

**Westport Finance Committee
Meeting Minutes
Virtual Meeting-Remote Participation
February 28, 2023**

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

Absent: Charles “Buzzy” Baron (BB), Lawrence Holsworth (LH)

Also Present: Susan Brayton , Shana Shufelt

KAR opened the meeting at 6:31 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.*

1.Fy2024 Town Budget/ Warrant Articles(Kar) said the Board of Selectmen approved their version of the Fy24 Budget and sent it over to us and so now it's time for the Finance Committee to prepare its own budget or take that budget and modify it and in any ways that we feel appropriate to put our version our draft version together. I'd be happy to crunch the numbers once I get some guidance from everyone. Certainly, with the new state aid and numbers from the governor's office we can certainly put that through if everyone feels that that's appropriate. If the numbers have been released, the incremental revenue would be 54% school, 46% town. I think we're just waiting on the Diman and Bristol Aggie assessments then then we can go ahead and actually fine tune and finalize this budget the sooner we are able to finalize it, the sooner the 24-page report can get out and published and people can start to see where we are physically and so that starts the process on the need for an override.

2.Override: Plan, Timetable, and assignment of tasks(Kar) said let's define what we all feel are the biggest hurdles for this override and then go from there. Figure out a plan of attack to address those hurdles . I think we can demonstrate internally what the needs are, but we need to come across and demonstrate the needs to the general public. We need documents, we need educational materials, and the sooner we get those things, the sooner we can get them out to the general public. So, we're not at town meeting allowing people to hear things really for the first time. The second biggest hurdle that I see is really the maintaining the credibility of the

town officials. I'm not at all indicating that town officials are not credible, but we need to be credible. We as town officials. Once we put a plan together, so the select board, the school committee, the Finance Committee, we need to be clear what the intention is of the override and then we need to stick to it. The third hurdle with the override is really with the tax bill impact will be right to the town resident. The fourth issue is who will track this process from where we are now to the end. The plan that I set forth that we can talk about, I will try to break it down into tasks and then we as a committee in conjunction with the Select Board can determine where we go with this if everyone sort of agrees with some of my tasks or people have other ideas.

(CB) mentioned the news that perhaps broke today, yesterday that the new estimated cherry sheet is out. And we're going to get even more money. It looks like if the governor's plan goes through and they're pretty confident, once they start putting estimates on cherry sheets that they send out to the communities, it's an additional \$400,000.

(Kar) mentioned we going to look at the, the Select Board's budget and we can certainly elected add additional state revenue if we feel that that's appropriate and see where that lands within the budget. The finance committee is certainly not ready to finalize the budget at this time. We can certainly add those dollars in and see where that takes us.

(CB) mentioned there is a five year plan already put on paper .We had one done in that fiscal stability committee. There was a consultant in the collector's office recently just in the last four months did a five-year plan for revenue and budgets .(Kar) said if it can be circulated to the Select Board and the finance committee if they're ready , so we can start to look at those things.

(Kar) said in terms of the FY24 budget, I, I have made requests to both the town and then Michelle over at the school to see what is built into fiscal 24 into gross salary increases. (Kar) continued and asked the committee ,anybody that's interested if you could email me directly what your thoughts are, if you have some specific ideas on the \$3 million override and sketch it out and then I'll be happy to summarize and then I'll forward that along to Shana Shufelt (Board of Selectmen).

3.Committee Updates /Liaison Reports: N/A

4.Minutes: The minutes for February 21, 2023, was presented for approval. (HM) motioned and (CB) seconded to approve. The roll call vote was unanimous in favor.

5.Topic for next Meeting Agenda: Reports and Override Education ,Fy24 Budget

6.Meeting Schedule: March 07 ,2023

7. Correspondence: N/A

8.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 8:14pm was made by (CB) and (HM) seconded the roll call vote in favor was unanimous.

Respectfully submitted,
Jessica McKane Recording Clerk

REFERENCE DOCUMENTS:

02-21-23 Meeting Minutes.docx

0.2023 02 28 AGENDA INDEXED.docx

BOS Recommendation 2-22-23.doc

FY24 FC Bos Rec 2-21-23.xlsx

FY24 BOS Approved budget 02-21-23.xlsx

FY24 CIPC Projects.xlsx

Override Numbers 2-28-23.xlsx

OVERRIDE PLAN DISCUSSION v2.docx