

**Finance
Committee
MEETING
MINUTES**

February 11, 2025

Upton Town Hall, Room 203

Paul Flaherty and Stephen Bern, Virtual - Shawn Craig and Rick McGuire
Joe Laydon, Brett Simas, Laura Hebb, Maureen Dwinnell, Susan
Brouwer, Dennis Westgate, Mike Marchand, Mike Bradley, Bill Taylor,
Maria Cherubino, along with Rick Porter and other virtual participants
not identified.

1 The Finance Committee meeting was opened at 6:20pm by Paul Flaherty.

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3 **Joint Meeting with Select Board to review financial presentation and discuss FY26 budget
4 process:**

5 Town Manager Joe Laydon opened the conversation by providing a brief overview of the process
6 and what was planned for this meeting – budget reviews for Recreation, Fire / EMS and DPW
7 departments.

8

9 *Recreation:*

10 Recreation Director Maria Cherubino, joined by Rec Com Chair Rick Porter, provided an
11 overview of the Recreation budgets. They discussed some of the prior year activities and
12 explained the need for an additional “adult” to assist in supervising the Kids@Play and beach
13 activities over the summer. The Rec Com and Director are proposing that the General Fund
14 provide for 20% of the Rec Director salary (\$15,000). The same value would then be used to
15 fund the additional supervision. The main reason for the additional supervision is safety and
16 primarily due to the fact that currently if the Director is not there, it is high school / college
17 students and they are probably not the right level to take care of what could be needed. Most of
18 the attendees agree with the need, but some question why the General Fund would cover this
19 cost. The discussion of increasing fees to cover the additional costs was discussed and the
20 presenters explained how they thought of that, but also pointed out that when they increase costs,
21 this has led to reduction in attendees. The need is not only based on numbers of participants, but
22 also the safety aspect. Finance Committee suggested that they hire the resource and see how
23 things are at the end of the summer. The issue with funding the overall Rec Director salary could
24 be addressed at the Fall STM if necessary. However, it was clear that the majority felt that the
25 Revolving Fund was intended to cover the costs of the program.

26

27 *Fire / EMS:*

28 Fire Chief Mike Marchand and Public Safety Director Mike Bradley presented the Fire and EMS
29 budget overviews. They explained that a tentative agreement has been reached for the CBA and
30 that some items reflect larger increases due to the agreement going into effect for FY25. They
31 walked through building their budget along with the proposed reductions per the request of the
32 Town Manager.

33 Mr. Bradley then walked through the current and near-term capital needs. They provided some
34 details on the Truck replacement along with the required Station Drain repairs. During the
35 discussion, the upcoming ambulance replacement was brought up, including the costs and lead
36 times. Mr. Marchand mentioned that there are slots getting filled and that it could be possible to
37 save money if we could take one of the remaining slots. This requires funding approval, which
38 can only happen via a Town Meeting. Since the Annual Tonw Meeting is the next available time,
39 the Finance Committee suggested that the ambulance gets added to the warrant. The Town
40 Manager and Select Board took that under advisement.

41
42 **DPW:**
43 DPW Director Dennis Westgate presented the various DPW budget overviews along with the
44 proposed reductions per the request of the Town Manager. Mr. Westgate reviewed the new CBA
45 and the overall impacts to the budget. In most cases, the DPW budgets are showing slight
46 reductions (primarily due to the TM requests). Mr. Westgate explained the reductions are
47 considered temporary as the oil & paving is being offset due to the proposed roads articles (to
48 follow the plan to get roads up to a more acceptable rating) and that the DPW consultant is a
49 variable cost. Mr Westgate then updated the status of previous capital purchases along with what
50 is proposed to be purchased next year. The new DPW facility process was also touched on. At
51 the end of his presentation, Mr Westgate discussed overall town facilities and that led to a
52 discussion about possibly adding a stabilization account for either the community center or the
53 playground. Mr. Flaherty mentioned that the expected life for some of the playground materials
54 is ~10 years and the costs of the equipment / materials is expected to be significant (\$100k). The
55 additional landscaping and upkeep was also discussed. The Town Manager and Select Board
56 acknowledged the needs and took it under advisement.

57
58 **Scheduling of Next Meetings with Select Board and Departments/Committees:**
59 There is a MURSD multi-board meeting scheduled for February 12 to discuss the capital needs
60 for the regional school district.

61 The next Finance Committee is expected to be held on February 24, 2025, as another joint
62 meeting with the Select Board to discuss additional department budgets.

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64 **Motion to adjourn** is made by Paul Flaherty at 7:50pm, seconded by Stephen Bern. Unanimous
65 approval.

66
67 Respectfully submitted,
68 Stephen M. Bern, co-chair of the Finance Committee