

Approved: 6/13/23

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WINCHENDON TOWN CLERK
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TOWN OF WINCHENDON



Finance Committee

Telephone (978)-297-5419

Regular Meeting/Public Hearing Finance Committee Minutes May 9, 2023 6:30PM Town Hall 2nd Floor Auditorium

Members Present: Chairman Thomas J. Kane Jr., Vice-Chair Dr. Maureen Ward, Doug Delay, Anthony Dickson, Adrian Guerrero, James Reed

Absent: Charles C. Corts

Guests: Justin Sultzbach- Town Manager

List of Documents Presented at Meeting:

- April 26, 2023 Meeting Agenda
 - Warrant Articles for the Special and Annual Town Meeting
-

6:30PM: Chairman Thomas J. Kane Jr. called the Finance Committee meeting to order, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance. He asked the audience if anyone would be audio or video recording, hearing none.

Minutes: April 10, 2023, April 24, 2023, April 26, 2023

T. Kane suggested postponing the approval of the minutes from April 24 & April 26 to allow the members time to review them. They will revisit them at their next meeting on Monday, May 15.

Dr. M. Ward motioned to approve the minutes of April 10, 2023, 2nd by D. Delay.

Delay (Y) Dickson (Y) Guerrero (Y) Reed (Y) Ward (Y) Kane (Y) 6-0

YTD Reports: T. Kane pointed out on the Town side, the column headings under the expense report were incorrectly labeled and contain the titles for the revenue report, not the expense report. Deanna, Assistant Town Accountant, was made aware of the error and updated the reports.

T. Kane spoke with Linda, regarding page 8 & 9- Cable TV studio- very little has been spent out of the \$17,000. Also, the \$40,000 that was approved for Con-Com articles and encumbrment, has not been spent either. Linda stated they were doing extensive renovations to the equipment and estimated around \$30,000-\$40,000 worth of equipment ordered. That amount needed to be encumbered and Linda was going to take care of it.

Last months revenue report was identical to this months report. Katie, Town Accountant, has been working with prior Town Accountant Joanne to get the revenues posted.

T. Kane had a few questions for Brian Croteau, DPW Director. In regards to the DPW Highway Materials, he stated there's a healthy balance of \$95,000. B. Croteau replied that was due to approval of the \$95,000 for road paving at the Fall Town Meeting. They are scheduled to pave Pleasant St. in June so he expects that line item to drastically drop after and be close to, if not, \$0 by the time the crew finishes with the overlays of roads as well.

Under Enterprise Expenses, in regards to the water meters, \$10,000 was budgeted. B. Croteau stated they are still buying water meters under ARPA and are planning on finishing the system. They are waiting on the last shipment to arrive, there are about 800 meters remaining out of the 2,200. The \$10,000 will be extremely helpful in the winter for water breaks. He is going to transfer the funds to the system maintenance line item.

Under Sewer, \$102,000 was budgeted for chemicals and shows it has not been spent. B. Croteau replied that have spent some, Veolia is behind on their billing, but now that the contracts are in place and it will be a lot easier to set up in the computer, we will see that line item drop as well.

The Transfer Station Enterprise will be going over budget due to taking in more trash than they budgeted for. They will have to address that from retained earnings at the fall town meeting. With the increase in costs for the trash companies that come to residents to pick up, there has been an increase in residents purchasing transfer station stickers. B. Croteau stated how important it is to purchase the roll off truck so they can better control their costs and haul full dumpsters and compactors.

Dr. M. Ward stated her concern with the fuel line items. The Council on Aging is currently -\$10,000 but it was only increased by \$2,000 for next years budget. The Library fuel is at \$4,700 and they were increased by \$1,000. The Fire Department fuel is at \$4,600 and they received an \$8,000 increase. She also mentioned the Fire Department Overtime is at \$21,000.

Dr. M. Ward asked if it would be possible to receive the corrected revenue reports before their June meeting. T. Kane replied he would ask Katie. D. Delay requested if it is not possible to receive the corrected reports in time, would be it be possible to at least receive some information as to how far behind they are in postings to try and make an educated guess regarding the information provided.

Town Meeting Report: The committee met a few weeks ago to discuss the Finance Committee report and agreed to focus on free cash policy, particularly the impact that the rising costs of snow and ice amounts has had on the budget. Also, the Post-Employment OPEB Payments have not been budgeted as part of the operating budget. The Town Manager is concerned it would be a big jump, but to take it out of free cash assumes we'll always have the free cash available. If it is a regular cost, it should be built into the budget, free cash is supposed to be used for non-reoccurring expenses.

The report contains an explanation on what free cash is, and what is the policy is. The goal is to try and carry 5% Free Cash. There is a slide containing the trend of the snow and ice accounts.

Dr. M. Ward suggested adding examples and explaining the increases are due to rising material costs.

T. Kane stated he understood adding \$100,000 cost into the operating budget is a lot but at the very least there should be a plan to add it in over time, as it is a reoccurring cost that is not going away and he did not agree with relying on free cash.

Member Comments: T. Kane attended the Association of Town Finance Committee Conference last week. They focused on grants and did an overview of the State budget.

Last night B. Croteau presented with the Town Manager to the Board of Selectmen. They proposed 5 new projects.

1. \$500,000 towards the allocation for the water line from the plant to the Town line.
2. The match for the \$500,000 received from the Federal Government for the water line starting at the top of Maple Ext. to Jackson Ave. and upgrades it from a 10 in. line to a 12 in. line.
3. Asset management grant- last warrant article. The total grant was \$137,000. They had to fund a small portion, \$39,250.
4. On Central St. there are small gaps between the curb and sidewalk. They originally hoped the state would cover the cost of plantings but they did not. The town went out to bid and the prices were astronomical. They have decided to buy the plants and install them in house. Asking \$25,000.
5. Front St. bridge is down to one lane due to a basketball size hole. They are requesting for engineers to come in and determine what needs to be done, so the town can go out to bid.

Dr. M. Ward proposed a change to the agenda. After the approval of the minutes, she would like #2 to be a Chair report to update the Committee, and #3 to be Committee Reports.

Dr. M. Ward motioned to add #2 Chair Report and #3 Committee Reports.

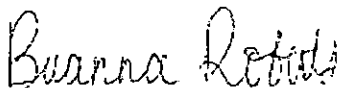
Delay (Y) Dickson (Y) Guerrero (Y) Reed (Y) Ward (Y) Kane (Y) 6-0

Public Input: None.

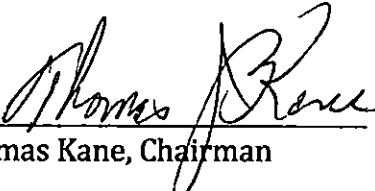
7:50PM- Dr. M. Ward motioned to adjourn, 2nd by A. Guerrero.

Delay (Y) Dickson (Y) Guerrero (Y) Reed (Y) Ward (Y) Kane (Y) 6-0

Respectfully submitted:



Brianna Roberts, Finance Committee Recording Secretary


Thomas Kane, Chairman

Dr. Maureen Ward, Vice-Chair

Charles C. Corts

Douglas Delay

Anthony Dickson

Adrian Guerrero

James Reed