

Minutes

Finance Committee

March 2, 2023

Meeting called to order at 7:00 PM by Jim Sullivan

Present by ZOOM Meeting: Jim Sullivan, Brian Cusack, Dan Sherman, Bill Boodry, Aimee Forsythe, Tarae Howell, David Mastroianni, Ellie Zuccaro, Edward Bean, Don Ravenelle, Doug Butler, Dennis Hogan, Stefan Chase, Joseph Bertrand and Evan Kenney.

Absent:

Also, in Attendance: Town Administrator Stephen P. Maio, Town Accountant Kevin Gill, Provisional Fire Chief Thomas Purcell, Health Director Anthony Chui, Board of Health Chairman Candace Linehan, Board of Health member Laurel Gourville, Insurance Agent John Spinello, Retirement Director Cathy Cheek.

- 1) Public Participation: None
- 2) Motion to approve minutes of January 19th, 2023 Finance Committee Town Hall Subcommittee meeting minutes by Don Ravenelle seconded by Tarae Howell and so voted
- 3) Motion to approve minutes of February 8th, 2023 Finance Committee I.T. Subcommittee by Evan Kenney seconded by Stefan Chase and so voted
- 4) Motion to approve February 16th, 2023 regular Finance Committee meeting minutes by Tarae Howell seconded by Dennis Hogan and so voted.
- 5) Motion to approve February 23rd, 2023 Finance Committee Fire Department Subcommittee meeting minutes by Aimee Forsythe seconded by Dennis Hogan and so voted.
- 6) Budget Presentations

I) Fire Department

The Fire Department proposed budget for FY2024 was \$6,467,517 an increase of \$140,185 over FY2023. It was noted that the Fire Union contract was still under negotiation. The Sub Committee issued a report on the department. General discussion ensued in regard to the increase in the number of runs and the General State of overtime.

II) Animal Inspector:

Budget is level funded from FY2023 @\$40,600

III) Parking Clerk:

The budget is decreased by \$209 over FY 2023 @12,573.

IV) Health and Human Services:

The Health and Human Services Department recommended increase is \$6,816 over FY2023 @\$389,892.

The positions will be funded by Tax Levy, Covid settlement and ARPA funds. Members of the Board of Health commented on the importance of these positions and the direction of Public Health in Wakefield. Director Chui presented a power point indicating the many programs the department is responsible for.

V) General Insurance

a) The Increase over the 2023 Budget was \$23,594 @\$522,725 mainly due to general market conditions.

VI) Workers Compensation:

a) The overall budget is increased by \$5200 however, the tax levy decrease over the 2023 Budget Was \$2500 mainly due to our good experience rating.

VII) Retirement

a) The retirement budget was increased \$402,223 over FY2023.

7) Committee Comments:

Dan Sherman presented an updated forecast. The Committee remains concerned about the developing trend of expenditures and the potential of serious cuts to personnel in all areas as well as in the area of Capital Expenditures.

Concerns were also expressed over the expiring Union contracts for Police, Fire and Teachers as given the current inflationary environment it will be difficult to settle contracts in the 2.5% range.

The School Budget Sub Committee related that the School Administration would be presenting its initial budget package at the March 16, 2023 meeting and that it appears that the School department will be requesting a budget increase of over 5%. Committee members expressed additional concern over the amount of the percentage increase.

Next meeting will be March 16, 2023 @7PM

8) Motion to adjourn at 9:00 P.M by Bill Boodry seconded by Dennis Hogan and so voted.