

**Westport Finance Committee
Meeting Minutes
Virtual Meeting-Remote Participation
September 12, 2023**

Present: Karen Raus (Chair), Cindy Brown (Vice-Chair), Hugh Morton, Al Lees, Zachary Lebreux, Lawrence Holsworth, Michelle Orlando, Christopher Thrasher

Also Present: Susan Brayton, Nicole Pearsall

Absent: Gary Carreiro

Karen Raus called the meeting to order at 6:31pm, 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.

1.New Members Introduction: Karen Raus addressed the committee members and introduced one new member of the Finance Committee, Al Lees.

2.Annual Reorganization : The committee re-voted for chair and for 12-month term.

Motion: Hugh Morton proposed to make a motion to make a vote to nominate Karen Raus as Chair of Finance Committee for the 12-month term. Cindy Brown seconded the motion. The roll call vote was 7-0.

3.Discussion: Fiscal 24/Fiscal 25 budget;5-year operating /capital plan: The Finance Committee discussed a date and time for an upcoming meeting next week with a few members of Board of Selectmen and School Committee in regards to the budget. The Finance Committee discussed the concerns about using free cash (non-recurring revenue source) to support recurring operating expenses and for next week's joint meeting, adding to the agenda about the policy of usage of free cash. The policy originated from Mass Department of Revenue, Municipal Associations and well as the Board of Selectmen adopted a policy back in 2013.

Sue Brayton (Treasurer /Collector) mentioned with the use of free cash there is a negative impact on the bond rating for utilizing too much for recurring expenses instead of using free cash for capital expenses.

4. Committee/Liaison assignments: Cindy Brown updated the committee on the Personnel Board mentioning RFPs were sent out for a compensation and classification study to a couple of firms for 140 union and non-union employees (not including fire, school, police). Town meeting allocated \$30,000 but the lowest amount from one of the firms came in at \$44,000 which does not include job descriptions. The Personnel Board will be meeting with two of the representatives from the firms next week to discuss more in depth what can be added to and deleted from the proposals that were sent.

Chris Thrasher updated the committee on the Long-Term Building Committee mentioning the committee had a walkthrough of the Old High School and there are still discussions on what direction to take with the use of the school and the code requirements.

5.Minutes: The minutes for August 08, 2023 , was presented for approval Michelle Orlando motioned and Hugh Morton seconded to approve. The roll call vote was 7-0 with one abstained.

6.Topic for next Meeting Agenda: A (Draft) Meetings for Departments Budgets

7.Meeting Schedule: October 10, 2023, Remote

8. Correspondence: N/A

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

Adjourn :There being no further business to come before this meeting a motion to adjourn the meeting at 7:30 pm was made by Hugh Morton and Michelle Orlando seconded the roll call vote in favor 7-0.

Respectfully submitted,
Jessica McKane
Finance Committee Recording Clerk

REFERENCE DOCUMENTS:

2023 Agenda September 12, 2023.docx
08-08-23 Meeting Minutes.docx
Committee & Liaison Appointments FY24.xlsx

