

**Westport Finance Committee
Meeting Minutes
Remote Meeting
March 12, 2024**

Present: Karen Raus (Chair) , Cindy Brown (Vice-Chair), Al Lees, Christopher Thrasher ,Gary Carreiro, Zachary Lebreux, Duncan Law, Hugh Morton

Absent: Michelle Orlando

Also Present: Steve Ouellette, Jim Hartnett, Evan Gendreau, Richard Brewer, Betty Slade, Roger Fernandes, Maury May, Nicole Pearsall ,Nancy Stanton-Cross ,Thomas Aubin, Sue Brayton

Karen Raus called the meeting to order at 6:32pm, and a Pledge of Allegiance .

Karen Raus read the following: This meeting is being held remotely in accordance with the Governor of Massachusetts *'March 12, 2020, order suspending certain provisions of the Open Meeting Law, G.L. c.30A Section 20 and on March 29, 2023, Governor Healey signed a Supplemental 2023 Budget Bill allowing remote and hybrid meetings options for public bodies through March 31, 2025. This meeting is being recorded.*

Karen Raus (Chair) opened the meeting by mentioning the Infrastructure and Oversight Committee was present to give a presentation of their warrant article.

1.Department Budget Meetings:N/A

2.Discussion: Fiscal25 Budget, 5-year operating/capital plan; Warrant Articles:

Karen Raus opened the meeting to representatives of the Infrastructure and Oversight Committee (IOC), Steve Ouellette, Roger Fernandes and Maury May who gave a presentation titled Greater Route 6 Water & Sewer Project Trunkline. After the presentation by the IOC, Karen Raus asked to confirm the current \$35M was for the trunk line only as per the presentation, which was confirmed. Karen Raus also asked for an estimate of the total project costs (beyond the initial trunkline), and the IOC estimated that entire water/sewer costs could be double the current contract of \$35M, as it extends into neighborhoods with future projects. Those costs were estimates and would be determined by the IOC at a later date. There followed an extensive question and answer period with other finance committee members.

At the Finance Committee meeting of March 5,2024, members requested to meet with the Select Board regarding the Select Board's FY25 budget presented to the Finance Committee. The Finance committee has questions regarding the Select Board's funding of the School budget number and the addition of a new position of Town Engineer.

Select Board Chair, Dick Brewer and Town Administrator, Jim Hartnett were invited and were present at the meeting to answer questions.

Karen Raus provided a recap from previous meetings/discussions: The FY24 School budget was supplemented with \$500,000 of free cash. The 5-year plan called for a reduction of \$100,000 per year (starting in FY25) to slowly reduce the free cash to eventually \$0 in the fifth year. The Select Board's FY25 approved budget added \$400,000 of free cash to the School budget, per the plan set out in the 5-year plan. In addition to the \$400,000 of free cash, the Select Board added an additional \$252,000 by revising the

customary 54% revenue sharing to 67% revenue sharing.

Dick Brewer chair of Selectboard mentioned the money would be coming from the additional estimated chapter 70 money in FY25. Jim Hartnett discussed meeting with department heads, and the school presentation and tried to balance the Town department needs and trying to accommodate providing the School \$1.3M over FY24 (before free cash). Dick Brewer indicated that the change in revenue sharing was for FY25 only and was not intended to be a permanent change to the formula.

Nancy Stanton Cross, School Committee Chair and Tom Aubin, Superintendent reiterated the budget need for those extra funds (as discussed and presented in previous meetings).

Finance Committee members recognized the previous request by the School and the previous budget presentation (February 6, 2024 Department budget meeting) demonstrated the needs.

Jim Harnett discussed why the Select Board added the position to the FY25 Select Board budget, described the need for the Town Engineer and cited a number of projects the new position would be handling. That position was the highest priority of the Town's position needs.

There were no further questions from the finance committee members.

*Karen Raus noted Gary Carreiro left the meeting at 8.15pm and did not return to the meeting.

3.Committee/Liaison updates: N/A

4. Approval of Minutes: N/A

5.Topic for next Meeting Agenda: FY25 Budget and Warrant Articles

The Finance Committee will need to be making its recommendations on all of the articles. Members requested a presentation from the Internet Advisory Committee / Article 32 (draft 8) and that would try to be scheduled for the next meeting.

6. Meeting Schedule: March 19, 2024 (Remote)

7.Correspondence: N/A

8.Topics not reasonably anticipated forty -eight (48) hours in advance of the meeting: N/A

Adjourn: There being no further business to come before this meeting a motion to adjourn the meeting at 9:39pm was made by Cindy Brown and Hugh Morton seconded the roll call vote was 7-0 all in favor. Raus ;aye Lees ;aye Brown; aye. Lebreux; aye, Thrasher ;aye ,Morton ;aye Law ;aye ,Carreiro ;(left the meeting at 8.15pm)

Respectfully submitted,
Jessica McKane
Finance Committee Recording Clerk

REFERENCE DOCUMENTS:

Infrastructure Water-Sewer
The Livestock Institute-LOS.pdf
FAQ-Fernandes -3-10-24.docx
Divine Enterprises -LOS.pdf
Costa Mgt.Los-SewerExt_.pdf
Cost Estimate -Kleinfelder-Silveri-3-8-24pdf
Bristol Pacific- LOS.pdf
Betterment Presentation-2-21-24.pptx
Applied Plastics Technology-LOS.pdf
2024 03-12 Presentation WESTPORT FIN COM(4).pptx
2024 03-12 Presentation WESTPORT(4).pdf
49 Borden Street -LOS.pdf
29MM-6MM.pdf
5-7-24 ATM Warrant Articles Index.doc
5-7-54 ATM Warrant 8th Draft.doc
03-05-24 Meeting minutes Finance Committee.pdf