

Minutes Holden Finance Committee, April 6, 2022, Town Hall
F/Y 2023 Budget Deliberations

Members Present: Paul Challenger, Dave White, Joe Dolak, Chris Lucchesi, Al Berg, Jane Titcomb, Stephanie Adams (remotely), Marilyn Foley

Member Absent: Don Graves

Also Present: Peter Lukes, Town Manager, Stephanie King, Assistant Town Manager, Lori Rose, Town Accountant

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

Peter had sent a revised Resource Profile to the Committee before the meeting. There is an increase of \$20,000.00 in Chapter 90 funding from the State. The F/Y 23 budget has a deficit of \$428,000.00 partly due to increases in the fuel adjustment and wage adjustments accounts. Wage adjustments went up due to the settling of one of the open union contracts for more than had been previously estimated. The Cherry Sheet from the State is level funded. The Mount Wachusett Regional budget has increased as more Holden students are enrolled there this year. The assessment letters from the WRSD and Montachusett are unchanged.

The Committee discussed ideas on how to address the budget deficit. The Committee looked at various funds in the budget to discuss. The Committee will also look to the Town Manager for suggestions. Chris looked into the excise tax the Town collects and it appears to be consistently underestimated in the budget by at least \$400,000/year. The estimated revenue projection in the EMS budget has been increased to \$900,000.00 (from a lower previous more conservative estimate). The Committee asked Peter to review the revenue budget and make a recommendation on how to increase revenue by \$250,000 (including the \$48,000 already added to the EMS budget)

The Town is looking to the State Legislature for a land swap with DCR to trade land by the pool on Salisbury Street for another piece of land elsewhere in town. If this swap happens before July 1, Peter then wants to spend \$100,000 to cut down trees and clean up the land acquired to expand the softball field at Dawson Rec and make a path to the Industrial Park possible.

Peter proposed removing the \$100,000.00 contribution to fire stabilization since the new ambulance (\$350,000.00) will be purchased from a Federal Grant, not the stabilization account. Archival materials for the Town Clerk's office will be purchased from the operating budget instead of the Capital Budget. It was suggested that the Brine maker and the fork lift for the new DPW building be purchased from the \$350,000.00 with funds previously approved by Town Meeting for the new DPW building. The ice and snow budget is over budget after to the last storm. The water main replacement figure has been reduced to \$1,500,000.00 in the W/S Capital budget. The W/S Commissioners will be discussing a W/S rate increase.

A motion by Dave 2nd by al to approve the minutes of March 30, 2022 was voted unanimously by roll call vote: Adams aye, Berg aye, White aye, Lucchesi aye, Challenger aye, Dolak aye, Titcomb aye, Foley aye.

The meeting adjourned at 8:30 P.M.

Respectfully Submitted,
Marilynn Foley, Clerk