



BUDGET JOINT MEETING
Select Board & Finance Committee
Saturday, January 7, 2023
8:30 AM – 12:30 PM
Albert J Sargent Memorial Library & Hybrid
427 Massachusetts Ave, Boxborough, MA 01719

APPROVED: 4/10/23

PRESENT: **Select Board:** Diana Lipari, Chair; Wesley Fowlks, Member; Les Fox, Clerk; and John Markiewicz, Member
Finance Committee: Maria Neyland, Priya Sundaram, Becky Neville, Antony Newton, Gary Kushner, and Keshava Srivastava

ALSO PRESENT: Town Administrator Mike Johns; Rajon Hudson, Assistant Town Administrator; Kelli Pontbriand, Town Accountant; Kelley Price, Administrative Assistant; Ed Kukkula, Director of Public Works; Interim Chief of Police, John Szewczyk; and Kirby Dolak, BXBTB

The documents discussed herein have been included with the file copy of the agenda packet for the above referenced date and are hereby incorporated by reference.

1. Call the Meeting to Order Noting the Time & Presence of the Quorum

At 8:30 AM, Chair Lipari called Select Board meeting to order, via ZOOM pursuant to the procedures noted. Maria Neyland also called the Finance Committee meeting to order.

NEW BUSINESS

8:30 AM – Budget Overview

Town Administrator Johns explained that this is a stabilization year. This budget will stay within Proposition 2 ½; will fund Other Post Employment Benefits (OPEB) at the recommended \$300,000; will fund the reserve at \$150,000; and the School budget will increase at approximately 5.3%. There are also assumptions for electricity, fuel, and health insurance. Expenditures for FY23-24 look at be approximately a 6.4% increase on the municipal side and a 5.3% increase on the school side. The debt includes a bond anticipatory note which is a major driver. Health insurance will likely increase by 7.6%, though an exact number is not yet known.

9:00 AM – Public Works

Ed Kukkula stated that he believes the Town needs to be proactive with its facilities moving forward. Town Administrator Johns noted that he has been meeting with the operations team weekly, to try to better be proactive on this item.

Ed Kukkula reviewed the DPW budget presentation.

9:45 AM – Public Safety – Police

Interim Chief of Police, John Szewczyk, stated that the Department has a level service budget for FY24. This includes a new Collective Bargaining Agreement, which drives much of the budget. This CBA was signed in November and passed during the Town Meeting. It included a wage adjustment of between 3.8%-6.8%, and a Gross Wage Increase of 3%. Retroactive pay was paid to officers on December 14, 2022. The requested FY24 operating budget is \$1,669,284, for an increase of 8.59%. 88.8% of this budget is located in salary items.

There was discussion regarding the proposed clerical position.

In response to a question from Chair Lipari, Interim Chief Szewczyk stated that there are currently 11 vehicles on the fleet, with another to be added shortly. Shortly, one of these vehicles will be removed due to age. Chair Lipari stated that the number of vehicles seems excessive for the size of the Department.

10:30 AM – Public Safety – Fire

Fire Chief, Paul Fillebrown, presented the FY24 budget. He discussed the Fire Department overtime budget. The proposed budget for FY24 is approximately \$1.403M, a 7.5% increase. He noted that the CBA changes are yet to be determined. The level services staffing budget assumes full shift coverage for per diem staffing.

The groups discussed the staffing costs for the Department. Town Administrator Johns suggested that the Department look at some options that can be presented at Town Meeting for this budget.

There was discussion regarding the Department's recommendation to move PPE to a capital item so that rolling funds are available. There was additional discussion regarding putting this item forth as a warrant article, or through a fund.

11:15 AM – Town Hall

Assistant Town Administrator Hudson presented the Town Hall budget. He explained that this is a level services budget. There is a proposed wage increase for non-union and non-contracted employees, anticipated at 2.9%.

There was a discussion regarding the Town legal fees.

ADJOURN

Both boards adjourned the meeting at 2:00 p.m.