

Minutes Holden Finance Committee, March 27, 2024, Senior Center
General Government all Departments

Members Present: Paul Challenger, Chris Lucchesi, Al Berg, Dave White, Stephanie Adams, Donna Wallace, Marilynn Foley

Also Present: Peter Lukes, Town Manager, Stephanie King, Asst. Town Manager, Lori Rose, Town Accountant, Laurie Gaudet, Treasurer/Collector, Jeane Hudson, Town Clerk, Dave George, Town Planner, Dave Lindberg, Sealer of Weights, Inspection Services and Solid Waste, Rose Scully, Town Assessor, Tim Sherblom, Police Chief, Glenda Williamson, Conservation Agent

The meeting was called to order at 6:30 P.M.

Peter reported that the study of the Senior Center parking lot would not qualify for a capital exclusion.

The Committee began the review of General Government Budgets. The Department Heads present reviewed their budgets and answered questions from the Committee.

Town Moderator Budget no changes.

Finance Committee Reserve Fund, no changes.

Selectmen Budget slight increase in clerical line.

Town Manager's Budget includes funds for settlement of union contracts and wage adjustments.

IT Budget equipment upgrades. By October of 2025 Windows 10 will no longer be supported and all departments will need to use Windows 11. This is driving the replacement of a number of computers and laptops throughout the Town.

Insurance Budget covers all insurance for the Town. Health insurance has increased by about 9% and property and liability insurance has increased by 15%, primarily due to the increased cost of repairing for damage done due to higher prices for labor and material.

Legal Budget has increased due to upcoming contract negotiations with 5 of our labor unions.

Accounting Budget. Increases due to wage adjustments and step increases. The new budgeting system ClearGov has worked well.

Treasurer/Collector Budget, Bank charges have increased. Step increase as a result of the staff payroll study. Retirement Account, The General Fund portion of the assessment from the Worcester Regional Retirement Board has increased 12%. Debt Service Budget covers all town debt including the debt which is excluded by Prop 2-1/2.

Assessors Budget, Increases in equipment maintenance and revaluation of town property.

Town Clerk Budget, Increases for elections this year (Town Annual Election, State Primary and Presidential Election). Early voting hours and processing mail-in ballots take up a lot of extra hours in

that office. Postage increased due to mail in balloting and census 2nd mailings. Equipment upgrades include a high-speed tabulator to reduce the amount of time it takes to process the ballots on election day.

Planning and Development Budget, Increases the hours of the part time conservation agent from 30 to 35 hours and rerates the job grade to more accurately reflect the skill level required. It is important to have the right person for this position. Increases in software support and upgrading equipment.

Sealer of Weights and Measures, No changes

Solid Waste, Increase in health and liability insurance. The contract with Casella expires in June 30, 2025. The Selectmen have increased the cost of a large toter by \$0.50 per month to raise an additional \$30,000 year. An additional increase will be considered mid-year. Small toters are being phased out. Existing customers can keep the one they have, but new small toters will not be issued.

Inspection Services, looking to increase license fees, which have not increased in years, and are substantially lower than neighboring communities.

The meeting adjourned at 8:45 P.M.

Respectfully Submitted,

Marilynn Foley, Clerk