

**Westport Finance Committee
Meeting Minutes
Virtual Meeting-Remote Participation
January 10, 2023**

Present: Karen Raus (KAR), Cindy Brown (CB), Hugh Morton (HM), Zachary Lebreux (ZL), Lawrence Holsworth (LH)

Absent: Charles "Buzzy" Baron (BB), (Gary Carreiro GC)

Also Present: Nicole Pearsall, Paul Joncas, Beverly Bisch, Jim Hartnett

KAR opened the meeting at 6:32 p.m.

KAR 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 June 16,2021 Governor Baker signed an Act relative to extending certain COVID-19 measures adopted during the state of emergency. This meeting is being recorded.*

(Kar) opened up the meeting saying thank you everyone for coming tonight we are continuing with our Department Budget Meetings.

1.Fy2024 Budget Meetings with Departments:

- A. **Conservation Department** Paul Joncas was in attendance to present the FY24 departmental budget and said I am Paul Joncas, Chairman of the Conservation Commission I think for almost 10 years. The budget is it's pretty static went up a little over \$3000, The expense side of it was within \$50 of the FY23 approves and most of the increase was contractual with salaries. There's not a lot to our budget, it's \$132,000. We have two full time employees and on the contractual side went up just above \$3200 and we didn't exchange any expenses over time.

B. **Council of Aging** Beverly Bisch was in attendance to present the FY24 departmental budget and said I am the Director of the Council on Aging. I've been here since 2015. See a lot of ups and downs. And this year of the budget that I presented sent us back with a little bit of a decrease and I think we're pretty much in good standing. I have received funding for 12 grants since January and I was just adding up the amounts and the grant funding that I get is for all of the programs that the town doesn't pay for or support it keeps part of our transportation going It keeps our supportive day going because the town doesn't have to pay for that. It keeps our outreach staff and our outreach program going. Town doesn't pay for that, keeps our activities going. Grants are really important in my part of the budget, and the town. The overall budget that I'm submitting for with the reduction is \$233,853 most of it is in salary. It is my salary, my principal clerk, part time custodian and part of the salary for van drivers. The van drivers' part of their salary comes from the town and part of it comes from my formula grant and my transportation revolving. I was able to get a \$10,000 grant from AARP. 2020 Community Challenge Grant and that was for my fixed route transportation. We do shopping just on Tuesdays and they extended it was supposed to end in we had spent all the money, yet it was supposed to end in November, and they extended it for me till April, which is very good because that'll help still pay for some of the drivers for that and that that grant. We really work hard to stay on budget. The town picks up half of the gas and oil for the vans and transportation revolving in formula picks up others and some gifts and donations. (CB) mentioned although Beverly Bisch doesn't excellent job of explaining and outlining the many grants and that she's been able to recover. Roughly we only pay the town only pays about 50% of our total operating budget so. She manages a budget of about \$450,000 and the town really only is responsible for about 50% of that. She has done an absolutely excellent job of resourcing funding from anywhere she can find it to, to provide the seniors here in town. That's an excellent menu of different activities that are available to them, whether it be for, as she said, supportive daycare technology. A lunch program would be rides to doctors' appointments, exercise programs and endless number of activities that. these seniors can get involved and just bringing them even the social component of that to have that be source available to them.

C. **Town Hall /Town Hall Annex /Cemetery** Jim Hartnett was in attendance to present the FY24 departmental budget. Jim Hartnett said the budget itself is pretty straightforward. We have contractually raises with the non-clerical staff, which is the maintenance position. As far as the expenses go, we bumped up the heat \$2000. We bumped up the water testing and this is the testing within the buildings. We have public water supplies from the town hall and annex. You need a private operator come in test it on a monthly basis. We have reduced the number of that cause we have to maintenance staff doing the actual water testing and submit to the public water supply operator and they follow up with that and we save a little bit there. Going back down most of the other expenses of is same as last year building repair and maintenance about \$58,000, vehicle repair \$500 professional services \$3000 The telephone, gasoline, and oil we bumped up \$50. Uniforms Form & other clothing went from \$475 to \$750. I'll check on Nicole the town accountant on numbers on that call, but expenses and overall salary are pretty much the same, just contractual and a couple minor adjustments. I will say that as far as the maintenance vehicle. They were using a Ford Explorer that was old from the Fire Department which also is used by Public Works and Highway Department they put it on a lift and said it just not safe and has been taken off the road. We do need a maintenance vehicle. Maintenance man has been using the electric car but cannot put

garbage in it that he goes back and forth to transfer station. It is just not practical, and we need a vehicle and need it soon. Cemetery FY24 departmental budget Jim Hartnett said the salary portion we have negotiated raises. We bumped up the seasonal from \$20,400 to \$24,000 and that was just looking back the previous years. We rely heavily on seasonal employees to get the grass cut and clean up during the summer. Work slows down in the winter. This is not a department where you can cut overtime. The heat we increased a little bit \$2840 last year we are \$3500 this year so we're probably close to where we should be, electricity went up \$140 equipment repair \$2500 did not change vehicle repair did go from \$2225 to \$5000. The gas and oil went up to \$6500. The previous year was close to \$6000, clothing allowance went up. (Kar) said in terms of revenues for the cemetery that's some of your revenues may not cover all your costs, have you explored the fee structure for the cemetery and are the cemetery fees competitive or is there room to increase some of those revenues? Jim Hartnett said six months ago they did increase the fees and we are pretty much in line with other cemeteries.

- D. **Town Accountant** Nicole Pearsall was in attendance to present the FY24 departmental budget. Nicole said an increase in the budget is 2% for the salaries. A \$2000 increase pending my certification, which should be in the spring of 2024. The OPEP study, we decreased that line item because it's every other year that we do the full actuarial, so this FY24 will be a low year, so that went from \$10,000 to \$1000 and the other increase is computer software for maintenance. We're starting a migration of our accounting, accounting collections utility billing software to the cloud there's an increase in the maintenance for that software and that's basically my budget. (LH) asked could you reiterate again, behind the sharp increase in the computer software amount. Nicole said all the work. we have a program called SOFTWATE that sits on the town server. Our IT guy says that our server is running out of room. The new software is for all the collections, for the real estate, the assessors, everybody who uses it, also includes the school department because the school department doesn't pay separately, but they have the program as well. We all use the same accounting program for our purchase orders, our accounts payable, accounts receivable, utility billing, all the real estate, motor vehicle, personal property, all the collections and we're hoping that it also will have a better handle on our treasury receipts and bank reconciliation, so we don't have to have a separate program for that it may end up less money in the long run. (LH) said if you could give narrative, and documentation in some way to show to show that the benefits of migrating to this cloud based service outweighs that 100% increase what the costs is and cost of upgrading the server as well. Nicole said I can see what I can write up and get some more information from Keith Novo(IT).

2.Override Discussions: (KR) asked Jim Hartnett if there was any update on the override and said if anything changed? Jim Hartnett said School choice looks like it will go down a little bit from what we projected to \$35000 from \$38000 And two minor adjustments to the board of health salary accounts getting step increases amount \$2500. The revenue on the offsets, the conservation was originally \$25,000. Last year we bumped it up to \$40,000 but that was never voted on by conservation commission but brought it back down to \$25000. School still waiting to hear. Regards to the override it will be on the next agenda for the board of selectmen meeting and last night discussion in the meeting I think they're leaning towards having in on the ballot. The Diman question will also be on the April ballot.

3.Committee Updates /Liaison Reports: (CB) said I went in front of the selectboard as a chairman of the personal board to sponsor for a warrant that has been requested from what (GC) has told me, that has been requested many times to have a classification and compensation survey done for town employees, This would not include the school and probably not include the rank and file of police and fire.

(Kar) asked if anyone is interested in taking over Bob McCarthy's for liaison contacts board of health, cemetery and transfer station and Bob was on one committee infrastructure committee for representation and Tracy Priester liaison contact for school. (LH) said will willing to volunteer for infrastructure committee and liaison for board of health, transfer station and school. (CB) said she can be liaison for cemetery.

4.Minutes: The minutes for January 03, 2023, was presented for approval. (CB) motioned and (HM) seconded to approve. The roll call vote was unanimous in favor.

5.Topic for next Meeting Agenda: Department Budgets

6.Meeting Schedule: January 17,2023

7. Correspondence: N/A

8.Topics not reasonably anticipated forty-eight (48) hours in advanced of the meeting:

(Kar) said we need to change some funds from the reserve, and we just got that today, so we didn't have that on our agenda, but that would be something that came to us in less than 48 hours' notice, and it sounds like it might be something rather urgent Jim Hartnett said we need to replace the existing oil tank at the Town Farm. Because of the poor condition of the tank the oil company will no longer deliver oil to the property. It is not a simple tank replacement, the existing tanks will need to be cut in order to remove them from the basement, an existing 12' old water tank will need to be removed, a new concrete floor will need to be poured and new tanks and piping will be installed.

Requesting a transfer of \$13,000 from the reserve fund (HM) motioned and (CB) seconded the roll call vote in favor was unanimous.

Adjourn There being no further business to come before this meeting a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:04pm was made by (CB) and (HM) seconded the roll call vote in favor was unanimous.

Respectfully submitted,
Jessica McKane Recording Clerk

REFERENCE DOCUMENTS:

01-03-23 Meeting Minutes.docx

0.2023 01 10 AGENDA INDEXED.docx

1aFY24 Conservation.pdf

1c 541 COA TA Rec 12-5-22.xlsx

1c Fy24 COA.pdf

1c Fy24 Cemetery .pdf

1eFy24 Town Hall-Annex.pdf

1f FY24 Town Accountant.pdf

Fy24 Accounting Budget.pdf

Fy24 Narrative.pdf