

**Westport Finance Committee
Westport Board of Selectmen
Westport School Committee
Meeting Minutes
Virtual Meeting-Remote Participation
March 22, 2023**

Present: Finance Committee: Karen Raus (KAR)(Chair), Cindy Brown (CB) (Vice Chair), Hugh Morton (HM), Lawrence Holsworth (LH), Charles “Buzzy” Baron (BB), (Gary Carreiro GC), Zachary Lebreux (ZL)

Present: Board of Selectmen: Shana Shufelt (Chair) Richard W. Brewer (Vice Chair), Steven J Ouellette, Ann E. Boxler (Clerk)
Absent: Brian T Valcourt

Present: Westport School Committee: Nancy Stanton -Cross (Chair) Melissa Pacheco (Vice Chair), Antonio Viveiros, Gloria Cabral, Michelle Orlando

Finance Committee Chair Karen Raus called the meeting to order at 6:31 p.m., 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 June 16,2021 the Governor signed an Act relative to extending certain COVID-19 measures adopted during the state of emergency. This meeting is being recorded.*

Karen Raus recognized Select Board Chair Shana Shufelt. Select Board Chair Shana Shufelt called the Select Board meeting to order and recognized board members Ann Boxler, Steve Ouellette, Richard Brewer present and Brian Valcourt absent.

Karen Raus recognized School Committee Chair Nancy Stanton Cross. Nancy Stanton Cross called the School Committee meeting to order and recognized committee members Gloria Cabral, and Tony Viveiros as present. Melissa Pacheco is the Vice Chair she will be joining in, and Michelle Orlando is going to be joining in later by phone. Also present is Superintendent Thomas Aubin and our Business Manager, Michelle Rapoza.

Finance Committee Chair Karen Raus Chair recognized Finance Committee members Cindy Brown, the Vice Chair, Hugh Morton, Gary Carreiro, Lawrence Holsworth, Zach Lebreux and Charles (Buzzy) Baron.

Karen Raus noted the Finance Committee, Select Board and School Committee will be recognized using the raise hand feature. Members of the general public have the microphones disabled, and the chat feature will be enabled and monitored. After the completion of both items on the agenda, the general public microphones will be enabled and will be open for comments and questions.

1.FY24 Town Budget

Item 1 was presented. Karen Raus provided a brief update of the status of the budget process. The Select Board approved the budget recommendations and forwarded them to the Finance Committee. Shortly after that, the State Budget numbers were updated, and the Select Board provided updated recommendations. The Finance Committee Budget is still in draft form and awaiting Regional School Assessment information and the request for 140,000 of free cash for the School Department that we are now discussing.

The Finance Committee draft budget as of 03-10-23 includes the school number of \$21,295,162. Incorporating the \$140,000 additional funds, the revised school number would be \$21,435,162. The School Committee's proposed FY24 budget number was \$21,706,159, which still leaves school shortfall of \$270,997. Karen Raus recognized Nancy Stanton Cross to speak regarding the request.

School Committee Nancy Stanton-Cross addressed the constraints and challenges the School budget is facing each year. Ms. Stanton-Cross agreed with the additional \$140,000 as requested, the School would sustain the \$270,997 in cuts.

Finance Committee members, School Committee members and Select Board members responded to the information presented with several comments and questions.

Finance Committee members discussed the importance of long-term/5-year forecasting, and the need for the Town to develop this. Concerns about using free cash (non-recurring revenue source) being used to support recurring operating expenses, and supporting the overall structural deficit are issues that needs to be addressed. Revenue continues to be limited, and expenses continue to grow, making it likely the demands for free cash will be higher next year, and this is not sustainable. Finance Committee members indicated support of approving the additional \$140,000 request to amend the draft budget for these additional funds needed for the School. The budget would be finalized at a future Finance Committee meeting.

2.Override Karen Raus recognized Shana Shufelt from the Board of Selectmen present for the Override presentation.

The presentation included two options for a \$3M override. Option A reflected increasing the levy by \$1M per year for three years. Option B proposed to increase the levy by the full \$3M in the first year. Ms. Shufelt also presented the draft details of the Town spending by department. Details of the School amount were not available at this meeting and were not presented.

Ms. Shufelt indicated Option A is the option the Select Board has been discussing and are scheduled to finalize soon. Ms. Shufelt requested that if anyone had a different alternative for the Select Board to consider, to present that to the Select Board.

Finance Committee members, School Committee members and Select Board members responded to the information presented with several comments and questions.

Karen. Raus noted the general public microphones have been enabled. Several guests made comments, and questions raised were addressed by several board/committee members.

Finance Committee members, School Committee members and Select Board members responded to the comments and questions.

Karen Raus noted that there appear to be no further questions or comments and would proceed to move to end the meeting.

Adjourn :

School Committee: There being no further business to come before this meeting a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:14pm was made by Melissa Pacheco and Gloria Cabral seconded the roll call vote was 4-0 in favor.

Board of Selectmen: There being no further business to come before this meeting a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:14pm was made by Ann Boxler and Shana Shufelt seconded the roll call vote was 4-0 in favor.

Finance Committee: There being no further business to come before this meeting a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:14pm was made by (CB) and (LH) seconded the roll call vote was 7-0 in favor.

Respectfully submitted,
Jessica McKane Finance Committee Recording Clerk

REFERENCE DOCUMENTS:

0.2023 03 22 AGENDA INDEXED.docx

FinCom Bos SC Meeting 03-22-23.pptx

Fy24 Proposed School -Town Budget_03-16-2023.xlsx