

Approved: 4 18 125

# TOWN OF WINCHENDON



WINCHENDON TOWN CLERK  
RCUD APR 17 2025 AM 9:20

## Finance Committee

Telephone (978)-297-5419

### Joint Board Meeting with the Finance Committee and Board of Selectmen

Finance Committee Minutes

March 24, 2025 6:30PM

Town Hall 2nd Floor Auditorium

**Finance Committee Members Present:** Chair Thomas J Kane Jr, Vice-Chair Dr. Maureen Ward, Charles C. Corts, Doug Delay, Adam Gardner, Mike Giovannucci

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

**6:30PM:** Chair Rick Ward called the Board of Selectmen to order. Chair Thomas Kane Jr. called the Finance Committee meeting to order, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance. R. Ward asked the audience if anyone would be audio or video recording, hearing none.

### Town Manager's Proposed FY26 Budget Presentation:

Bill McKinney, Town Manager, began the Proposed FY26 Budget Presentation. The negative impacts of the budget include; program cuts and potential layoffs at the school, the library would be closed, the senior center would be closed (they will still plan for programs not supposed by the budget such as meals on wheels and transportation), reduction in police and fire staff, reduction in DPW plowing during storms, CAC and YMCA would receive no funding from the town, and recreation would be very limited.

| Expenses            |              |              |             |
|---------------------|--------------|--------------|-------------|
| Category            | FY25 Amount  | FY26 Amount  | Difference  |
| School Dept         | \$17,432,926 | \$17,432,926 | \$-         |
| Police              | \$2,094,210  | \$2,094,210  | \$-         |
| Fire                | \$1,613,375  | \$1,613,375  | \$-         |
| DPW                 | \$1,679,950  | \$1,828,190  | \$-         |
| TM/Select/FinCom    | \$539,050    | \$452,090    | \$(86,960)  |
| Finance/Legal       | \$597,290    | \$629,690    | \$32,400    |
| IT/Town Clerk       | \$431,915    | \$419,055    | \$12,860    |
| Conserv/Planning/TH | \$284,585    | \$303,585    | \$19,000    |
| Building/Health     | \$206,500    | \$200,390    | \$(6,110)   |
| Council on Aging    | \$233,850    | \$-          | \$(233,850) |

|                           |              |              |             |
|---------------------------|--------------|--------------|-------------|
| Veterans Services         | \$186,780    | \$186,780    | \$-         |
| Library                   | \$268,000    | \$-          | \$(268,000) |
| Recreation                | \$55,130     | \$-          | \$(55,130)  |
| Historical Commission     | \$1,000      | \$1,100      | \$100       |
| Monty Tech                | \$662,230    | \$633,000    | \$(29,230)  |
| School Bus Transportation | \$1,625,220  | \$1,755,000  | \$129,780   |
| School Tuition            | \$1,087,040  | \$1,038,770  | \$(48,270)  |
| Other Cherry Sheet        | \$39,650     | \$51,260     | \$11,610    |
| Debt                      | \$857,600    | \$1,185,000  | \$327,400   |
| Prop/Liab Insurance       | \$381,000    | \$402,000    | \$21,000    |
| Retirement                | \$2,307,100  | \$2,448,800  | \$141,700   |
| Workers Comp              | \$180,000    | \$185,000    | \$5,000     |
| Unemployment              | \$100,000    | \$150,000    | \$50,000    |
| Health/Life Insurance     | \$2,688,000  | \$3,132,700  | \$444,700   |
| Medicare                  | \$290,000    | \$300,000    | \$10,000    |
| Total                     | \$35,842,401 | \$36,294,681 | \$452,280   |

#### Revenues

| Category             | FY25 Amount  | FY26 Amount  | Difference |
|----------------------|--------------|--------------|------------|
| Chapter 70/Local Aid | \$16,111,292 | \$16,511,931 | \$400,639  |
| Property Tax         | \$15,012,476 | \$15,616,461 | \$603,987  |
| Motor Vehicle Excise | \$1,250,000  | \$1,250,000  |            |
| Transfers In         | \$420,511    | \$433,725    | \$13,214   |
| HT, AL, SOL, SSP     | \$49,160     | \$49,160     |            |
| SPED Medicaid        | \$60,600     | \$60,600     |            |
| Penalties/Int        | \$200,000    | \$200,000    |            |
| Building Permits     | \$150,000    | \$150,000    |            |
| Cannabis Tax         | \$140,000    | \$140,000    |            |
| Meals Tax            | \$105,000    | \$105,000    |            |
| SPED Medicaid        | \$60,600     | \$60,600     |            |
| Interest Income      | \$60,000     | \$60,000     |            |
| PILOT                | \$55,000     | \$55,000     |            |
| CEM, BOH             | \$51,000     | \$51,000     |            |
| CC,PB,ZB,PO,FL,PT,FP | \$50,700     | \$50,700     |            |
| HT, AL, SOL, SSP     | \$49,160     | \$49,160     |            |
| Town Clerk           | \$42,400     | \$42,400     |            |
| TCML, RMV            | \$9,640      | \$9,640      |            |
| Total                | \$35,077,294 | \$35,988,372 | \$911,078  |

| Category   | FY23 Amount  | Revenue (from State) |              |              |
|------------|--------------|----------------------|--------------|--------------|
|            |              | 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    |

| Category          | FY23 Amount  | Revenue (Tax Levy) |              |              |
|-------------------|--------------|--------------------|--------------|--------------|
|                   |              | 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    |

|                            | Expenses     | Revenues     | Difference  |
|----------------------------|--------------|--------------|-------------|
| Budget Totals              | \$36,294,681 | \$35,988,372 | \$(306,309) |
| Ambulance (increase)       |              | \$100,000    |             |
| Cannabis (increase)        |              | \$100,000    |             |
| Interest Income (increase) |              | \$106,309    |             |
| Total                      | \$36,294,681 | \$36,294,681 | \$-         |

| Water Enterprise Fund |             |             |                    |             |             |
|-----------------------|-------------|-------------|--------------------|-------------|-------------|
| Expenses              | FY25        | FY26        | Revenue            | FY25        | FY26        |
| Personnel             | \$307,928   | \$360,750   | Connection/CWA     | \$11,530    | \$11,645    |
| Expenses              | \$649,150   | \$695,550   | Liens              | \$30,000    | \$30,300    |
| Debt Service          | \$115,000   | \$260,000   | Int/Penalties/Misc | \$15,500    | \$15,655    |
| Indirect              | \$216,337   | \$255,154   | Water rates        | \$1,331,550 | \$1,514,350 |
| Total                 | \$1,288,415 | \$1,571,454 | Total              | \$1,388,580 | \$1,571,950 |
|                       |             |             | Difference         |             | \$496       |

| Sewer Enterprise Fund |             |             |                    |             |             |
|-----------------------|-------------|-------------|--------------------|-------------|-------------|
| Expenses              | FY25        | FY26        | Revenue            | FY25        | FY26        |
| Personnel             | \$16,770    | \$22,100    | Connection         | \$20,402    | \$20,606    |
| Expenses              | \$1,164,409 | \$1,236,383 | Liens              | \$30,300    | \$30,603    |
| Debt Service          | \$90,000    | \$35,000    | Int/Penalties/Misc | \$50,070    | \$57,140    |
| Indirect              | \$135,403   | \$146,443   | Sewer rates        | \$1,116,720 | \$1,175,000 |
| Total                 | \$1,406,582 | \$1,439,926 | Total              | \$1,407,492 | \$1,443,349 |
|                       |             |             | Difference         |             | \$3,423     |

**Transfer Station Enterprise Fund**

| <u>Expenses</u> | <u>FY25</u>   | <u>FY26</u>   | <u>Revenue</u>          | <u>FY25</u>   | <u>FY26</u>            |
|-----------------|---------------|---------------|-------------------------|---------------|------------------------|
| Personnel       | \$75,301      | \$89,550      | Trash Bags- Large       | \$74,375      | \$87,500               |
| Expenses        | \$154,509     | \$177,450     | Trash Bags- Small       | \$31,500      | \$42,000               |
| Debt Service    | \$30,000      | \$40,000      | Landfill Decals         | \$97,500      | \$110,500              |
| Indirect        | \$23,474      | \$26,802      | Demolition Materials    | \$84,500      | \$94,500               |
| <br>Total       | <br>\$283,284 | <br>\$333,802 | <br>Total<br>Difference | <br>\$287,875 | <br>\$334,500<br>\$698 |

**PEG Access Enterprise Fund**

| <u>Expenses</u> | <u>FY25</u>   | <u>FY26</u>   | <u>Revenue</u>      | <u>FY25</u>   | <u>FY26</u>   |
|-----------------|---------------|---------------|---------------------|---------------|---------------|
| Personnel       | \$67,500      | \$67,500      | Capital Payment     | \$30,000      | \$30,000      |
| Expenses        | \$28,394      | \$28,174      | PEG Quarterly Fee   | \$100,000     | \$100,000     |
| Capital         | \$30,000      | \$30,000      | User Assessment Fee | \$1,000       | \$1,000       |
| Indirect        | \$5,106       | \$5,326       |                     |               |               |
| <br>Total       | <br>\$131,000 | <br>\$131,000 | <br>Total           | <br>\$131,000 | <br>\$131,000 |

**Net School Spending**

| <u>Category</u> | <u>FY23 Amount</u> | <u>FY24 Amount</u> | <u>FY25 Amount</u> | <u>FY26 Amount</u> |
|-----------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| Required        | \$18,305,278       | \$20,130,691       | \$20,598,406       | \$21,245,551       |
| Actual          | \$18,659,665       | \$20,333,625       |                    |                    |
| Budgeted        |                    |                    | \$21,086,767       |                    |

**Fiscal Year 2026 Budget Presentation with \$1.9M Override:**

| <u>Category</u>           | <u>FY25 Amount</u> | <u>FY26 Amount</u> | <u>FY26 w/Override</u> | <u>Difference</u> |
|---------------------------|--------------------|--------------------|------------------------|-------------------|
| School Dept               | \$17,432,926       | \$17,432,926       | \$18,051,070           | \$618,144         |
| Police                    | \$2,094,210        | \$2,094,210        | \$2,094,210            | \$-               |
| Fire                      | \$1,613,375        | \$1,613,375        | \$1,678,555            | \$65,180          |
| DPW                       | \$1,679,950        | \$1,828,190        | \$1,751,770            | \$71,820          |
| TM/Select/FinCom          | \$539,050          | \$452,090          | \$803,590              | \$351,500         |
| Finance/Legal             | \$597,290          | \$629,690          | \$640,090              | \$10,400          |
| IT/Town Clerk             | \$431,915          | \$419,055          | \$419,155              | \$100             |
| Conserv/Planning/TH       | \$284,585          | \$303,585          | \$286,390              | \$(17,195)        |
| Building/Health           | \$206,500          | \$200,390          | \$200,690              | \$300             |
| Council on Aging          | \$233,850          | \$-                | \$251,410              | \$251,410         |
| Veterans Services         | \$186,780          | \$186,780          | \$186,780              | \$-               |
| Library                   | \$268,000          | \$-                | \$270,955              | \$270,955         |
| Recreation                | \$55,130           | \$-                | \$66,130               | \$66,130          |
| Historical Commission     | \$1,000            | \$1,100            | \$1,100                | \$-               |
| Monty Tech                | \$662,230          | \$633,000          | \$633,000              | \$-               |
| School Bus Transportation | \$1,625,220        | \$1,755,000        | \$1,755,000            | \$-               |
| School Tuition            | \$1,087,040        | \$1,038,770        | \$1,038,770            | \$-               |
| Other Cherry Sheet        | \$39,650           | \$51,260           | \$51,260               | \$-               |

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|                       |              |              |              |             |
|-----------------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|-------------|
| Debt                  | \$857,600    | \$1,185,000  | \$1,185,000  | \$-         |
| Prop/Liab Insurance   | \$381,000    | \$402,000    | \$402,000    | \$-         |
| Retirement            | \$2,307,100  | \$2,448,800  | \$2,448,800  | \$-         |
| Workers Comp          | \$180,000    | \$185,000    | \$195,000    | \$10,000    |
| Unemployment          | \$100,000    | \$150,000    | \$150,000    | \$-         |
| Health/Life Insurance | \$2,688,000  | \$3,132,700  | \$3,132,700  | \$-         |
| Medicare              | \$290,000    | \$300,000    | \$310,000    | \$10,000    |
| Total                 | \$35,842,401 | \$36,294,681 | \$38,003,425 | \$1,708,744 |

#### Revenues

| Category             | FY25 Amount  | FY26 Amount  | Difference  |
|----------------------|--------------|--------------|-------------|
| Chapter 70/Local Aid | \$16,111,292 | \$16,511,931 | \$400,639   |
| Property Tax         | \$15,012,476 | \$17,516,463 | \$2,503,987 |
| Motor Vehicle Excise | \$1,250,000  | \$1,250,000  | \$          |
| Ambulance            | \$650,000    | \$650,000    | \$          |
| Transfers In         | \$420,511    | \$433,725    | \$13,214    |
| Other Cherry Sheet   | \$409,515    | \$302,753    | \$(106,762) |
| Treasurer Misc       | \$250,000    | \$250,000    | \$          |
| Penalties/Int        | \$200,000    | \$200,000    | \$          |
| CC,PB,ZB,PO,FL,PT,FP | \$50,700     | \$50,700     | \$          |
| HT, AL, SOL, SSP     | \$49,160     | \$49,160     | \$          |
| Town Clerk           | \$42,400     | \$42,400     | \$          |
| TCML, RMV            | \$9,640      | \$9,640      | \$          |
| Total                | \$35,077,294 | \$37,888,372 | \$2,811,078 |

| Category      | Expenses     | Revenues     | Difference  |
|---------------|--------------|--------------|-------------|
| Budget Totals | \$38,003,425 | \$37,888,372 | \$(115,053) |

|                            |           |
|----------------------------|-----------|
| Ambulance (increase)       | \$100,000 |
| Interest Income (increase) | \$15,053  |

|       |              |              |
|-------|--------------|--------------|
| Total | \$38,003,425 | \$38,003,425 |
|-------|--------------|--------------|

Dr. Maureen Ward asked B. McKinney if he had considered giving the residents the option to vote on the \$1.9M override, along with a couple other options such as \$2.9M, \$3.9M, etc, showing exactly what that would give the departments, and let the residents vote. B. McKinney stated it would be up to the BOS to add additional items to the ballot. Erika Eitland agreed and stated the \$1.9M override is the bare minimum.

#### Public Comments:

Yvonne Senecal came forward. She thanked all the board members and departments for their hard work on the budget. She stated, however, all departments needed to prepare for decreases in spending. Contracts could be renegotiated. She stated that she has worked with putting together budgets in her

career, and if they included overtime in the regular budgets, she would have been fired. The fire department should do better, and create a schedule that reflects the necessary shifts, and save overtime for emergencies and when truly needed. If a position has been vacant for 2 years, it should be eliminated. It is disingenuous to use that position to offset overtime. She felt that DPW could be more efficient. Utilization of staff and equipment, as well as adequate supervision, need to be priorities. She did not agree with asking the residents to increase their taxes, without showing the departments are decreasing their costs. The school department needs to reflect funding realities. It is difficult to ask residents to increase taxes to fund the school system that fails its students. Consolidate schools, eliminate unnecessary busing, and renegotiate contracts, need to be done before asking for more money.

Rick Lucier stated his concern that this override was not only for this year, but next year with a 2.5% multiplier on top of it, and it keeps going in perpetuity. There is also talk in regards to a water and sewer increase, plus there are still unknown numbers that could cause more proposed increases in the future. He suggested a wage freeze for the town employees for a year, and then discuss potential options.

Karen Kast-McBride was on the ad-hoc committee and mentioned, out of the six members, more than half of them agreed we should be requesting more than \$1.9M, because "level service" does not cut it for any department. She stated the residents deserve better, and while she agrees that she does not want her taxes to go up just like most residents, but it's needed. There are several reasons why the town is in this position, and while we could argue why they are there and what to do about it, there is a solution being presented to ensure the town does not go downhill, and closing the library and senior center, two vital departments of the community, would cause the town to go downhill. She is on the school committee as well and invited the public to attend the school department budget meeting tomorrow night.

Jill Sackett came forward. She asked if there was any possible way to keep the library, senior center, and recreation department, without the override. She suggested looking into maybe closing more days a week, or some other possible solutions. She was in favor of the override and felt there needed to be more information to convince the residents to be in favor. She felt one way to ensure the residents were on board was to explain the long term plan for the town.

Marc Dorwart has come before the boards several times to bring attention to unlawful and inefficient equipment purchases by the DPW director, and has never been asked for supporting documents. He closed by saying efficiency is important, if the library is going to be closed, there should be more efficiency in the DPW department.

Pinkie Evans Liao came before the board last year, asking what the town planned to do about being in trouble, and was responded with "nothing". She wanted to know what they planned on doing to quit this cycle. She expected from the ad hoc committee to explain how we got here and what things we need to do so this does not happen again. She requested the warrants to state what the override will cover and what the budget will entail. She felt closing the library and senior center were obnoxious and two reasons to not live in this town. The statement of just \$50 a month per resident is unacceptable, as residents cannot afford an additional \$50 a month right now. She requested a select board committee that meets in front of the camera so the public can watch the meetings.

Richard Ames expressed his respect for the fire and police departments, being a veteran he was in danger for a while, but those members of the staff are in danger 24/7. The fire department has a \$1.7M expense, but receives \$650,000 in ambulance revenue. He felt they should receive that revenue as the town would

vote in favor of the fire department. Their expense should be stated as only \$1M, not \$1.7 as the ambulance offsets that expense, and felt it was dishonest to show it that way. He requested more information on how much his taxes were going to increase, and will it increase at that percentage every year. He agreed with looking into the hours of operation for the library and senior center to keep them open. Along with that, advertising of the programs they offer needs to improve.

Rick McKenzie moved to the town 8 years ago, and when he first moved here, he asked a neighbor what the plan or vision of the town is, and his neighbor's response was, we don't have a plan or want a plan, we want to keep it just the way it is. He shared a quote, "without a vision the people will perish". He stated the residents are perishing, and did not agree with increasing the taxes of the residents while threatening to close vital departments.

**Member Comments:** Rick Ward thanked the public for their input and stated their points would be taken into consideration. The biggest message was that the town needs to come up with and voice the long term plans for the town.

**Adjourn: 7:51PM-** Dr. Maureen Ward motioned to adjourn the Finance Committee, 2nd by Charles Corts  
**Corts (Y) Delay (Y) Gardner (A) Giovannucci (Y) Ward (Y) Kane (Y) 6-0**

Respectfully submitted:



Brianna Lindahl, Finance Committee Recording Secretary

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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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Doug Delay

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Adam Gardner

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Mike Giovannucci