

**Westport Finance Committee  
Meeting Minutes  
Virtual Meeting-Remote Participation  
January 02, 2024**

Present: Karen Raus (Chair) (came in late ), Cindy Brown (Vice-Chair), Al Lees, Michelle Orlando, Hugh Morton , Christopher Thrasher , Gary Carrerio (left early)

Also Present: Susan Brayton, Michael Burris, Nicole Pearsall, George Ripley, Deputy Daniel Baldwin

Absent: Zachary Lebreux

Cindy Brown called the meeting to order at 6:30pm, and a Pledge of Allegiance .

Cindy Brown 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.

Cindy Brown (Vice -Chair ) opened up the meeting mentioned Lawrence Holsworth of the finance committee has resigned. and we thank him for his service that he provided to us, and we wish him well.

**1.Department Budget Meetings:**

- A. Library :** George Ripley was in attendance to present the FY25 budget George Ripley mentioned I have been a library director for 3 years. Our FY25 budget intends to improve our core services while at the same time having only contractually required salary increases and no other enhancements. Fundraising help with the Friends of the Westport Library, our efforts to maximize our state aid to libraries, grants, and the support of generous donors throughout the community, we strive to continually improve our ability to provide library services each and every year.
- There was a question from a finance committee member (Christopher Thrasher) in regard to the professional services item line for \$11,000 that seems to be consistent over a few years. George Ripley mentioned that is our consortium membership for the Regional Library District, where part of it's called the Sales Library Network. So that is half of the assessment. The others, the rest of it comes from either donations or from state aid, something like that. Which pays for our membership in the reciprocal borrowing network we belong to. One other question from finance committee member Christopher Thrasher asked was the amount of money that is spent on material expenditures. And I noticed that you had mentioned that that does not come from town plans. Do you have a kind of estimate as to how much out of the current trust funds would be going towards that this year or next coming year ?

George Ripley mentioned right now we're looking at anywhere from \$5,000 to \$15,000 would need to come from either the trust funds or from the gift accounts or from direct donations and the budget has minimal increases by the town .

**B. Planning Board :** Michael Burris was in attendance to present the Fy25 budget.

Michael Burris mentioned they received a little over a billion dollars and grants over the past year through a variety of different programs, everything to support the route 6 sewer project to smaller projects through climate resilience. No Major changes the usual standard operating budget plus the average annual salary increases.

**C.**

**Fire Department :** Deputy Daniel Baldwin was in attendance to present the Fy25 budget Deputy Daniel Baldwin mentioned the fire department has about 10 on call firefighters and we have a small EMA division which is largely a volunteer portion of our department mainly come with the retired members The full-time firefighters are also paramedics. Deputy Daniel Baldwin mentioned the increases nonunion personnel myself, the deputy administrative assistant was based on the guidance for the town administrator, 2% increase on all the other line items where you do see some increases are contractual. I do have a couple of firefighters that are going to be obtaining their degrees over the next fiscal year. That's why you see a little bit of an increase there. Our expenses again we do whatever we can to save money.

**2.Discussion :Fiscal24/Fiscal 25 budget ; 5-year operating /capitol plan:** Karen Raus (Chair) mentioned that we're meeting with members of the select board and the school committee and we will be talking about the most recent budget submitted by the town administrator.

**4. Committee/Liaison updates:** Cindy Brown mentioned for the CIPC, the Capital Improvement Planning Committee. We are meeting on Thursday. We have heard all of the presentations from various departments that are seeking capital expenditure on the list are quite lengthy and we have not ranked any of them yet. The Town Administrator has begun the process of fanning them out. Cindy Brown continued and mentioned the Personnel Board we need some very modest additional funding for the compensation study. I'm not really sure what the final tally we may be \$5,000 to \$10,000 short, but the Select Board may be able to use their Professional Services account to make up the difference, there may be an article to extend the funding for. I have a meeting about that also on Thursday. Karen Raus mentioned to fill in the open spots for committee and liaison from Larence Holsworth .Al Lee said he can be the liaison for the Fire Dept. Veterans Services Hugh Morton mentioned he can be the liaison. Karen Raus said she can be the committee representative for the school committee.

**5.Minutes:** The minutes for December 5, 2023 , was presented for approval Cindy Brown motioned and Al Lee's seconded to approve. The roll call vote was 5-0 in favor Hugh Morton abstained Raus ;aye Brown ;aye Orlando ;aye Thrasher; aye Lee ;aye

**6.Topic for next Meeting Agenda:** N/A

**7.Meeting Schedule:** January 3, 2024 , Hybrid with Select Board and School Department  
January 09, 2024 , January 16, 2024, January 23, 2024, February 06, 2024

**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 8:34pm was made by Michelle Orlando Cindy Brown seconded the roll call vote was 6-0 all in favor. Raus ;aye Morton ;aye Thrasher ;aye Lee's ;aye Brown; aye Orlando ; aye.

Respectfully submitted,  
Jessica McKane  
Finance Committee Recording Clerk

**REFERENCE DOCUMENTS:**

Ta Budget Draft 12-12-13  
Committee & Liaison Appointments Fy24.xlsx  
2024 Jan 2, 2024, AGENDA.docx  
Fy25 Budget schedule.xlsx  
12-05-2023 meeting minutes  
Westport Free Public Library Fy25 FinCom Budget Presentation.pdf  
TA Review 175 Planning Board .xlsx  
Fire Fy25 Budget Request.pdf  
Westport Fire Fy 2025 Budget Letter (2).pdf  
Fire Fy 25 Dept Head Request for Materials.pdf  
Fire Department Stats 1989-2023 Sheets5.pdf  
Fire CIP Fy25.pdf  
Fire Fy25 Ambulance Revolving warrant article (2).pdf  
Fy25 Fire Prevention Revolving warrant article (2).pdf

