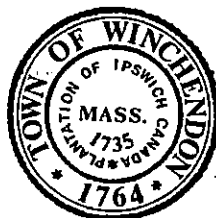


## TOWN OF WINCHENDON



## Finance Committee

Telephone (978)-297-5419

**Regular Meeting/Public Hearing**

Finance Committee Minutes

April 27, 2021

Held Remotely via Zoom

**Present:** Thomas Kane, Jr., Dr. Maureen Ward, Douglas Delay, Phillip Levine, Charles Corts

Stephen Delaney, Interim Town Manager. Joanne Goguen, Town Accountant

**Absent:** Keith Kent, David Alexander

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**List of Documents Presented at Meeting:**

- Draft Town Meeting Warrant

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**6:30PM:** Mr. Kane called the Finance Committee meeting to order and opened the public hearing, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance. He explained that he will work through the Warrant, ask the appropriate Town representative to speak to their articles and then he will allow public comment on the articles. After this, the Committee will close the public hearing and vote on their recommendations of each warrant.

**Discussion on Town Meeting Warrant:**

**Article 1 of STM – Committee Report:** To see if the Town will vote to hear and act on the reports of the Finance Committee, or act in relation thereto. (Usual and customary article)

**ANNUAL TOWN MEETING ARTICLES**

**Article 1: Committee Report –** To see if the Town will vote to hear and act on the report of the Finance Committee, the annual report of the Board of Selectmen and of any other officers or committees required to report to the Town, or act in relation thereto. (Usual and customary article).

**Article 2: Establish/Discharge Committees -** 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. (usual and customary article)

**Article 3: Authorize Revolving Funds -** To see if the town will vote to fix the maximum amount to be spent during fiscal year 2022 beginning on July 1, 2021 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.

**Article 4: Senior Tax Work-Off Program:** 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.

**Article 5: Community Action Committee Non-Profit Support** - 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.

**Article 6: FY22 General Government Budget** - To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate and transfer from other available funds the sum of \$16,185,796 for the operating budget of the Town for the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2021, or act in relation thereto. (usual and customary article)

Kane said he understands there are increases with the Fire Department salaries due to the SAFER Grant phasing out. With regard to the Spare Houseman account, he asked why there is an increase. Delaney explained this account is being reviewed thoroughly and he will have an answer to the Committee as soon as possible.

**Article 7: FY22 Water Dept. Enterprise Budget** - To see if the Town will vote to appropriate the sum of \$967,915 for direct costs of the Water Department Enterprise Fund for the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2021, and that indirect costs of \$146,063 appropriated in the general government budget be funded by Water Receipts, or act in relation thereto.

**Article 8: FY22 Wastewater Enterprise Budget** - To see if the Town will vote to appropriate the sum of \$1,373,427 (Wastewater Receipts of \$1,202,166 and Betterment Revenues of \$310,000) for the direct costs of the Wastewater Treatment Department Enterprise Fund for the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2021, and that indirect costs of \$138,739 appropriated in the general government budget be funded by Wastewater Receipts, or act in relation thereto.

**Article 9: FY22 Transfer Station Enterprise Budget** - To see if the Town will vote to appropriate the sum of \$192,028 from Transfer Station Receipts for direct costs of the Transfer Station Enterprise Fund for the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2021; and that indirect costs of \$22,797 appropriated in the general government budget be funded by Transfer Station Receipts, or act in relation thereto.

**Article 10: FY22 School Budget** - To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate and/or transfer from available funds the sum of \$14,242,642 (Required Net School Spending of \$17,036,655 plus \$356,606.29 prior year override that includes a 2.5% escalator in increased funding plus \$63,000 which represents a portion of the solar PILOT revenues for FY22 less \$3,213,619.65 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, 2021, or act in relation thereto.

**Article 11: FY22 Monty Tech's Assessment** - To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$784,000 to fund the Town's assessment for its share of the Montachusett Regional Vocational Technical School budget for the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2021, or act in relation thereto.

**Article 12: Capital – DPW Lease/Purchase of 10 Wheel Dump Truck** - To see if the Town will vote to authorize the Town Manager, in accordance with the provisions of G.L. c.44, §21C to enter into a lease purchase agreement for a term of four years for the acquisition and equipping of a Ten Wheel Dump Truck, with plow with sander insert for use by the Department of Public Works, or act in relation thereto. (Total cost of the lease over 4 years estimated at \$236,360)

Delay asked if there is a cost difference between leasing and purchasing. Delaney answered that the interest rates that are being offered are competitive.

**Article 13: Capital – Police Cruisers** - To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate, transfer from available funds, and/or borrow the sum of \$95,000 for the acquisition and equipping of two Police Department Cruisers, or act in relation thereto.

**Article 14: Capital – Beals Memorial Library Electrical Upgrades and Fire Suppression System** - To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate, transfer from available funds and/or borrow the sum of \$597,247 for Beals Memorial Library for upgrades to the electrical system and the installation of a fire suppression system, with \$300,000 transferred from Free Cash and the balance to be borrowed for a term of five years, or act in relation thereto.

Mr. King, Library Director, explained the work that will be done and said it is necessary to protect the investments already made into the Library building. He noted that some utilities of the building are out of date, either posing a safety hazard or simply not meeting the needs of the twenty-first century. Dr. Ward clarified that they will be borrowing \$297,000. She asked Mr. Delaney if there will be an impact on tax rate; to which he replied it is a part of the capital plan and there will be an override.

**Article 15: Capital – Critical Repairs to Senior Center** – To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate, transfer from available funds and/or borrow the sum of \$1,560,000 for critical repairs to the Senior Center building, or act in relation thereto. Proposed Repairs include ventilation and operating chimney repairs, selective roof repairs, clock tower window replacement and hazardous material survey and abatement. An amount of \$608,000 has been requested from the Robinson-Broadhurst Foundation for masonry repairs to the clock tower. If any funds are received from the Foundation for these repairs, the amount to be borrowed would be reduced by that amount. (It is proposed that the sum be borrowed for a term of 6 to 10 years.)

**Article 16: Capital – Emergency Generator for Toy Town Elementary School** - To see if the Town will vote to transfer from Free Cash the sum of \$100,000 to purchase and install an emergency generator at Toy Town Elementary School, or act in relation thereto.

Kane noted that this has been a request from the Capital Planning Committee for the last three years. Dr. Ward asked if this school comes to be out of service, could the generator be moved. Delaney answered it could.

**Article 17: Capital – Water Fund – Replace Water Meters** - To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate, transfer from available funds, and/or authorize the borrowing of \$800,000 to replace water meters throughout the system, and that the payments for such meter replacement be made through the Water Fund Enterprise budget. (Borrowing term: 10 years)

Croteau explained that this investment will allow meters to read more accurately and will also help to notify staff and water users of high usage that would be indicative of leaks.

**Article 18: Design Costs Required for Local Grants** - To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate, or transfer from available funds the sum of \$40,000 for design costs required for grant programs, or act

in relation thereto. (Explanation: Design costs are often required as part of a transportation/roadway application program. Without a readily available source of funds, the design costs are often charged to the only available/eligible source of funds, the Chapter 90 roads fund, which if utilized for design, would not be available for necessary road maintenance.)

**Article 19: Mellen Rd. Acceptance** – To see if the Town will vote to accept Mellen Road as a public town way, for all purposes customary as a public way including maintenance and repair, in the location laid out by the Board of Selectmen, on plan noted as Mellen Road Roadway Acceptance Plan, dated April 23, 2021, and drawn by McCarty Engineering Inc., with reference points noted at southerly border at 565 Mellen Road, extending northerly to 215 Mellen Road, said layout having been placed on file with the Town Clerk as required by law no less than seven (7) days prior to a vote hereon, or take any other action relative thereto.

**Article 20: Authorization to Allow Selectmen to Acquire Temporary and Permanent Easements for Mellen Rd.** - To see if the Town will vote to authorize the Board of Selectmen to acquire, by purchase, gift, eminent domain or otherwise, for public way purposes, easements or other interests in land in the location more or less depicted as "Mellen Road" on the plan entitled: "Mellen Road Roadway Acceptance Plan, dated April 23, 2021", as said plan may be amended, a copy of which has been placed on file with the Town Clerk, to enable the Town to lay out and accept said Mellen Road as a public way in the Town, and further to see if the Town will vote to authorize the Board of Selectmen to petition the General Court for special legislation in the form set forth below, provided that the General Court shall make changes of form only to the bill unless the Board of Selectmen approves amendments to the bill before enactment by the General Court within the scope of the general public objectives of the petition, and to authorize the Board of Selectmen to approve such amendments, or take any other action relative thereto.

Delaney explained that whether residents choose to accept the road via Article 19 or Article 24, the easements will still be necessary to accept this road. Dr. Ward asked what would happen if both Articles 19 and 24 pass.

**Article 21: Town Charter Amendment** - To see if the Town will vote pursuant to G.L. c.43B, §10(a) to amend the Town Charter as recommended by the Charter Bylaw Review Committee in a document entitled, "2021 Proposed Charter Revisions", on file in the office of the Town Clerk and available on the Town's website at <http://www.townofwinchendon.com/>, with text to be inserted underlined and text to be deleted shown in the margins; revisions include but are not limited to: ministerial and clerical amendments such as grammar, capitalization, gender neutrality, internal consistency, and references to and updates based upon state law and other matters; or act in relation thereto.

Dr. Ward, who had chaired the Charter Bylaw Committee, explained the changes that are being recommended.

**Article 22: General Bylaw Amendment** - To see if the Town will vote to amend the General Bylaws of the Town of Winchendon as recommended by the Charter Bylaw Review Committee in a document entitled "2021 Proposed Bylaw Revisions" on file in the office of the Town Clerk and available on the Town's website at <http://www.townofwinchendon.com> with text to be inserted underlined and text to be deleted shown in the margins; revisions include but are not limited to: ministerial and clerical amendments such as grammar, capitalization, gender neutrality, internal consistency, and references to and Special and Annual Town Meeting Warrant May 17, 2021 Page 21 of 23 updates based upon state law; as well as certain substantive revisions, such as an update and/or replacement of Articles 12 and 31 per M. G. L. or to clarify language and other matters; or act in relation thereto.

**Article 23: Accept Deed in Lieu of Foreclosure – Hall St. and Lincoln Ave.** - To see if the Town will vote to accept a deed in lieu of foreclosure from John D. Walker, or from the then current owner(s), pursuant to

the provisions of G.L. Chapter 60, Section 77C, to three (3) parcels of land identified as (i) Assessor's Map 4D4-0-11, being 0.14 acres, more or less, located on Hall Street; (ii) Assessor's Map 2-0-72, being 0.15 acres, more or less, located on Lincoln Avenue; and (iii) Assessor's Map 2-0-73, being 0.30 acres, more or less, located on Lincoln Avenue, said property described in a deed recorded with the Worcester South Registry of Deeds in Book 4810, Page 40, which parcels are subject to tax takings held by the Treasurer/Collector for unpaid real estate taxes, said parcels to be under the care, custody, control and management of the Board of Selectmen for general municipal purposes, and to authorize the Board of Selectmen to accept and record the deed, provided the Board of Selectmen determines that the deed and the acceptance shall comply with the provisions of G.L. Chapter 60, Section 77C, or act in relation thereto.

**Article 24: Citizens Petition for the Town to Accept Certain Portions of Mellen Rd.** - The residents of Mellen Road are not waiving: earlier public designations/recognitions, ANR, public nature by prescription, and/or other actions/omissions and/or statements that the road is a public way, and the residents of Mellen Road reserve all remedies for the Town of Winchendon attempting to change positions, including, but not limited to, damages and attorneys' fees. Subject to the foregoing reservations and notice of non-waiver, in order to stop the Town of Winchendon from continuing to avoid its obligations, the residents of Mellen Road hereby present this Petition. Petition subject to notice of non-waiver: To see if the Town will vote to accept Mellen Road from the Southern border of Winchendon town line adjacent to the property #565 extending northernmost border of property #215 to the end of new pavement as shown on the existing conditions plan 204-405 Mellen Road, Winchendon MA prepared for McCarty Companies by Tauper Land Survey, Inc. File: 20-383 215-405 Mellen Rd., Winchendon, Ma McCarty, for all purposes for which public ways are used in the Town of Winchendon and for the purpose of maintenance and repair.

#### **Public Comment on Town Meeting Warrant:**

Multiple residents came forward to express their frustration with the process thus far, and to urge the Finance Committee to not recommend Articles 19 and 20 and to recommend Article 24, the Citizen's Petition that they had submitted.

Dr. Ward moved to close the public hearing at 8:27 p.m., seconded by Corts. With a roll call vote of Cortes, aye, Ward, aye, Levine, aye, Delay, aye and Kane aye, the hearing closed at 8:27 p.m.

Dr. Ward moved to take a five-minute recess, seconded by Corts. With a vote of all aye, the Committee entered into recess at 8:28 p.m. The meeting was called back to order at 8:33 p.m.

The Committee discussed obtaining the impact that the proposed capital expenses will have on the tax rates imposed on homeowners in Town.

#### **Finance Committee Recommendations on Town Meeting Warrant:**

Article 1 of STM – Committee Report: This article does not need a recommendation.

#### ANNUAL TOWN MEETING ARTICLES

Article 1: Committee Report – Dr. Ward moved to recommend this article, seconded by Corts. With a roll call vote of Corts, aye, Ward, aye, Levine, aye, Delay, aye and Kane aye, the motion carried unanimously.

Article 2: Establish/Discharge Committees - Dr. Ward moved to recommend this article, seconded by Corts. With a roll call vote of Corts, aye, Ward, aye, Levine, aye, Delay, aye and Kane aye, the motion carried unanimously.

**Article 3: Authorize Revolving Funds - Dr. Ward moved to recommend this article, seconded by Delay. With a roll call vote of Corts, aye, Ward, aye, Levine, aye, Delay, aye and Kane aye, the motion carried unanimously.**

**Article 4: Senior Tax Work-Off Program - Dr. Ward moved to recommend this article, seconded by Corts. With a roll call vote of Corts, aye, Ward, aye, Levine, aye, Delay, aye and Kane aye, the motion carried unanimously.**

**Article 5: Community Action Committee Non-Profit Support - Dr. Ward moved to recommend this article, seconded by Delay. With a roll call vote of Corts, aye, Levine, aye, Ward, aye, Delay, aye and Kane aye, the motion carried unanimously.**

**Article 6: FY22 General Government Budget – Dr. Ward moved to recommend this article, seconded by Corts. With a roll call vote of Corts, aye, Levine, aye, Ward, aye, Delay, aye and Kane aye, the motion carried unanimously.**

**Article 7: FY22 Water Dept. Enterprise Budget – Dr. Ward moved to recommend this article, seconded by Corts. With a roll call vote of Corts, aye, Ward, aye, Levine, aye, Delay, aye and Kane aye, the motion carried unanimously.**

**Article 8: FY22 Wastewater Enterprise Budget - Dr. Ward moved to recommend this article, seconded by Delay. With a roll call vote of Corts, aye, Ward, aye, Levine, aye, Delay, aye and Kane aye, the motion carried unanimously.**

**Article 9: FY22 Transfer Station Enterprise Budget - Dr. Ward moved to recommend this article, seconded by Corts. With a roll call vote of Corts, aye, Ward, aye, Levine, aye, Delay, aye and Kane aye, the motion carried unanimously.**

**Article 10: FY22 School Budget - Dr. Ward moved to recommend this article, seconded by Delay. With a roll call vote of Corts, aye, Ward, aye, Levine, aye, Delay, aye and Kane aye, the motion carried unanimously.**

**Article 11: FY22 Monty Tech's Assessment - Dr. Ward moved to recommend this article, seconded by Corts. With a roll call vote of Corts, aye, Ward, aye, Levine, aye, Delay, aye and Kane aye, the motion carried unanimously.**

**Article 12: Capital – DPW Lease/Purchase of 10 Wheel Dump Truck - Dr. Ward moved to recommend this article, seconded by Corts. With a roll call vote of Corts, aye, Ward, aye, Levine, aye, Delay, aye and Kane aye, the motion carried unanimously.**

**Article 13: Capital – Police Cruisers - Dr. Ward moved to recommend this article, seconded by Corts. With a roll call vote of Corts, aye, Ward, aye, Levine, aye, Delay, aye and Kane aye, the motion carried unanimously.**

**Article 14: Capital – Beals Memorial Library Electrical Upgrades and Fire Suppression System - Dr. Ward moved to recommend this article, seconded by Corts. With a roll call vote of Corts, aye, Ward, aye, Levine, aye, Delay, aye and Kane aye, the motion carried unanimously.**

**Article 15: Capital – Critical Repairs to Senior Center – Dr. Ward moved to recommend this article, seconded by Corts. With a roll call vote of Corts, aye, Ward, aye, Levine, aye, Delay, aye and Kane aye, the motion carried unanimously.**

**Article 16: Capital – Emergency Generator for Toy Town Elementary School - Dr. Ward moved to recommend this article, seconded by Delay. With a roll call vote of Corts, aye, Ward, aye, Levine, aye, Delay, aye and Kane aye, the motion carried unanimously.**

**Article 17: Capital – Water Fund – Replace Water Meters - Dr. Ward moved to recommend this article, seconded by Corts. With a roll call vote of Corts, aye, Ward, aye, Levine, aye, Delay, aye and Kane aye, the motion carried unanimously.**

**Article 18: Design Costs Required for Local Grants - Dr. Ward moved to recommend this article, seconded by Corts. With a roll call vote of Corts, aye, Ward, aye, Levine, aye, Delay, aye and Kane aye, the motion carried unanimously.**

**Article 19: Mellen Rd. Acceptance - Dr. Ward asked Mr. Delaney if Town Counsel has reviewed this article, to which he answered yes. She acknowledged the frustration and emotions of Mellen Road residents, but said she will be following the advice set forth by the Town's counsel. She noted that if Article 20 does not pass, Articles 19 and 24 would be moot as the easements will be needed regardless of the method used to accept the road.**

**Dr. Ward moved to recommend this article, seconded by Corts. With a roll call vote of Corts, aye, Ward, aye, Levine, aye, Delay, abstain and Kane aye, the motion carried 4-0-1.**

**Article 20: Authorization to Allow Selectmen to Acquire Temporary and Permanent Easements for Mellen Rd. - Dr. Ward moved to recommend this article, seconded by Corts. With a roll call vote of Corts, aye, Ward, aye, Levine, aye, Delay, abstain and Kane aye, the motion carried 4-0-1.**

**Article 21: Town Charter Amendment - Dr. Ward moved to recommend this article, seconded by Corts. With a roll call vote of Corts, aye, Ward, aye, Levine, aye, Delay, aye and Kane aye, the motion carried unanimously.**

**Article 22: General Bylaw Amendment - Dr. Ward moved to recommend this article, seconded by Corts. With a roll call vote of Corts, aye, Ward, aye, Levine, aye, Delay, aye and Kane aye, the motion carried unanimously.**

**Article 23: Accept Deed in Lieu of Foreclosure – Hall St. and Lincoln Ave. - Dr. Ward moved to recommend this article, seconded by Corts. With a roll call vote of Corts, aye, Ward, aye, Levine, aye, Delay, aye and Kane aye, the motion carried unanimously.**

**Article 24: Citizens Petition for the Town to Accept Certain Portions of Mellen Rd. - Dr. Ward moved to not recommend this article, seconded by Corts. With a roll call vote of Corts, aye, Ward, aye, Levine, aye, Delay, abstain and Kane aye, the motion carried 4-0-1.**

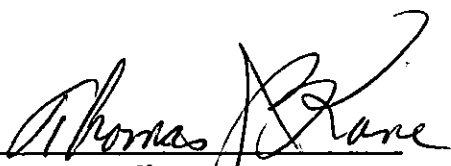
**Member Comments:** Dr. Ward asked Mr. Kane to place "Audit Committee recommendations" on the next agenda so that she can update the Finance Committee.

**Public Input:** David Watkins of Mellen Road continued to present his case in support of Article 24. There was significant discussion of which sections of Mellen Road have been accepted and discontinued with other residents of the road chiming in with their opinions of the status of the road.

**Dr. Ward motioned to adjourn, seconded by Mr. Corts. With a unanimous vote of all aye, the meeting adjourned at 9:12 p.m.**

Respectfully submitted:

Taylor Tower, Finance Committee Recording Secretary



Tom Kane, Chairman