

**Finance Committee and Selectboard
Meeting Minutes
April 23, 2024
Town Offices
Hybrid Meeting**

The open Hybrid session of the Town of Whately Finance Committee/Selectboard was called to order on April 16, 2024, at 6:00pm by Chairperson Paul Antaya. Present were Committee members Tom Mahar, Jim Kirkendall, Dan Kennedy, Paul Newlin, JD Ross, and Brenda Doherty (Via Zoom). Selectboard members Fred Baron, Julie Waggoner, and Joyce Fortune (Via Zoom) were present. Co-Interim Town Administrator Patricia Vinchesi, Administrative Assistant Jessica Murphy, Highway Superintendent Keith Bardwell, Recreation Director Chris Williams, Board of Assessor Chair Fred Orloski, Water Superintendent Wayne Hutkoski, Water Commissioners John Lukin and George Bucala were also present.

1. To review and vote to approve the meeting minutes from April 16, 2024

Jim noted that a motion needed to be added to accept the 3% COLA recommendation from the Personnel Committee. Motion made to accept minutes from April 16, 2024, as amended. Motion seconded. All in Favor. Roll Call Vote. Paul-yes, Tom-yes, Brenda-yes, Dan-yes, Jim-yes, JD-yes, Paul-yes.

2. To discuss fiscal year 2025 operating budgets

Recreation:

Chris began discussion that increases can be seen for line items such as water, building maintenance and park maintenance, due to the need to maintain fields and fix fences and building damage from birds. Fred Baron noted that the increase in water is due to a meter being put in by the Water Department. Chris discussed an increase for updated sports equipment. Chris shared there was no change in the Personnel budget and remains the same as last year. Chris discussed a Capital Project request for the installation of batting cages at Herlihy Park that has been approved by the CPC.

Board of Assessors:

Fred Orloski shared that the Selectboard has signed a contract to hire a consultant for the remainder of FY24 and FY25, noting an annual contract price of \$40,000 for FY25 with enough funds available to cover the remainder of FY24. Fred discussed software upgrades that will be needed, increasing that line item to \$6,500, while Fred Baron noted that COVID Relief money could potentially be used. Fred shared a total budget increase of \$12,000, expressing that the Board of Assessors has been level funded for consecutive years.

Water Department:

Wayne began discussion that increases can be seen for electricity and testing as well as a 59% increase in salary for the Water Superintendent, which has now increased to 40 hours a week

instead of 30. Wayne explained that an increase in workload, along with an extensive lead and copper survey are the main reason for the increase in hours, noting that during a sanitary survey that took place 2 years ago, the survey suggested one employee at 40 hours and another at 20 hours per week. Water Commissioners, John and George expressed that it has become more difficult to find someone with the credentials that Wayne has, therefore they believe the increase in salary is not only warranted but is also comparable to surrounding Towns. Wayne shared that he is requesting to transfer funds from the operating budget to the salary budget for the remainder of FY24 due to his increase in hours.

The Committee made a motion that come July 1, 2024, the Finance Committee will transfer \$25,458.23 from the operating budget to the salary budget of the Water Department expense. Motion seconded. All in Favor. Roll Call Vote. Paul-yes, Tom-yes, Brenda-yes, Dan-yes, Jim-yes, JD-yes, Paul-yes.

CIPC FY25:

The Committee began discussion on the Capital Improvement Planning Committee recommendations for FY25, starting with the installation of electrical Subpanels and the installation of mini-split heat pumps at the Whately Elementary School. The Committee expressed that there may be an alternative approach that is better long term and will need more information.

The Committee made a motion to table the discussion of \$54,000 for the electrical sub-panels, \$63,000 for 6 mini splits, and \$55,000 for 5 mini splits. Motion seconded. All in Favor. Roll Call Vote. Paul-yes, Tom-yes, Brenda-yes, Dan-yes, Jim-yes, JD-yes, Paul-yes.

The Committee discussed Pre-K restroom flooring replacement and exterior door replacements at Whately Elementary School, noting that after a recent walkthrough, these replacements should take place.

The Committee discussed the replacement of Airpack's for the Fire Department, sharing that JP has applied for a Grant that would cover most of the cost, however the exact cost the Town would incur is unknown at this point.

The Committee made a motion to table the discussion of \$202,000 to replace Airpack's for the Fire Department. Motion seconded. All in Favor. Roll Call Vote. Paul-yes, Tom-yes, Brenda-yes, Dan-yes, Jim-yes, JD-yes, Paul-yes.

The Committee discussed the purchase of a new Hybrid Ford F150 for the Highway Department which has extensive rust and wear and tear. Keith shared that due to the Town being apart of the Green Communities Grant, the Hybrid option is required. Fred shared that he will be attending a presentation on Electrical Fleet Vehicles for the Town that will give more information, especially on charging stations.

The Committee made a motion to table the discussion of \$85,000 for a new Hybrid Pickup-truck for the Highway Department. Motion seconded. All in Favor. Roll Call Vote. Paul-yes, Tom-yes, Brenda-yes, Dan-yes, Jim-yes, JD-yes, Paul-yes.

The Committee discussed the replacement of an unmarked cruiser with an unmarked Hybrid cruiser and the usage of the existing vehicles, including mileage and functionality. The Committee expressed hesitation regarding the reasoning behind acquiring another marked cruiser.

The Committee made a motion to table the discussion of \$65,000 for a new Hybrid cruiser for the Police Department. Motion seconded. All in Favor. Roll Call Vote. Paul-yes, Tom-yes, Brenda-yes, Dan-yes, Jim-yes, JD-yes, Paul-yes.

The Committee discussed repairs to the yellow barn at the Cemetery and the possibility of using CPA funds if possible.

The Committee touched upon the resealing of exterior bricks at the library, noting a previous discussion with Chair, Bob Smith regarding the project not being eligible for CPA funding.

The Committee discussed the purchase of a guard rail mower attachment for the Highway Department in which safety and visibility being important factors.

The Committee discussed the installation of double lane batting caged at Herlihy Park in which it was noted was eligible for CPA funds.

The Committee discussed the purchase of voting tabulators to replace the original crank voting box. Fred noted that there will eventually be a state mandate to switch over to electronic tabulators.

The Committee discussed anticipated projects, stating that Tri-Town Beach will submit their project request to CPC for FY26 and Fred will confirm if SCEMS pulled their project requests.

FY25 Wage Adjustments:

Tricia shared that the total cost increase for FY25 3% COLA included is \$34,375.82.

The Committee will plan to meet on April 30, 2024, to further discuss and potentially vote on budgets.

3. Items not anticipated

4. Adjourn

Motion to adjourn at 8:05pm. Motion Seconded. All in Favor. Roll Call Vote. Paul-yes, Tom-yes, Brenda-yes, Dan-yes, Jim-yes, JD-yes, Paul-yes.

Document List

Meeting Minutes from April 16, 2024

Fiscal Year 2025 Comprehensive Budgets

Assessor Budget Notes

Capital Improvement Planning Committee FY25 Project Recommendations

FY25 Wage Adjustments