

# TOWN OF WINCHENDON

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## Finance Committee

Telephone (978)-297-5419

### Joint Meeting: Board of Selectmen & Finance Committee

Finance Committee Minutes

October 10, 2023 6:30PM

Town Hall 2nd Floor Auditorium

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**Finance Members Present:** Chair Thomas J. Kane Jr., Vice-Chair Dr. Maureen Ward, Charles C. Corts, Doug Delay, Anthony Dickson, Adrian Guerrero, James Reid

**BOS Members Present:** Chair Audrey LaBrie (present via zoom), Vice-Chair Richard Ward, Danielle LaPointe

**Absent:** Barbara Anderson, Melissa Blanchard

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#### List of Documents Presented at Meeting:

- October 10, 2023 Meeting Agenda
  - Draft Special Town Meeting Warrants
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**6:30PM:** Vice-Chair Richard Ward called the Board of Selectmen meeting to order. Chair Thomas J. Kane Jr. called the Finance Committee meeting to order, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

Halloween Trick or Treating will be on Tuesday, October 31, 2023 5:30PM-7:30PM.

R. Ward wanted to thank Nicole Roberts & staff, the Police, DPW, and all those who made the Fall Festival possible.

Dr. Maureen Ward motioned to move agenda item 2 before 1, 2nd by C. Corts.

**Corts (Y) Delay (Y) Dickson (Y) Guerrero (Y) Reid (Y) Ward (Y) Kane (Y) 7-0**

#### Presentation of the Draft Special Town Meeting Warrants:

Interim Town Manager Bill McKinney began presenting the Draft Special Town Meeting Warrants to the Board of Selectmen and Finance Committee.

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

**ARTICLE 2:** To see if the Town will vote to transfer from Free Cash the sum of \$xxxx for the payment of bills of a prior fiscal year as follows:

Fiscal Year	Name	Invoice Amount
FY2023		
FY2023		
FY2023		
FY2023		
Total		\$xxxx

**ARTICLE 3:** To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate or transfer from available funds the additional sum of \$60,000 to be added to the Fire Department Houseman account to cover phase one of a wage scale adjustment, or act in relation thereto.

**ARTICLE 4:** To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate or transfer from available funds the additional sum of \$126,245 to the Fire Department Spare Houseman account to cover the additional staffing needed to cover multiple emergency calls, or act in relation thereto.

Dr. M. Ward asked where the funds would be appropriated from. B. McKinney replied that it would come from free cash. Fire Chief Thomas Smith stated it would cover a wage/salary adjustment. The current contract was made 1.5 years ago. They have been struggling to stay competitive and keep employees with the surrounding/comparable communities. Out of 14 communities, Winchendon is last in regards to competitive salaries. With the adjustment, it would move the community up to the number 11 spot.

T. Kanes concern was using Free Cash to supplement the adjustment, as its a reoccurring expense, but not reoccurring in the budget. T. Smith explained there was miscommunication between him and the prior town manager in regards to the ARPA funds that were used to supplement the department the past few years. He was under the impression they had 1 more year to use the ARPA funds but unfortunately that was not the case. Once it was discovered, the budget had already been submitted for the year and T. Smith is concerned with waiting until the next budget as he is afraid he will continue to lose the employees.

Danielle LaPointe stated the need to remember what these services were for. These professionals leave their family every day to provide the emergency care and services the community needs and it is the towns responsibility to make sure the services are available and paid appropriately.

Audrey LaBrie mentioned the Article language states this would be for Phase one and questioned what the plans were for Phase two. T. Smith replied they would look at the other half of the increase that they have done before and work it into the budget vs an Article.



**ARTICLE 5:** To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate, transfer from available funds, and/or borrow the sum of \$442,551 for the purposes of purchasing an ambulance (with an estimated 18-month delivery time) to replace the current 2016 Freightliner ambulance, or act in relation thereto.

R. Ward asked if this was a Capital Planning Article and if so, asked if they have they voiced their opinion on it. T. Smith replied that is was, it was in the packet last year but he was unsure if they stated their opinion or not. R. Ward stated in the past, they would typically have the Capital Planning vote on the packet, along with the BOS and Finance votes. T. Smith stated he did not believe they voted on it as it was supposed to be in the future Capital Plan. He added that right now, he was not looking for the money, he was looking for the approval to order the ambulance as production time is 18-20 months.

**ARTICLE 6:** To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate or transfer from available funds the additional sum of \$XXX to the DPW & Fire Department vehicle repair account , or act in relation thereto.

Brian Croteau, DPW Director, estimated they would need \$35,000. \$20,000 for DPW and \$15,000 for the Fire Department.

**ARTICLE 7:** To transfer the sum of \$158,754 from free cash back into ARPA funds for the purchase of the Fire Department apparatus fire equipment known as S.C.B.A.

B. McKinney explained they were originally supposed to have a 3 year lease for the S.C.B.A equipment. Approval at the town meeting was required for that request, and the equipment had already been delivered, so the board agreed to use the ARPA funds to buy the equipment outright and save money on interest. They were able to pay the vendor right away and save about \$27,000 in interest charges. This request was to replenish the ARPA account to use the funds for its intended purpose.

**ARTICLE 8:** To reallocate the vote taken on for the Winchendon Community Park barn exterior funds to be transferred to Blair Square project, or act in relation thereto. (Need Language)

Robinson Broadhurst supplemented the funds for the exterior of the Winchendon Community Park Barn. Since the community previously voted for the funds to go to that specific project, but are not needed anymore, the request is to vote and transfer those funds to the Blair Square project.

**ARTICLE 9:** Lincoln Avenue – Town to the Redevelopment Authority (Need Language)

The Winchendon Redevelopment Authority is looking to sell 275 Lincoln Avenue. It is easier for them to handle the purchase and sale over the Town, in turn they are looking for the authorization to transfer the property.



**ARTICLE 10:** To see if the Town will vote to authorize the Board of Selectmen to convey the Town-owned property located at Oak Street, and shown as Assessors Map 5B2-0-117, being a portion of the Poland and Streeter Schools property, for such consideration, and upon such other terms and conditions as the Board of Selectmen deems appropriate, 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 said property, or act in relation thereto. (submitted by the Town Manager)

A. LaBrie questioned if the language needed to add whom the property would be conveyed to (MVOC).

B. McKinney would check with the Legal Counsel. He stated the request was in regards to the two old school buildings that are going to be converted into Veteran housing. At the last town meeting, it was discovered they had only requested to convey the one property, not both buildings.

**ARTICLE 11: Winchendon Furniture- LAND SWAP FOR BIKE PATH**

Brian Croteau stated the Town received just under \$500,000 to extend the bike path from the current path to Jackson Ave. There is a small triangular piece of land on Spruce St. owned by the Town next to Mr. Ladeau's land. He was generous enough to donate a portion of his property behind the old Walgreens to be able to extend the bike path. In order to make it happen, they are going to transfer that small triangular piece to Mr. Ladeau, and he will in turn donate his parcel back to the Town.

**ARTICLE 12** – To see if the Town will vote to accept XXXX 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 XXXX Subdivision Plan, dated XXXXXX, and drawn by XXXXXX Engineering Inc., said plan having been placed on file with the Town Clerk, and further to authorize the Board of Selectmen to accept such all necessary property interest, or act in relation thereto. (submitted by the Town Manager) (Majority Vote Required) Unaccepted Roads ( DPW)

Brian Croteau explained this would help clean up the list of unaccepted roads. It would take all the current unaccepted roads and bring them to the town to vote upon.

**ARTICLE 13:** 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.

(Submitted by Charter Bylaw Review Committee in 2021 – Revote needed) **(2/3 vote required)**



Explanation: This article passed at ATM of May 2021 and was returned approved by the Attorney General's office. It was required to be placed on the next Town Elections Ballot and was not; therefore at the guidance of Town Counsel, the article is being resubmitted at Town Meeting the Fall 2023.

**ARTICLE 14:** To see if the Town shall accept the renumbering and revision of the Zoning Bylaw of the Town from its original numbering, as amended through May 15, 2023, to the numbering or codification, arrangement, sequence and captions and the comprehensive revisions to the text of the Zoning Bylaw as set forth in the Final Draft of the Code of the Town of Winchendon, dated September 28, 2023; said codification of the Zoning Bylaw having been done under the direction of the Planning Board, and being a compilation and comprehensive revision of the present Zoning Bylaw, including amendments thereto. All Zoning Bylaws, as amended, heretofore in force, shall be repealed, except that such repeal shall not affect any suit or proceeding pending as the result of an existing law. The Zoning Bylaw shall be codified as Chapter 300 of the "Code of the Town of Winchendon, Massachusetts."

**ARTICLE 15:** To see if the Town shall accept the renumbering and revision of the various bylaws of the Town from their original numbering or their numbering in the former General Bylaw compilation, as amended through May 15, 2023, to the numbering or codification, arrangement, sequence and captions and the comprehensive revisions to the text of the General Bylaws as set forth in the Final Draft of the Code of the Town of Winchendon, dated September 28, 2023; said codification having been done under the direction of the Board of Selectmen and Town Attorney, and said Code being a compilation and comprehensive revision of the present bylaws of the Town. All bylaws of a general and permanent nature, as amended, heretofore in force and not included in the Code shall be repealed, except that such repeal shall not affect any suit or proceeding pending as the result of an existing law, and such repeal shall not apply to or affect any bylaw, order or article heretofore adopted accepting or adopting the provisions of any statute of the Commonwealth. These bylaws shall be referred to as the "Code of the Town of Winchendon, Massachusetts."

**ARTICLE 16: PLACE HOLDER-** Solar moratorium (Need Language)

**ARTICLE 17:** To see if the Town will vote to amend the Town By-laws to rename the Board of Selectmen as the Selectboard, and, for such purposes, to replace the words "Board of Selectmen" or "Selectmen" with "Selectboard"; and "Selectman" with "Selectboard member", and to authorize the Town Clerk to make non-substantive ministerial revisions to ensure that gender and number issues in related text is revised to properly reflect such change in title; or take any other action relative thereto.

R. Ward clarified this change should have been in regards to the Charter. He also stated the specific titles were "Board of Selectmen", not "Selectboard member", and "Select Board", not "Selectboard". The Article needed to be revised with the language originally sent in.

**ARTICLE 18:** To see if the Town will vote to accept the provisions of G.L. c.44, S54(b) to allow Town trust funds to be invested in accordance with G.L. c.203C, the so-called "prudent Investment Rule", or take any other action relative thereto.



Dr. Maureen Ward mentioned in the past at the Fall Town Meeting, they have always funded OPEB, Stabilization, and Separation Liability out of free cash. She pointed out that was not on the warrant this year and the town will really be affected if those are not funded. OPEB is 5% of the cost of health benefits, around \$85,000. Separation Liability is about \$50,000 and Stabilization is 10% of Free Cash.

R. Ward motioned to recess the Board of Selectmen for 10 minutes and to reconvene on the 4th floor to continue the 2nd half of the meeting, which is the Town Manager Search Update, 2nd by D. LaPointe.  
**LaPointe (Y) Ward (Y) LaBrie (Y) 3-0**

### **Finance Committee Meeting**

**Approval of Minutes:** September 12, 2023

Dr. M. Ward motioned to approve the minutes of September 12, 2023, 2nd by A. Guerrero.

**Corts (A) Delay (A) Dickson (Y) Guerrero (Y) Reid (A) Ward (Y) Kane (A) 4-0-3 Abstentions**

**YTD Reports:** T. Kane stated he had a lot of questions after receiving the YTD reports. Most of the revenues have not been posted yet. B. McKinney let T. Kane know they are working on closing up some things from last year to be able to submit and certify as free cash. Most of the School salaries have not been posted yet either.

Dr. M Ward was concerned with the Town managers department head and temp salary wages as they were already at 45% and 48% of the budget spent, along with the Fire Department Overtime being at 51% as well. There were quite a few line items that were not entered or questionable. The committee will follow up with the departments and keep an eye on the YTD reports.

Charles Corts mentioned the difficulty in getting the Audit Committee members together due to their availability. There was supposed to be a meeting in early October to appoint the new member but unfortunately they were unable to get a quorum.

Doug Delay provided an update on the Town Managers Search Committee. A list of applicants was provided by Municipal Solutions and they were able to narrow it down to 8 qualified applicants. Those applicants were interviewed and since then, 2 applicants have accepted jobs elsewhere, so they are now down to a list of 6. The Committee is meeting tomorrow to determine the next steps, including how many applicants they decide to complete zoom interviews with. Once they determine how many to narrow it down to (estimating 2-3 applicants), they will then provide a final list to the Board of Selectmen to choose a final Town Manager. They expect to have a Town Manager around the New Year.

**Other Committees with Finance Representation Updates:** Charles Corts mentioned the difficulty in getting the Audit Committee members together due to their availability. There was supposed to be a meeting in early October to appoint the new member but unfortunately they were unable to get a quorum.

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Adrian Guerrero stated the CPA was supposed to meet in September but never did. The Chair resigned and no one has stepped forward to replace them.

**Five Year Budget Trends Project:** The Committee spent some time at the last meeting discussing their first goal- Review the past five years' End of the Year actuals for both revenues and expenditures to identify fiscal trends that would better inform budgeting projections. The spreadsheets and information on the trends/figures of the reports will hopefully help the new Town Manager in creating future budgets. T. Kane put together 5 Excel Spreadsheets; Town Hall, Public Safety, DPW, Other Depts, and Fixed Costs. The Committee will meet again on October 24th.

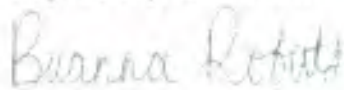
**Member Comments:** Dr. M. Ward mentioned how important it was to stay vigilant with the YTD reports.

**Public Input:** None.

**8:34PM-** Dr. M. Ward motioned to adjourn the Finance Committee, 2nd by C. Corts.

**Corts (Y) Delay (Y) Dickson (Y) Guerrero (Y) Reid (Y) Ward (Y) Kane (Y) 7-0**

Respectfully submitted:



Brianna Roberts, Finance Committee Recording Secretary

  
Thomas Kane, Chairman

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Dr. Maureen Ward, Vice-Chair

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Charles C. Corts

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Douglas Delay

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Anthony Dickson

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Adrian Guerrero

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James Reid