

**Westport Finance Committee
Meeting Minutes
Virtual Meeting-Remote Participation
November 14, 2023**

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

Also Present: Susan Brayton

Absent: Gary Carreiro, Christopher Thrasher, Zachary Lebreux

Karen Raus called the meeting to order at 6:33pm, 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.TA/Select Board Budget timeline, Proposed FinCom Meeting Schedule, Schedule meetings with Department:Karen Raus opened up the meeting mentioning the town administrator is expected to have his first round, at the budget mid-December, And then the other deliverable per the town bylaws is by February 20th of each year. The Select Board needs to present its proposed budget to the Finance Committee by that date. We try to work within those dates so that by the time February 20th comes, we all have reviewed all the budgets and things are still estimates at that time because it's still early enough in the process with many of the items including state aid .The preliminary schedule for budget department meetings are December 5 or 12 and moving into weekly meeting in January 2,9,16,23,February 6 for last budget meeting. Then there is a review before the Board of Selectmen.

2.Liaisons Assignments- Updates/changes: The Finance Committee discussed finalizing the liaisons assignments with Al Lee taking over Charles Barons liaisons assignments .

3.Role of Liaisons: Karen Raus mentioned for a role of a liaison would be the contact person for that department to help them if they have questions or if they have questions on the budget presentation or making sure they're scheduled to come in and have the appropriate memos all in good order so that when we meet with them that you know we are able to go through the schedule with ease.

4. Discussion Committee/Liaison updates: Lawrence Holsworth mentioned there was a school budget meeting that he attended ,kicking off the FY25 school budget he continued and said that in the meeting there was discussions in regard to that the teacher salary negotiations have started, and the incoming request is far more than can be. And the school department have a request for Fincom representation with Jim Hartnett to be present at a meeting on

December the 13th at 4:00 PM to give a presentation on the actual financial situation of the town. There were discussions on how the 500K free cash for FY24 was at one time offer. The FY25 budget for the school is for the school district is looking like it will be in the neighborhood of 200 to 250K above FY24 when you take away the 500K contribution . There may be a need to actually make some cuts in the classroom teacher population. Another option is providing transportation for high school students may have to be on the chopping block. As well as questions about the Orper funding and whether some of that could be utilized for alternative transportation options. For example, purchasing minivans or small buses as a capital investment so that we're free of the contracted obligations with Amaral Bus Company. There was also something brought up about UMass Dartmouth about the potential of renting the old high school building but then that raises the question of what would happen to the district administration, the early childhood learning and the after-school programs that are also.

5.Minutes: The minutes for September 12, 2023 , was presented for approval Cindy Brown motioned and Michelle Orlando seconded to approve. The roll call vote was 5-1 with one abstained.

6.Topic for next Meeting Agenda: N/A

7.Meeting Schedule: December 5, 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 Karen Raus and Cindy Brown seconded the roll call vote in favor 6-0.

Respectfully submitted,
Jessica McKane
Finance Committee Recording Clerk

REFERENCE DOCUMENTS:

2023 Agenda November 14, 2023.docx

09-12-23 Meeting Minutes.docx

10-04-23 meeting minutes.docx

Fy25 Budget Calendar-Proposed.doc

Fy25 Budget Timeline.docx

Committee & Liaison Appointments Fy24.xlsx

Proposed Fincom Schedule for Budget Season.pdf

SC Requests to the District 10-19-23.pdf

10162023 Dept Budget Req.doc

