$191,575
DPW	\$1,679,950	\$1,828,190	\$148,240
TM/Select/FinCom	\$539,050	\$560,840	\$21,790
Finance/Legal	\$597,290	\$650,570	\$53,280
IT/Town Clerk	\$431,915	\$451,450	\$19,535
Conserv/Planning/TH	\$284,585	\$290,490	\$5,905
Building/Health	\$206,500	\$202,070	\$(4,430)
COA/Lib/Vet/Rec	\$744,760	\$813,350	\$68,590
Monty/Transp/Tuit	\$3,374,490	\$3,793,770	\$419,280
Other Cherry Sheet	\$39,650	\$51,260	\$11,610
Debt	\$857,600	\$1,315,000	\$457,000
Prop/Liab Insurance	\$381,000	\$402,000	\$21,000
Retirement	\$2,307,100	\$2,448,000	\$141,700
Workers Comp	\$180,000	\$185,000	\$5,000
Unemployment	\$100,000	\$150,000	\$50,000
Health/Life Insurance	\$2,688,000	\$3,096,000	\$408,000
Medicare	\$290,000	\$310,000	\$20,000
Total	\$35,842,401	\$39,793,160	\$3,950,759

Revenues

Category	FY25 Amount	FY26 Amount	Difference
Chapter 70/Local Aid	\$16,111,292	\$16,511,931	\$400,639
Property Tax	\$15,012,476	\$15,476,463	\$463,987
Motor Vehicle Excise	\$1,250,000	\$1,250,000	
Transfers In	\$420,511	\$420,511	
HT, AL, SOL, SSP	\$49,160	\$49,160	
SPED Medicaid	\$60,600	\$60,600	
Penalties/Int	\$200,000	\$200,000	
PILOT	\$55,000	\$55,000	
Meals Tax	\$105,000	\$105,000	
Cannabis Tax	\$140,000	\$140,000	
TCML, RMV	\$9,640	\$9,640	
Other Cherry Sheet	\$409,515	\$302,753	\$(106,762)
Interest Income	\$60,000	\$60,000	
Treasurer Misc	\$250,000	\$250,000	
Town Clerk	\$42,400	\$42,400	
CC,PB,ZB,PO,FL,PT,FP	\$50,700	\$50,700	
Ambulance	\$650,000	\$650,000	
Building Permits	\$150,000	\$150,000	
Cem, BOH	\$51,000	\$51,000	
Total	\$35,077,294	\$35,835,158	\$757,864

Budget Totals

	Expenses	Revenues	Difference
Total	\$39,793,160	\$35,835,158	\$(3,958,002)

Revenue (from State)

Category	FY23 Amount	FY24 Amount	FY25 Amount	FY26 Amount
Chapter 70	\$12,492,076	\$14,000,926	\$14,039,746	\$14,394,811
Local Aid	\$1,948,847	\$2,011,210	\$2,071,546	\$2,117,120
Total	\$14,4410	\$16,012,136	\$16,111,292	\$16,511,931
Increase	\$1,062,332	\$1,571,213	\$99,156	\$400,639

Revenue (Tax Levy)

Category	FY23 Amount	FY24 Amount	FY25 Amount	FY26 Amount
Tax Levy Prior Yr	\$13,466,411	\$13,906,524	\$14,334,126	\$14,825,818
2.5% Increase	\$336,660	\$347,663	\$358,353	\$370,645
New Growth	\$103,453	\$79,939	\$133,339	\$80,000
Total	\$13,906,524	\$14,334,126	\$14,825,818	\$15,276,463
Increase	\$440,113	\$427,602	\$491,692	\$450,645

		Net School Spending		
Category	FY23 Amount	FY24 Amount	FY25 Amount	FY26 Amount
Required	\$18,305,278	\$20,130,691	\$20,502,162	\$21,245,551
Actual	\$18,659,665			
Budgeted		\$20,366,603		

Looking Ahead					
Expenses					
Category	% Increase	FY26 Amount	FY27 Amount	FY28 Amount	FY29 Amount
Pension	10%	\$2,448,800	\$2,693,800	\$2,963,180	\$3,259,500
Health Ins.	15%	\$3,077,000	\$3,536,800	\$4,067,500	\$4,678,000
Debt	0%	\$1,315,000	\$1,250,000	\$1,200,000	\$1,150,000
School Dept	2.5%	\$19,287,470	\$19,770,000	\$20,270,000	\$20,780,000
Town Salaries/OT	2.5%	\$6,237,220	\$6,394,000	\$6,554,000	\$6,718,000
All other expenses	2.5%	\$7,427,670	\$7,620,000	\$7,815,000	\$8,015,000
Total		\$39,793,160	\$41,264,600	\$42,869,680	\$44,600,500
Increase		\$3,950,759	\$1,471,440	\$1,605,080	\$1,730,820

Revenue					
Category		FY26 Amount	FY27 Amount	FY28 Amount	FY29 Amount
Chapter 70&Local Aid	46%	\$16,511,931	\$16,611,931	\$16,711,931	\$16,811,931
Tax Levy	43%	\$15,476,463	\$15,903,375	\$16,340,959	
		\$16,789,483			
All Other	11%	\$3,846,764	\$3,846,764	\$3,846,764	\$3,846,764
Total		\$35,835,158	\$36,362,070	\$36,899,654	\$37,448,178
Increase			\$526,912	\$537,584	\$548,524

Budget FY26-FY29					
Category		FY26 Amount	FY27 Amount	FY28 Amount	FY29 Amount
Total Revenue		\$35,835,158	\$36,362,070	\$36,899,654	\$37,448,178
Total Expenses		\$39,793,160	\$41,264,600	\$42,869,680	\$44,600,500
Deficit		\$(3,958,002)	\$(4,902,530)	\$(5,970,026)	\$(7,152,322)

Karen Kast-McBride suggested if there is a need for an override, there needs to be a plan on how to educate the town on how overrides work. Audrie LaBrie stated the presentations from the MMA meeting in regards to overrides were available online and she would get them for the Ad-Hoc Committee. Erika Eitland mentioned that the surrounding communities were also in the same position, and wanted the community to know that Winchendon was not in a unique situation, the surrounding communities are also struggling.

David Iannacone motioned for a 5 minute recess, 2nd by Mike Barbaro.

8:46PM- Recess

8:54PM- Chair Karen Kast-McBride called the meeting back to order.

Chair Thomas Kane motioned to pass over agenda item 3 and move right to public comment. Karen Kast-McBride motioned, 2nd by Mike Barbaro.

Public Comments:

Tina Santos came forward and suggested looking into using the CAC van for the after school programs. She also suggested looking into the reimbursement of Medicaid for the School Department and the possibility of combining departments to save on costs. She would also like some of the capital projects that got pushed to the back burner to be considered again.

Marc Dorwart came forward to question and discuss the duties of the Finance Committee.

Tiffany Parkhurst questioned the 2.5% override and if there would be two budgets presented, one with the override and one without. Bill McKinney responded that there would be 2, maybe even 3 budgets presented.

Christine Haslam-Giovannucci asked how they planned on fixing these problems.

Marc Dorwart asked for the committees to communicate a “doomsday” scenario if they did not do the override.

Member Comments:

Rick Ward brought up the fact that they need to comply with state law and certain deadlines, and there is a very limited timeframe in which they can hold the town meeting and election.

David Iannacone stated the town has funded the bare minimum for years, which has resulted in this situation.

Eleni Marinelli stated we need to invest in the teachers, nurses, paraprofessionals, etc.

Audrie LaBrie brought up the fact that substitute teachers only make \$14/hr, while teachers with a bachelors degree only make \$18/hr.

Andrew Beauvais thanked the members for their time and effort putting together the information tonight.

Rick Ward mentioned that the Superintendent and Town Manager have been communicating and meeting regularly which has not happened in the past. There are fixed costs the Town has to pay, so unfortunately there will be an override that is unavoidable. He expects the Town Manager to provide every resident the information on how much it will cost them in taxes. With the lack of communication channels such as no newspaper, limited people at the meetings, and not everyone online, there needs to be a discussion on the best way to communicate with the town residents.

Adjourn: 10:03PM- Karen Kast-McBride motioned to adjourn the Tri-Board meeting Unanimously voted to adjourn.

Respectfully submitted:

Brianna Lindahl

Brianna Lindahl, Finance Committee Recording Secretary

Thomas Kane Jr., Chair

Dr. Maureen Ward, Vice-Chair

Charles C. Corts

Diane Coulter

Doug Delay

Adam Gardner

Mike Giovannucci