

**Finance
Committee
MEETING
MINUTES**

March 28, 2023
Upton Town Hall – Room 203

Paul Flaherty, Stephen Bern, Nick Ensko and Shawn Craig; and Rick McGuire (virtual)
Joe Laydon, Matthew Bachtold, Rick Porter and Deb Amorelli; Dennis Westgate, Kenny Costa, Bill Taylor, Laura, F.P. Richards, Lyn Haggerty and Sandy Hakela (virtual)

1 The Finance Committee meeting was opened at 7:00 pm by Paul Flaherty.

2

3 **Approve minutes:** Finance Committee meeting minutes for November 1, 2022, March 7, 2023,
4 March 21, 2023 and March 22, 2023 were distributed to the members for review. Some edits
5 were proposed and accepted. Motion to approve all of the meeting minutes was made by Nick
6 Ensko, seconded by Shawn Craig. Motion was unanimous approval by roll call vote.

7

8 **Review Library Budget:** Matthew Bachtold, Library Director, was present to review and
9 discuss the Library budget submission. The discussion evolved around the additional services to
10 be provided as a result of the new community center. The budget proposes to hire a new position,
11 Adult Librarian. The FC asked about qualifications, pay scale and Mr Bachtold provided
12 sufficient responses to all inquiries. Overall, the Library is expecting to see an increase in
13 activities and are proactively increasing services and resources. No issues or concerns raised by
14 the FC.

15

16 **Review Recreation Commission Budget:** Rick Porter, Recreation Committee, was present to
17 review and discuss the Recreation Budget, which includes the revolving funds. Mr. Porter
18 explained the drivers for the \$10k increase in the Rec Revolving Fund. Increased expenses need
19 to be offset by revenues as the fund is a zero-sum effort. The Rec Com is proposing to increase
20 the Rec Director hours, this salary is funded by the Revolving Fund. Mr. Porter also touched
21 upon the Parks Revolving Fund as well as the line items impacting the budget. The Capital
22 Purchases were highlighted and resurfacing the tennis and basketball courts at Kiwanis is still a
23 need. The costs are estimated to be about \$31k (\$20k – tennis and \$11k – basketball). This is a
24 short-term need, but not likely to be done this year. Mr. Porter also discussed the master plan and
25 said details would be forthcoming. No issues or concerns raised by the FC.

26

27 **Discuss / vote recommendation on FY24 Operating Budget:** Mr. Flaherty opened the
28 discussion by praising the efforts of the Town Manager and the Finance Committee for the
29 seamless, albeit extended budget process. Mr. Flaherty briefly reviewed to the Town Manager
30 Recommendation line items as well as the summary docs provided via email and then explained
31 that the FC recommendation needed to be broken out into separate items due to the fact that co-
32 chair Steve Bern’s wife is the Assistant Town Clerk. There is some brief discussion about the
33 line items and the values and the approach is agreed upon to proceed.

34

35 *Raise & Appropriate Recommendation Votes:*

36 Motion to Raise and Appropriate \$27,721,259 for the Operating Budget line items with the
37 exception of the Town Clerk budget of \$110,030 made by Nick Ensko, seconded by Shawn
38 Craig. Motion was unanimous approval by roll call vote.

39

40 Motion to Raise and Appropriate \$110,030 for the Town Clerk Operating Budget line items
41 made by Paul Flaherty, seconded by Nick Ensko. Motion was passed by majority approval by
42 roll call vote, Steve Bern abstained.

43
44 **Discuss / vote recommendation on ATM warrant articles:** After completing the budget line
45 items, Mr. Flaherty proceeded to discuss the articles and the proposed recommendation vote
46 process, which led to the following motions:

47
48 Motion to Raise and Appropriate \$100,000 for Article 13 (Road Construction) made by Paul
49 Flaherty, seconded by Nick Ensko. Motion was unanimous approval by roll call vote.

50
51 Motion to Raise and Appropriate \$10,000 for Article 31 (Board of Assessor Certification) made
52 by Paul Flaherty, seconded by Nick Ensko. Motion was unanimous approval by roll call vote.

53
54 *Free Cash Recommendation Votes:*
55 Motion to fund Articles 3, 9, 10, 11, 13, 14, 15, 16, 20, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 30 and 32 using
56 Free Cash in the amount of \$1,369,413 made by Paul Flaherty, seconded by Nick Ensko. Motion
57 was unanimous approval by roll call vote.

58
59 *Other Recommendation Votes:*
60 Motion to fund Articles 2 and 8 from Other Available Funds (PEG Access and Cable Related) in
61 the amount of \$98,400 made by Nick Ensko, seconded by Shawn Craig. Motion was unanimous
62 approval by roll call vote.

63
64 Motion to fund Article 5 in the amount of \$986,295 for the Water Enterprise Fund made by Nick
65 Ensko, seconded by Shawn Craig. Motion was unanimous approval by roll call vote.

66
67 Motion to fund Article 6 in the amount of \$723,222 for the Wastewater Enterprise Fund made by
68 Nick Ensko, seconded by Shawn Craig. Motion was unanimous approval by roll call vote.

69
70 Motion to fund Article 28 in the amount of \$250,000 from Retained Earnings of the Wastewater
71 Enterprise Fund made by Paul Flaherty, seconded by Nick Ensko. Motion was unanimous
72 approval by roll call vote.

73
74 Motion to fund Article 29 in the amount of \$150,000 from Retained Earnings of the Water
75 Enterprise Fund made by Paul Flaherty, seconded by Nick Ensko. Motion was unanimous
76 approval by roll call vote.

77
78 Finance Committee discussed Article 12. After consultation with the Town Manager, the group
79 concluded that no action was required.

80
81 Motion to accept Article 33 (Ride Share Funds) made by Paul Flaherty, seconded by Nick
82 Ensko. Motion was unanimous approval by roll call vote.

83
84 Motion to favorable recommendation for Articles 17A (various), 17B (Undesignated), 17C
85 (Undesignated), 18 (Undesignated) and 19 (Historic) to and from multiple Community

86 Preservation Accounts made by Nick Ensko, seconded by Rick McGuire. Motion was unanimous
87 approval by roll call vote.

88
89 Article 21 for \$120,000 from CPA Open Space to be used construct a bridge over Warren Brook
90 on the Robertson property was discussed. The committee has several questions about the costs,
91 the grant funding and the process of reviewing funding options prior to grant award notification.
92 The Committee is under the impression that the grant from the Trails Program was for 80%
93 reimbursement and that the grant filled out with a cost of \$88,200 plus contingency to get to
94 ~\$100,000. If the grant is awarded, it is expected to be in the range of \$80,000, leaving a balance
95 of \$20,000 - \$40,000 to be funded via the CPA Open Space Account. The Committee feels like
96 knowing the grant status is vital to making the recommendation for funding and will ask the
97 proponents for more information, may attend the upcoming public hearing on April 5 and will
98 invite them to attend the May 4 FC meeting prior to the ATM to discuss further.

99
100 Upon completion of the ATM warrant article discussions, Mr. Bern reviewed the DRAFT
101 version of the Recommendation Letter that had been sent via email for review to the Committee.
102 A few edits were pointed out and some proposed improvements were discussed. Mr. Bern will
103 update and distribute a revised version to the Committee, along with the Town Manager and
104 Finance Director for final review.

105
106 Mr. Laydon then mentioned his plan for some potential end-of-year transfers to be discussed in
107 early May. He inquired about a preliminary joint meeting with the Finance Committee and the
108 Board of Selectmen. More information to follow as he gets more details as to the transfer
109 quantity and value.

110
111 Next meeting is scheduled for May 4, 2023 at 6pm at Nipmuc High School prior to the Annual
112 Town Meeting scheduled for 7pm.

113
114 Motion to adjourn the meeting at 9:07pm by Nick Ensko, seconded by Shawn Craig. Motion was
115 unanimous approval by roll call vote.

116
117 Respectfully submitted,
118 Stephen M. Bern, co-chair of the Finance Committee