

**Westport Finance Committee  
Meeting Minutes  
Virtual Meeting-Remote Participation  
March 22, 2022**

Present: Karen Raus (KAR), Cindy Brown (CB) Charles “Buzzy” Baron (BB), Tracy Priestner (TP), Thomas Schmitt (TS), Hugh Morton (HM) Bob McCarthy (BM), Gary Carreiro (GC), Kevin Rioux (KR)

Also Present: Jim Hartnett, Nicole Pearsall, Nancy -Stanton -Cross, Michelle Rapoza, Shana Shufelt

KAR opened the meeting at 6:30 p.m.

KAR read the following: Under MGL Chapter 30A, section 20(f) – Meeting being recorded. *Pursuant to Governor Baker’s March 12, 2020, Order Suspending Certain Provisions of the Open Meeting Law, G.L. c. 30A, §18, and the Governor’s March 15, 2020, Order imposing strict limitations on the number of people that may gather in one place, this meeting of the Westport Finance Committee is being conducted via remote participation. No in-person attendance of members of the public will be permitted, but every effort will be made to ensure that the public can adequately access the proceedings as provided for in the Order.*

*A reminder that persons who would like to listen to or view this meeting while in progress may do so by following the remote links: [https:// meet. google.com](https://meet.google.com/jph-idsb-ndc)<https://meet.google.com/jph-idsb-ndc>, dial in this number dial: (US) +1 302-440-6804 PIN: 599 966 655#*

**1.FY23 Municipal Budget Approval** (Kar) opened up the meeting with the budget, mentioning we had a couple of small changes that the committee members that were present last week made that were added to the budget insert that was circulated to you. It was adding. \$10,000 of additional fuel costs to each of the Highway Department, Police Department, Fire Department, coming out of free cash. Where we are right now is as we talked about last week that in this budget, we as a Finance Committee agreed to use \$300,000 of free cash to supplement the school budget and we had asked the school to then go back and reduce the balance of the budget and take the remaining cuts, and then we would all agree with where we stand.

(TP) mentioned she heard from the school committee from the school committee, report out with the verbatim report that I just received, it says. The school committee is inclined to reduce its budget and take \$300,000. For what is contingent upon our soul occupancy of old high school allowed to do programs for \$50,000 a year. Plus, we would maintain reasonable and ordinary maintenance as previous year. We would require an executed agreement with Selectboard on

the building before adjusting their number. We won't do it without a signed agreement on the old building. Public meeting is next Thursday. Signed agreement needs to be done or we cannot adjust or number.

(GC) asked who does the old high school belong to the school or town. (Kar) mentioned that the school administration is planning on being in the building for the next fiscal year. The school also would like to use or is planning on using the old school for summer camp and some after day programs. Since the building is otherwise not occupied, they raised the question to the select board, at town meeting last year, the town authorized the transfer of the school from the school committee to the town. That has not formally happened yet, so the building is still in the school's possession. There's been this agreement, the school is occupying the building, the town has been paying the expenses. That was the agreement that was reached last year or this current year as the school administration was. Now the school had incurred some of the costs and paid for some of the costs. The town side of the budget, there's \$100,000 in the in the budget presently and— there's a warrant article for \$200,000 for additional costs that the school building would have, that is already in the budget. The school would like to use the building that's otherwise not being occupied, and they were willing to pay \$50,000 more for that use.

(TP) mentioned she received a response back from Nancy-Stanton-Cross regarding ownership of the building and her report out read verbatim, Article 31 on last year's warrant transferred into the town. She also mentioned Jim Hartnett said the schools have not procedurally transferred it. And if they did, the town would not accept ownership. If and, she further states if that is the case. Then we should be in charge of reuse and the money if they sell it.

(Nancy Stanton Cross) mentioned that there is an action agenda for the public hearing of our budget, which would be next Thursday 31<sup>st</sup> of March.

The Finance Committee agreed to postpone the vote on the FY2023 budget because the School Committee has not voted to reduce the FY2023.

**3.Warrant Article Discussion:** (Kar) mentioned she reached out to Betty Slade she is scheduled to come to the next meeting for discussion of the CPC Article. (TS) asked in terms of meeting article is it just one big number and how would that be resolved, assuming that it passes a town meeting, how would that be phrased for the voters. (Kar) as we have the draft for the warrant the Fiscal 23 budget will be Article 4, and so that will stand on its own. And then the override budget would be Article 5, and that would stand on its own. I believe the Select Board would be doing an itemized list by department of whatever the dollar amount would be the override, then there would be a detailed list of each department and what the dollars represented for each for each department.

**5. Override Discussion: N/A**

**6. Committee Update /Liaison reports: N/A**

**7. Minutes:** The minutes of 1/4/2022 was presented for approval. (CB) motioned and (KR) second to approve. The roll call vote 7-0 2 abstained.

The minutes of 1/11/2022 was presented for approval (CB) motioned and (KR) second to approve. The roll call vote 8-0 1 abstained.

The minutes 1/18/2022 was presented for approval. (TS) motioned and (CB) second to approve. The roll call vote 8-0 1 abstained.

The minutes of 3/8/2022 was presented for approval (KR) motioned and (HM) second to approve. The roll call vote was unanimous in favor.

The minutes of 3/15/2022 was presented for approval. (HM) motioned and (KR) second to approve. The roll call vote was 6-0 3 abstained.

**8. Topic for Next Meeting Agenda: CPC Article, Warrant Articles**

**9. Meeting Schedule:** Next meeting will be on March 31<sup>st</sup>, 2022 at 6:30 pm remotely due to the pandemic

**10. Correspondence: N/A**

**11. Topic not anticipated forty-eight (48) hours in advance of the meeting: N/A**

**Adjourn:** There being no further business to come before this meeting, a motion to adjourn the meeting at 7:45pm (Kar) motioned and (GC) second and the roll call vote in favor was unanimous.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Jessica McKane, Recording Clerk

**REFERENCE DOCUMENTS:**

1bFY23 FINCOM BUDGET Draft 03-22-22-xl..

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