

TOWN OF WINCHENDON



Finance Committee

Telephone (978)-297-5419

Regular Meeting/Public Hearing

Finance Committee Minutes

September 8, 2020

Held Remotely via Zoom

Present: Chairman Thomas J. Kane Jr., Charles C. Corts, Douglas Delay, Keith Kent, & Maureen Ward
Town Manager, Keith Hickey
Superintendent of Schools, Joan Landers
Director of Planning & Community Development, Tracy Murphy

Absent: Phillip Levine, David Alexander

List of Documents Presented at Meeting:

- Minutes of the July 14, 2020 Meeting
- Minutes of the August 11, 2020 Meeting
- YTD Budget Report
- Special and Annual Town Meeting Warrant September 28, 2020

6:30PM: Chairman Thomas Kane called the Finance Committee meeting to order followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

Approval of Minutes: 7/14/20 – Finance Committee Meeting

Finance Meeting- Dr. Ward motioned, seconded by Charles Corts.

Ward (Y) Corts (Y) Delay (Y) Kent (Y) Kane (Y) 5-0 Approved

Approval of Minutes: 8/11/20 – Finance Committee Meeting

Finance Meeting- Dr. Ward motioned, seconded by Charles Corts.

Corts (Y) Delay (A) Kent (Y) Ward (Y) Kane (Y) 4-0-1 Abstention

Review of YTD Reports: Mr. Kane noted that Ms. Goguen, Town Accountant, had provided the YTD reports and that due to the 1/12 budget, it will look a little different than usual. Ms. Goguen had also provided an explanation into the line items that were overdrawn. Dr. Ward asked if Mr. Kane had spoken to Ms. Goguen regarding the unusually high Police Department overtime, as discussed in their August 11th meeting. Mr. Kane said that he would follow up with Ms. Goguen. Dr. Ward said they were likely short on per-diem dispatchers and had to use regular dispatchers, which would account for the increase.

Mr. Kane said Ms. Goguen explained the issue with the Fire Housemen and how that account has had some changes in the accounting, which he guessed has to do with no longer using the grant to offset the cost. Dr. Ward asked if there was a case of a houseman that had been covered by Injury on Duty, rather than the budget, which had created some confusion with the line items. Mr. Kane confirmed that was likely the case. Dr. Ward said she appreciates Ms. Goguen's cover sheet, she finds it helpful. Dr. Ward asked when we would close out last year's budget, to which Mr. Hickey answered the auditors would be at Town Hall the following Monday to begin the process of closing out FY'20.

There were no further questions regarding the YTD report. Mr. Kane informed the Committee that there is an annual conference for Finance Committee members coming up, which will be held remotely. He has attended many of these conferences and has found them very helpful. Due to the schedule and it being held remotely, he finds it will be more accessible than it has in the past and he encouraged his fellow committee members to attend if they are able.

Mr. Kane asked if there were any questions from the public regarding the agenda items discussed so far; none were heard.

Dr. Ward motioned to recess for nine minutes until the beginning of the public hearing.

7:00PM: Call to Order- Public Hearing

SPECIAL TOWN MEETING WARRANT ARTICLES

ARTICLE 1 - To see if the Town will vote to hear and act on the reports of the Finance Committee, or act in relation thereto.

Kane said there will be no report for the Special Town Meeting.

ARTICLE 2 - To see if the Town will vote to transfer from Free Cash the sum of \$6,141.75 for the payment of bills of Fiscal Year 2020 for the Town of Winchendon.

Mr. Hickey said there were six invoices that came in after the closing of the prior fiscal year. There were no questions from Finance Committee members or from the public.

ANNUAL TOWN MEETING WARRANT ARTICLES

ARTICLE 1 - To see if the Town will vote to hear and act on the report of the Finance Committee, the annual report of the Selectmen and of any other officers or committees required to report to the Town, or act in relation thereto.

Kane said that the Finance Committee typically has a report from the Town, and that the the focus of that report is not typically determined until after the closing of the public hearing.

ARTICLE 2 - To see if the Town will vote to choose all other Town officers or committees that may be required or deemed necessary to the Town for the ensuing year and give any instructions to same, or to any other town officer or officers, and to discharge any committees which have completed their duties, or act in relation thereto.

There are no relevant committees, so Mr. Hickey suggested that this article will be passed over.

ARTICLE 3 - To see if the town will vote to fix the maximum amount to be spent during fiscal year 2021 beginning on July 1, 2020 for the revolving funds established in town by-laws for certain departments, boards, committees, agencies or officers in accordance with Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 44, Section 53 E1/2, or take any other action relative thereto.

Dr. Ward asked Mr. Hickey if there were any increases or decreases in any of these items, to which Mr. Hickey answered there are not.

ARTICLE 4 - To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate or transfer from other available funds the sum of eight thousand eight hundred dollars (\$8,800) for the Senior Tax Work-off Program, or act in relation thereto.

Mr. Hickey said this is a typical warrant article and the amount has not changed in recent years. Mr. Kent asked what an average number of enrollees is that takes advantage of this program, Mr. Hickey said below ten.

ARTICLE 5 - To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate or transfer from other available funds the sum of \$25,000 as a grant to the non-profit, Community Action Committee, Inc., 273 Central Street, Winchendon, in consideration of the numerous services provided to the Town, or act in relation thereto.

Mr. Hickey said this organization provides a tremendous amount of support to the community and those in need. They have been especially supportive of those in need in recent months due to the pandemic. Mr. Kent asked if this is an increase from the previous amount, Mr. Hickey said it was \$18,000 up until FY'20, when it changed to \$25,000. Mr. Kent asked if this is a number that management is comfortable with, or if they have needed an increase due to COVID-19. Mr. Hickey said they have not asked for an increase.

ARTICLE 6 - To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate and transfer from other available funds the sum of \$15,254,266 for the operating budget of the Town for the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2020, or act in relation thereto.

Mr. Hickey said it's mostly the same budget that was submitted back in March in anticipation for the May Town Meeting. The budget for Fall Town Meeting has been removed due to the cancellation of the event. The line item for election workers has increased \$12,000 due to the early voting that has been mandated by the state. The overall budget has changed very minimally from the last submittal a couple weeks ago. There are still many variables with the school budget, such as transportation, in-person vs. remote learning, etc. Due to the amount of layoffs, the unemployment cost has increased significantly, with an original funding of \$45,000 having increased to \$205,000 in funding budgeted. To help absorb the impact, Mr. Hickey has pledged \$205,000 out of the COVID-19 funds. Typically, the cost of unemployment for the school would be funded through the indirect cost of the school. The indirect cost is currently \$77,000, when over \$500,000 had been budgeted. This allowed the school to keep the same bottom line appropriation. Mr. Hickey has also included a separate warrant article in the budget which he is proposing to include in the Finance Committee budget for emergency COVID-19 related expenses. The Department of Revenue has approved a request from Mr. Hickey / the Board of Selectmen to access the deficit appropriation reserve accounts as an emergency contingency account.

Dr. Ward asked if the COVID-19 funds received from the government had to be expended by December, to which Mr. Hickey answered December 31st. Mr. Delay asked how many school employees were given notice of layoffs, and how many of those were recalled. Ms. Landers said around 71 were given notice of layoff and about 31 employees have been called back. The school is currently evaluating how many employees will be called back with the introduction of hybrid learning.

ARTICLE 7 - To see if the Town will vote to appropriate the sum of \$905,848 for direct costs of the Water Department Enterprise Fund for the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2020, and that indirect costs of \$153,023 appropriated in the general government budget be funded by Water Receipts, or act in relation thereto.

Mr. Hickey said this is the same budget proposed earlier this year, and unfortunately, there will need to be an increase in the water and sewer rates to help supplement the budget.

ARTICLE 8 - To see if the Town will vote to appropriate the sum of \$1,283,013 (Wastewater Receipts of \$973,013 and Betterment Revenues of \$310,000) for the direct costs of the Wastewater Treatment Department Enterprise Fund for the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2020, and that indirect costs of \$138,825 appropriated in the general government budget be funded by Wastewater Receipts, or act in relation thereto.

Mr. Hickey explained again that the increase in rates will help support the needs of the water department.

ARTICLE 9 - To see if the Town will vote to appropriate the sum of \$190,482 from Transfer Station Receipts for direct costs of the Transfer Station Enterprise Fund for the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2020; and that indirect costs of \$21,569 appropriated in the general government budget be funded by Transfer Station Receipts, or act in relation thereto.

Mr. Hickey said the transfer station has made a small profit in recent years. The DPW Director and his staff have done a great job managing the facility.

Inanna Arthen of 325 Lakeview Drive had a general question for all three enterprise funds. Her understanding is that up until recently, all three enterprise funds have generally been self-supporting. She recalled that a few years ago, she thought she had heard that the wastewater department was able to buy a new truck with excess profit funds. She questioned what was happened to make this situation change, and has made the enterprise funds need additional support. Mr. Hickey offered further clarification on the topic by stating these funds have been using retained earnings, which has been reflected in recent years warrant articles. A truck was leased due to the deteriorating condition of their current truck. The truck was leased rather than purchased due to price offered for leasing. David Watkins of 235 Mellen Road asked for explanation on the betterment fees of the wastewater enterprise fund. Mr. Hickey answered that betterment fees were established as part of an initiative to extend wastewater to different parts of town. The way that the town could afford this initiative was to charge the homeowners along the route a betterment fee calculated based on lot frontage. These fees are paid strictly by homeowners that hook up to the wastewater. The timing of the betterment fee is in conjunction with the debt taken out for the project.

ARTICLE 10 - To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate and/or transfer from available funds the sum of \$13,787,063.32 (Required Net School Spending of \$16,828,037 plus \$347,908.58 prior year override that includes a 2.5% escalator in increased funding plus \$50,000 which represents a portion of the solar PILOT revenues for FY21 less \$3,438,882.25 for net school spending and eligible indirect costs

budgeted in the general government budget for School Expenses) for the operating budget of the Winchendon Public Schools for the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2020, or act in relation thereto.

Ms. Landers explained that she has worked closely with Mr. Hickey and with the School Committee in establishing this budget. There were no questions from the Finance Committee or from the public.

ARTICLE 11 - To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$837,901 to fund the Town's assessment for its share of the Montachusett Regional Vocational Technical School budget for the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2020, or act in relation thereto.

ARTICLE 12 - To see if the Town will vote to accept a portion of Central Street as heretofore laid out by the Board of Selectmen and shown on a plan of land entitled "Central Street Route 202 In the Town of Winchendon," dated July 12, 2016, prepared by Northeast Survey Consultants, said plan on file with the Town Clerk, or act in relation thereto.

Mr. Hickey said that as everyone is aware, with the diligence of Planning Director, Tracy Murphy, and DPW Director, Al Gallant, the Town has been placed on the State's ten-year plan to construct Central Street at a cost of \$2.7 million with very little cost to the Town. In their final review of the plans, they found that for some reason years ago, a small section of Central Street was never laid out and formally accepted by the voters. For the State to allow State funding to be expended, they need this section of the road to be accepted by the Town of Winchendon. Mr. Kane asked what part of Central Street it is, to which Ms. Murphy answered that it is the section from just before the entrance of Cumberland Farms all the way up to the first curb cut at CVS, about a quarter-mile span. This acceptance would put a layout plan on file with the registry. Dr. Ward said the article says Front Street to Maple Street, which would account for that whole section. There was some discussion regarding the difference between Article 12 (accepting the layout of Central Street) and Article 13 (regarding the easements needed to complete this project).

David Watkins of 235 Mellen Road asked what the timeframe when it was discovered that the road was never accepted. Mr. Hickey answered it was discovered in the spring. Mr. Watkins asked if there are any homes along that stretch that would be affected, Ms. Murphy answered maybe one home. Mr. Watkins asked if any letter was sent to property owners along that road saying that due to the unacceptance of the road, it would not be plowed any longer. Ms. Murphy answered that it is not unaccepted, and this is a different situation – it just means that the layout was never recorded. She said there was a survey and a layout done in 2016, and that the registry does not have record of that layout. Mr. Watkins doesn't see the need to spend money on a road that has been in existence for many years, when he believes it could be a road by prescription. Mr. Hickey said the layout has been done, and this is part of the project funded by the Commonwealth. The issue is that the layout was not properly recorded by the registry. The Town is trying to have the layout of Central Street recorded into the registry, allowing the Commonwealth to fund the upgrades to Central Street. Marc Dorwart of 245 Mellen Road said the Registry of Deeds has been mentioned, when he said the Town has said it does not matter. He argued that it stated that the Registry matters on Central Street but not as it pertained to Mellen Road. Mr. Hickey said he was unaware what Mr. Dorwart is referring to and it is not relevant to the Finance Committee discussion.

Mr. Kent asked what are the total value of improvements the Town will receive in this project. He is aware some parking spots were forfeited due to the establishment of a bike lane. He asked the value of those parking spots and what the profit value will be in the overall scheme of the project. Ms. Murphy didn't have exact numbers in front of her but said the current value of the project is about \$5.3 million. Mr. Hickey answered that the reason the parking spaces will be lost is that the layout is a very old one,

and the location of parking spots allowed in the past are no longer allowed due to proximity of intersections, etc. While there will be fewer parking spaces, there will be safer parking spots due to more space from the intersections.

ARTICLE 13 - To see if the Town will vote to (a) authorize the Board of Selectmen to acquire, by purchase, gift and/or eminent domain, the fee to and/or permanent and/or temporary easements, for public way purposes, including without limitation, for the construction, alteration, installation, maintenance, improvement, repair, replacement and/or relocation of rights of way, sidewalks, walkways, driveways, drainage, utilities, driveways, guardrails, slopes, grading, rounding, construction, landscaping, and other appurtenances and/or facilities, to enable the Town to undertake the Central Street (Route 202) Reconstruction Project and for any and all purposes and uses incidental or related thereto, in, on and under certain parcels of land located on or near Central Street and approximately shown on plans entitled "Massachusetts Department of Transportation Highway Division Plan and Profile of Improvements and Related Work on Central Street (Route 202) from Front Street to Maple Street," dated October 4, 2019, prepared by Tighe & Bond Consulting Engineers, on file with the Town Clerk, as said plans may be amended and/or incorporated into an easement plan, and land within 200 feet of said parcels; (b) transfer the care, custody, and control of a portion or portions of the Town-owned property or properties shown on the aforesaid plans from the board or officer having custody of the same for the purposes for which such properties are currently held to the Board of Selectmen for the purposes set forth herein, and further to dedicate said portions of the Town-owned properties to the purposes set forth herein, and, if applicable, authorize the Board of Selectmen to submit petitions to the General Court to allow the foregoing under Article 97 of the Massachusetts Constitution or otherwise; (c) raise and appropriate, transfer from available funds, and/or borrow a sum of money not to exceed \$150,000 to fund the foregoing and any and all costs incidental or related thereto, including, without limitation, the cost of any land/easement acquisitions, appraisals and surveys; and, further, (d) authorize the Board of Selectmen to enter into all agreements and take any and all actions as may be necessary or appropriate to effectuate the foregoing purposes; or act in relation thereto.

Mr. Kane said he believes there are no permanent easements needed in relation to this project, they are all only temporary; Ms. Murphy confirmed. Mr. Watkins of 235 Mellen Road said that this is a great initiative for the Town, and the amount of State funding received is great.

ARTICLE 14 - To see if the Town will vote to appropriate the sum of \$3,762,000 for the purpose of making repairs for Phase 1 and Phase 2 of three phases for the Old Murdock Senior Center, including the payment of all costs incidental and related thereto; and as funding therefor that the Treasurer, with the approval of the Board of Selectmen, be authorized to borrow said sum and issue bonds and notes therefor pursuant to G.L. c.44, §7 or any other enabling authority; and further that any premium received by the Town upon the sale of any bonds or notes approved by this vote, less any such premium applied to the payment of the costs of issuance of such bonds or notes, may be applied to the payment of costs approved by this vote in accordance with Chapter 44, Section 20 of the General Laws, thereby reducing the amount authorized to be borrowed to pay such costs by a like amount; provided, however, that any borrowing authorized hereunder shall be contingent on the passage of a Proposition 2½ debt exclusion vote, or act in relation thereto.

Mr. Hickey said the Senior Center, about a year ago, was noticed to have damage to the brickwork, resulting in loose and sometimes falling bricks. An assessment was conducted, with a number of necessary repairs identified and categorized into three phases, with Phase 1 being the most immediate repairs and Phase 3 being the last repairs needed. Due to its historical status, the manner in which repairs are conducted is

limited. The total of necessary repairs totals \$3.76 million. Mr. Kent said this is the most loved building in the community. There is no question that the work needs to be done. He asked if there is a fixed number of the added taxes homeowners could expect to see, should this article pass. He also asked, if it does pass, is this \$3.7 million enough, or will there be further costs down the road. Mr. Hickey said there is a Phase 3 as well, which has been titled "Long Term Repairs". That cost is an additional \$1.5 million, because they are longer term repairs, the thought was to bundle the immediate and short-term repairs together and then address the longer-term repairs as part of a Capital Improvement Plan. Dr. Ward clarified that the increase to homeowners would average \$68 dollars on a \$206,000 home, which is the average residential property value in Winchendon. Mr. Kent asked which percentage of the vote would be needed to pass this article, Dr. Ward answered it is a 2/3 majority vote needed. Mr. Watkins asked how he would go about getting a copy of the proposed work on the Senior Center, to which Mr. Hickey answered the entire report is listed on the website. Mr. Dorwart asked if the \$3.7 million covers the repairs of the roof in total. Mr. Hickey answered the roof repairs should be done in Phase 1 and Phase 2. Mr. Dorwart asked if it will be a slate roof. As Mr. Hickey mentioned earlier, a slate roof must be done as the Town has accepted historical State funds in the past for this building. Mr. Kane asked if there was anything on the horizon in terms of historical or state funding. Mr. Hickey answered that the grant amounts available for any community is not significant, but of course, the Town will take advantage of any funds available to reduce the cost to the community. Mr. Kent asked if this article was to not pass, what is the alternative plan. Mr. Hickey said there are no real alternatives. This building is significant and historical, and the repairs are necessary. He does not know of another way to meet the needed repairs with the requirements set by the State and the historical funding received. Inanna Arthen of 325 Lakeview Drive informed all those listening that she has a breakdown of the cost and the application of putting the building onto the historical registry. It is intricate with many detailed photographs and a list of the needed repairs.

ARTICLE 15 - To see if the Town will vote pursuant to Section 7.15 of the General Bylaws to transfer from Free Cash the sum of \$86,165 to make permanent road improvements on the unaccepted portion of Mellen Road. These repairs will upgrade this portion of Mellen Road to the Town's dirt road standard in preparation for acceptance of a town road at a future Town Meeting, or act in relation thereto.

Mr. Hickey explained there has been a long conversation regarding the ownership of Mellen Road and how to make repairs to the currently poor condition of Mellen Road. The Board of Selectmen have proposed two options to the repair of Mellen Road. The first option, Article 15, will pave the road and bring it to Town standard, which will then allow the Town to accept the road at a Town Meeting if the residents vote in favor. This will also allow the Town to receive Chapter 90 funding to continue to maintain and repair the road. Dr. Ward understands that the residents would like it to be accepted as a Town road, and if this is part of that process, why is there still a disconnect? Mr. Hickey said his impression of what the disconnect was is that Mellen Road residents purchased a property abutting a brand new paved road. They would like to see that road paved and restored to its original condition. Mr. Watkins provided his interpretation of the events that transpired from 1981 until now, alleging that the Town has always had ownership and responsibility of maintenance. Mr. Dorwart asked if the Finance Committee had read the letter from the attorney of the Mellen Road residents regarding the circumstances regarding the road. Mr. Kane answered yes, and as Mr. Dorwart had pointed out, that is the opinion of the attorney. Mr. Dorwart also expressed his opinion of the circumstances of the history of the road. Mr. Kane thanked Mr. Dorwart for his opinion, but said that the Committee needs to just vote on this topic and what Mr. Dorwart is asking is not relevant to this article. The Finance Committee cannot help the residents with this topic. He is hearing Mr. Dorwart say that he does not want to see this article pass. Mr. Kent asked if Article 15 states that this will make permanent improvements to the road as part of the process to accept the road, which would only help improve the road and help the residents. Mr. Dorwart opposed this statement. Dominique Muldoon of

Mellen Road said the dirt road is not going to help and explained in detail the events that transpire on the road that she believes will damage the dirt road. She asked for a vote against this article. Bill Shea of 275 Mellen Road also voiced his opposition to this road.

ARTICLE 16 - To see if the Town will vote pursuant to Section 7.15 of the General Bylaws to transfer from Free Cash the sum of \$4,200 to make temporary road repairs on the unaccepted portion of Mellen Road, or act in relation thereto.

Hickey said this article will be passed over if Article 15 is to pass, and this will be a temporary repair.

ARTICLE 17 - To see if the Town will vote to transfer from Free Cash the sum of \$40,046 to fund the FY20 operating deficit of the Wastewater Department, or act in relation thereto.

Mr. Hickey said that when FY'20 was closed, it was found that the Wastewater Fund had a deficit. These funds will address the deficit. Mr. Kane asked why an enterprise fund deficit would come from free cash. Mr. Hickey said this is the first option, if this article fails, it would have to be raised through taxation.

ARTICLE 18 - To see if the Town will vote transfer from Free Cash the sum of \$165,032 for the following capital items:

<u>Capital Request</u>	<u>Department</u>	<u>Amount</u>
Cruiser Replacement	Police	\$ 45,000
School Security Cameras (District Wide)	School	\$ 30,000
Toy Town Hot Water Heater	School	\$ 26,600
Hot Box	Public Works	\$ 33,432
DPW Septic	Public Works	\$ 30,000
		\$ 165,032

Mr. Hickey said this article is requested to fund a reduced request of capital items versus what was initially proposed. These items were reduced to help fund the operating budget. Dr. Ward asked if the cruisers are the full cost or if they are being partially funded by grants. Mr. Hickey answered it is the full cost. Dr. Ward also asked if all schools will have cameras now, to which Ms. Landers answered yes. Dr. Kent asked if Mr. Hickey knew the year and the mileage of the cruisers that are retiring. Mr. Hickey said on average, the years are 2016 and 2017, and by the time the vehicles are retired, they will have over 100,000 miles on them.

ARTICLE 19 - To see if the Town will vote to transfer from Deficit Legislation Special Reserve Account the sum of \$323,776.09 into the Finance Committee Special Reserve Account, or act in relation thereto.

Mr. Hickey said this warrant article would transfer the \$323,776.09 from the Deficit Legislation Special Reserve Account into the Special Reserve Account in the case of emergency expenditures. Purchases from this account will be approved by the Finance Committee. This will provide the community some flexibility with monies available to them if there were some unknown or unanticipated COVID-19 expenses. Mr. Kane said the article makes sense to have the money available to the Town if necessitated. If not required, the money will be returned to its original account.

ARTICLE 20 - To see if the Town will vote to transfer the following balances of prior capital appropriations into the General Fund to offset the existing long term debt appropriation as required by Mass. General Law.

Purchase of a boiler for Toy Town Elementary School	\$521.02
Acquisition of a Fire Truck	\$161.00

Mr. Hickey said these funds are left unexpended from the prior fiscal year and according to the Town Accountant, they will be shown as a revenue on the Town General Fund.

ARTICLE 21 - To see if the Town will vote to transfer the following balance of reserve account for sale of town property into the General Fund to offset the existing long term debt appropriation as required by Mass. General Law.

Sale of Town Property	\$14,000
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Mr. Hickey said the \$14, 000 was received from a sale by the Town years ago and was placed into a reserve account, which is now not needed. The Town is asking to close this account and transfer the monies into the General Fund.

ARTICLE 22 - To see if the Town will vote to accept as town ways the roadways known as Bayberry Circle and Pinewood Drive, as heretofore laid out by the Board of Selectmen and shown on a plan entitled "Millers Run Subdivision Plan of Land in Winchendon, Massachusetts Surveyed for Robert Van Dyke," dated February 27, 2004, prepared by Sage Engineering, LLC, and on file with the Town Clerk, and to authorize the Board of Selectmen to acquire on behalf of the Town by gift, purchase, or eminent domain an easement to use Bayberry Circle and Pinewood Drive for all purposes for which public ways are used in the Town of Winchendon, and drainage, utility, access, and/or other easements related thereto; or act in relation thereto.

Mr. Hickey explained this acceptance has been approved by the Planning Board and by the Board of Selectmen. Dr. Ward asked the difference between accepting as a public way and a town road, to which Mr. Hickey answered they are one and the same.

ARTICLE 23 - To see if the Town will vote to authorize the Board of Selectmen to accept property from the Winchendon Redevelopment Authority, on such terms and consideration as the Board of Selectmen deems appropriate, the following parcels as described below:

Map 5C4 0 5:

A certain parcel of land situated in Winchendon at the corner of Glenallen and Spring Streets known as Grout Park and shown on the assessor's map as map 5C4, parcel 5. Parcel consisting of approximately .7 acres. Parcel is further described in deed recorded in Book 52460 Page 211 of the Registry of Deeds, Worcester District.

Mr. Hickey explained the Redevelopment Authority has owned this parcel historically but there is no need for them to currently own it. The Town has worked with Ms. Grout and her family, through their donations, to improve the park and the Town is now ready to take ownership of the park.

ARTICLE 24 - To see if the Town will vote to authorize the Board of Selectmen to convey the Town-owned property located on 4 Summer Drive, and shown as Assessors Map 5B3 Parcel 0-160, for such

consideration, including acquisition of other land in addition to or in lieu of a cash payment, and upon such other terms and conditions as the Board deems appropriate, and to authorize the Board to acquire any such land by purchase, gift, or eminent domain or in exchange for the Town-owned property, and for such purposes as the Board deems in the best interest of the Town and to take such additional action as may be needed to effectuate the purposes of this vote, including but not limited to execution of instruments and documents to convey and/or accept real property; and further, to raise and appropriate, transfer or borrow a sum of money for such purposes, or act in relation thereto.

Mr. Hickey spoke to both Article 24 and Article 25, explaining they were both acquired by the Town years ago as part of the tax title process. The property in Article 24 has a dilapidated building that continues to fall into disrepair. The parcel in Article 25 is a vacant piece of property that abuts the parcel in Article 24. The Town is seeking authority to sell the property with stipulations. Because the property was acquired through tax title, restrictions on how the property is resold can be placed as to what the Town would like to see the property be used for. The Town would like to see the property revitalized and developed into something that could be beneficial to the Town while generating income and generating jobs.

ARTICLE 25 - To see if the Town will vote to authorize the Board of Selectmen to convey the Town-owned property located on Summer Drive, and shown as Assessors Map 5B3 Parcel 0-158, for such consideration, including acquisition of other land in addition to or in lieu of a cash payment, and upon such other terms and conditions as the Board deems appropriate, and to authorize the Board to acquire any such land by purchase, gift, or eminent domain or in exchange for the Town-owned property, and for such purposes as the Board deems in the best interest of the Town and to take such additional action as may be needed to effectuate the purposes of this vote, including but not limited to execution of instruments and documents to convey and/or accept real property; and further, to raise and appropriate, transfer or borrow a sum of money for such purposes, or act in relation thereto.

ARTICLE 26 - To see if the Town will accept the provisions of M.G.L. c. 59, § 5, Clause Twenty-second H (inserted by Chapter 218 of the Acts of 2018 known as an Act Relative to Veterans' Benefits, Rights, Appreciation, Validation, and Enforcement ("BRAVE Act"), signed into law August 28, 2018, which provides for a property tax exemption for real estate to the full amount of the taxable valuation of the real property of the surviving parents or guardians of soldiers and sailors, members of the National Guard and veterans who: (i) during active duty service, suffered an injury or illness documented by the United States Department of Veteran Affairs or a branch of the armed forces that was a proximate cause of their death; or (ii) are missing in action with a presumptive finding of death as a result of active duty service as members of the Armed Forces of the United States; provided, however, that the real estate shall be occupied by the surviving parents or guardians as the surviving parents' or guardians' domicile; and provided further, that the surviving parents or guardians shall have been domiciled in the Commonwealth for the 5 consecutive years immediately before the date of filing for an exemption pursuant to this clause or the soldier or sailor, member of the National Guard or veteran was domiciled in the Commonwealth for not less than 6 months before entering service. Surviving parents or guardians eligible for an exemption pursuant to this clause shall be eligible regardless of when the soldier, sailor, member of the National Guard or veteran died or became missing in action with a presumptive finding of death; provided, however, that the exemption shall only apply to tax years beginning on or after January 1, 2019. Such exemption shall be available until such time as the surviving parents or guardians are deceased. No real estate shall be so exempt which has been conveyed to the surviving parents or guardians to evade taxation, or take any other action related thereto.

Mr. Hickey said the language was taken straight from the State law, so it is standard language and has been voted upon by the Board of Selectmen. Dr. Ward asked if there has been discussion in terms of adding "spouse" into this statement. Mr. Hickey said that spouses already have their own benefit and this article pertains to parents.

ARTICLE 27 - Town of Winchendon to officially recognize the section of Mellen Road by prescription beginning at #404, the home of Chris and Donna Nolette and extending northerly to #215, the home of John and Celeste Wehmeyer, for the purpose of maintenance and repair.

Mr. Watkins said this article says that Mellen Road has been experienced heavy public use for a minimum of twenty years. He said that the law surrounding "prescription" states it must be a public-used road. He said there are people coming up and down Mellen Road that are encouraged to do so by DCR in order to access the state-owned forest and that there are also logging trucks on the road frequently. The residents placed this article on the warrant in hopes to have the Town continue ownership and maintenance of this road. Mr. Kent asked how this article relates to Article 15. Mr. Watkins said that Article 15 proposes ripping up the current road and establishing a dirt road, which is not what the residents want. The residents want to see a paved road, as they had enjoyed in the past when they bought their homes. Mr. Kent asked Mr. Hickey asked if Article 15 and Article 27 both passed, how these two articles would interact or affect each other. Mr. Hickey was informed by Town Counsel that if both articles are able to pass it would provide the Board of Selectmen some direction, but there is no legal requirement for the Board of Selectmen to abide by the language of the article. Mr. Dorwart said he was under the impression that the Board of Selectmen will pass over Article 15 and the Town can just recognize the road by prescription. He asked the Finance Commission to pass over Article 15. Ms. Muldoon also spoke in favor of this article. Mr. Kane clarified that this article is more of a referendum and not a binding mandate; as the Board of Selectmen is the authority on this matter.

Dr. Ward moved to close the public hearing, seconded by Mr. Corts. The public hearing was closed at 9:16 p.m.

Ward (Y) Corts (Y) Delay (Y) Kent (Y) Kane (Y) 5-0 Approved

A five-minute recess was taken.

SPECIAL TOWN MEETING WARRANT ARTICLE – FINANCE COMMITTEE VOTES

Article 1- This article does not require a Finance Committee vote.

Article 2- Dr. Ward motioned to support, seconded by Mr. Corts. Mr. Corts asked for the balance in free cash. Mr. Kane said somewhere around \$700,000. The board unanimously voted aye.

Ward (Y) Corts (Y) Delay (Y) Kent (Y) Kane (Y) 5-0 Approved

ANNUAL TOWN MEETING WARRANT ARTICLE – FINANCE COMMITTEE VOTES

Article 1 – Mr. Kane said he would like some informal comment from committee members before Town Meeting to help finalize a report.

Article 2 – After some discussion, Dr. Ward made a motion to recommend Article 2, seconded by Mr. Corts. The board unanimously voted aye.

Ward (Y) Corts (Y) Delay (Y) Kent (Y) Kane (Y) 5-0 Approved

Article 3- Dr. Ward motioned to support Article 3, seconded by Mr. Corts. The board unanimously voted aye.

Ward (Y) Corts (Y) Delay (Y) Kent (Y) Kane (Y) 5-0 Approved

Article 4- Dr. Ward motioned to recommend Article 4, seconded by Mr. Corts. The board unanimously voted aye.

Ward (Y) Corts (Y) Delay (Y) Kent (Y) Kane (Y) 5-0 Approved

Article 5- Dr. Ward motioned to recommend Article 5, seconded by Mr. Corts. The board unanimously voted aye.

Ward (Y) Corts (Y) Delay (Y) Kent (Y) Kane (Y) 5-0 Approved

Article 6- Dr. Ward motioned to recommend Article 6, seconded by Mr. Corts. The board unanimously voted aye.

Ward (Y) Corts (Y) Kent (Y) Delay (Y) Kane (Y) 5-0 Approved

Article 7- Dr. Ward motioned to recommend Article 7, seconded by Mr. Delay. The board unanimously voted aye.

Ward (Y) Corts (Y) Kent (Y) Delay (Y) Kane (Y) 5-0 Approved

Article 8- Dr. Ward motioned to recommend Article 8, seconded by Mr. Delay. The board unanimously voted aye.

Ward (Y) Corts (Y) Kent (Y) Delay (Y) Kane (Y) 5-0 Approved

Article 9- Dr. Ward motioned to recommend Article 9, seconded by Mr. Corts. The board unanimously voted aye.

Ward (Y) Corts (Y) Kent (Y) Delay (Y) Kane (Y) 5-0 Approved

Article 10- Dr. Ward motioned to recommend Article 10, seconded by Mr. Kent. The board unanimously voted aye.

Ward (Y) Corts (Y) Kent (Y) Delay (Y) Kane (Y) 5-0 Approved

Article 11- Dr. Ward motioned to recommend Article 11, seconded by Mr. Corts. The board unanimously voted aye.

Ward (Y) Corts (Y) Kent (Y) Delay (Y) Kane (Y) 5-0 Approved

Article 12- Dr. Ward motioned to recommend Article 12, seconded by Mr. Corts. The board unanimously voted aye.

Ward (Y) Corts (Y) Kent (Y) Delay (Y) Kane (Y) 5-0 Approved

Article 13- Dr. Ward motioned to recommend Article 13, seconded by Mr. Delay. The board unanimously voted aye.

Ward (Y) Corts (Y) Kent (Y) Delay (Y) Kane (Y) 5-0 Approved

Article 14- Dr. Ward motioned to recommend Article 14, seconded by Mr. Corts. Dr. Ward commented that the Old Murdock building is not only a historical landmark, but their contribution to the community is significant. Last fiscal year, in spite of being closed for four months, they delivered \$21,998 meals to the elderly in the community, they transported 2,370 elders to appointments, with a total of 24,000 miles. They distributed 3,500 bags of groceries for a total of 24,500 pounds of food. Mr. Kane commented that it is a clear need that the Town has, from the perspective of the historic building and the fact that it houses the seniors. As the Finance Committee's representative on the Capital Planning Committee, he is concerned that these items can be taken out of perspective. He is not opposed to the project, but he is proposed to the approach to the priority of the capital needs in Town. Dr. Ward noted two of the three entrances are already blocked due to damage. If anything happens to the third, the center will be closed.

Ward (Y) Corts (Y) Kent (Y) Delay (Y) Kane (N) 4-1 Approved

Article 15- Dr. Ward motioned to not recommend, seconded by Mr. Corts. Mr. Delay noted it was clear from the conversation with Mellen Road residents that they oppose this article. Mr. Kent said that regarding public input, he supports not supporting this article. The board unanimously voted aye.

Ward (Y) Corts (Y) Kent (Y) Delay (Y) Kane (Y) 5-0 Approved

Article 16- Dr. Ward motioned to recommend Article 16, seconded by Mr. Corts. Mr. Delay said it appeared to him that the residents also did not approve of Article 16. Dr. Ward understood the repairs would revert back to what the road always was, which is what the residents wanted. Mr. Kane said they seemed to be in support of this article. The board unanimously voted aye.

Ward (Y) Corts (Y) Kent (Y) Delay (Y) Kane (Y) 5-0 Approved

Article 17- Dr. Ward motioned to recommend Article 17, seconded by Mr. Corts. The board unanimously voted aye.

Ward (Y) Corts (Y) Kent (Y) Delay (Y) Kane (Y) 5-0 Approved

Article 18- Dr. Ward motioned to recommend Article 18, seconded by Mr. Delay. The board unanimously voted aye.

Ward (Y) Corts (Y) Kent (Y) Delay (Y) Kane (Y) 5-0 Approved

Article 19- Dr. Ward motioned to recommend Article 19, seconded by Mr. Corts. Mr. Delay asked if this could go back to a stabilization account rather than free cash. Mr. Kane said it will go to free cash because it was money allocated that did not get spent. To go back to stabilization, it would require a warrant article and a vote at Town Meeting with a 2/3 vote. The board unanimously voted aye.

Ward (Y) Corts (Y) Kent (Y) Delay (Y) Kane (Y) 5-0 Approved

Article 20- Dr. Ward motioned to recommend Article 20, seconded by Mr. Corts. The board unanimously voted aye.

Ward (Y) Corts (Y) Kent (Y) Delay (Y) Kane (Y) 5-0 Approved

Article 21- Dr. Ward motioned to recommend Article 21, seconded by Mr. Kent. The board unanimously voted aye.

Ward (Y) Corts (Y) Kent (Y) Delay (Y) Kane (Y) 5-0 Approved

Article 22- Dr. Ward motioned to recommend Article 22, seconded by Mr. Delay. The board unanimously voted aye.

Ward (Y) Corts (Y) Kent (Y) Delay (Y) Kane (Y) 5-0 Approved

Article 23- Dr. Ward motioned to recommend Article 23, seconded by Mr. Corts. The board unanimously voted aye.

Dr. Ward said Mr. Kane read it as on page 210 of the Registry of Deeds, but it is actually 211.

Ward (Y) Corts (Y) Kent (Y) Delay (Y) Kane (Y) 5-0 Approved

Article 24- Dr. Ward motioned to recommend Article 24, seconded by Mr. Corts. The board unanimously voted aye.

Ward (Y) Corts (Y) Kent (Y) Delay (Y) Kane (Y) 5-0 Approved

Article 25- Dr. Ward motioned to recommend Article 25, seconded by Mr. Kent. The board unanimously voted aye.

Ward (Y) Corts (Y) Kent (Y) Delay (Y) Kane (Y) 5-0 Approved

Article 26- Dr. Ward motioned to recommend Article 26, seconded by Mr. Delay. The board unanimously voted aye.

Ward (Y) Corts (Y) Kent (Y) Delay (Y) Kane (Y) 5-0 Approved

9:30PM- Dr. Ward motioned to adjourn, seconded by Mr. Corts. The board unanimously voted aye.
Corts (Y) Delay (Y) Kent (Y) Ward (Y) Kane (Y) 5-0

Article 27- Dr. Ward asked if the Board of Selectmen accept the road by prescription, does the road need to be repaired to accept it as a town road, or can it be accepted the way that it is? Mr. Hickey answered that it can be accepted as it is now.

Dr. Ward motioned to recommend Article 27, seconded by Mr. Corts. The board unanimously voted aye.

Ward (Y) Corts (Y) Kent (Y) Delay (Y) Kane (Y) 5-0 Approved

Mr. Kane asked committee members to send their thoughts regarding the Finance Committee report to him by the end of the week. Mr. Kane asked to schedule a meeting for next week to discuss and act on the report.

Public Comment – Mr. Dorwart and Ms. Muldoon thanked the Committee.

9:58 p.m.- Dr. Ward motioned to adjourn, seconded by Mr. Corts. The board unanimously voted aye.

Corts (Y) Delay (Y) Kent (Y) Ward (Y) Kane (Y) 5-0

The meeting adjourned at 9:58 p.m.

Respectfully submitted:

Taylor Tower, Finance Committee Recording Secretary

Tom Kane, Chairman

Maureen Ward, Vice-Chair

Charles C. Corts

Douglas Delay

Keith Kent