

# Finance Committee MEETING MINUTES

April 2, 2025

Upton Town Hall, Room 203

Paul Flaherty, Stephen Bern, Shawn Craig, Nick Ensko and Rick McGuire  
Joe Laydon, Maureen Dwinnell, Lyn Haggerty, Dr. Maureen Cohen, Jay  
Byer, Sean Nicholson, Matt Hagen, Dr. Michael Fitzpatrick, Anthony Steele,  
Nicole Ferguson, Tyler Barrett

The Finance Committee meeting was opened at 7:01pm by Paul Flaherty.

## **Review and approving meeting minutes:**

Nick Ensko made the motion to approve the previously distributed Finance Committee meeting minutes for March 26, 2025, seconded by Rick McGuire. Unanimous approval.

## **School Budget Presentations:**

### *Mendon Upton Regional School District:*

Dr. Cohen opens up the discussion by introducing the members representing MURSD that are present. She then presented the slimmed down version of the approved budget and related details. She gets into the overall strategic plan and the many steps that they have gone through to get to their proposed approved budget. She hands the presentation over to Mr. Byer to discuss the figures in more detail. Upton's increase is primarily driven by the State's Minimum Local Contribution formula. The groups discuss the process, associated variables as well as the outlook for next year and beyond. Due to the continued use of their own funds (e.g. E&D), they believe that FY27 could include an override for both Towns. The discussion then shifts to the three warrant articles for debt authorization: Nipmuc Roof Replacement, Facility Capital Improvements and Athletic Field Improvements. It is important to note that the article requests are for the full values of the cost estimates, which is approximately \$30M. However, the Nipmuc Roof Replacement is expected to be offset by a Massachusetts School Building Authority (MSBA) grant and they expect fundraising to help offset some of the other costs (e.g. Fields). There are mixed opinions from MURSD reps as well as others in attendance about how much fundraising can / will be done.

### *Blackstone Valley Regional Vocational Technical High School:*

Dr. Fitzpatrick opens up the discussion by introducing the members representing BVT that are present. He then announces that Anthony Steele will be the next Superintendent after he retires in June. For the budget, Upton's assessment is an increase of about \$70k. Enrollment has seen a slight decrease to 88 from 93. Upton represents about 7% of the total enrollment. Dr. Fitz then explains some of the additional offerings that are in the future (e.g. adult education in some of the trades) as well as updating the status of their roof replacement project. Mr. Craig inquires about the recent news that Vocational schools may change the application process from its current version to a blind draft. This does not appear to be a done deal as there seems to be more doubt and pushback versus support for the radical change.

## **Review current status of budget, budget line items and warrant articles:**

Mr. Bern provides an overview of where things stand. The Town Manager and Finance Director reviewed the FC proposed revenue adjustments and proposed an increase of about \$284k (vs \$317k). This left a variance of about \$40k. To offset this variance, proposed line-item adjustments are being made to Canada Gees Control - \$2,000, Town Counsel - \$7,000, Software - \$10,000, Police Cruiser Replacement - \$5,000 and Oil & Paving - \$20,000. Mr. Bern explains

42 that the Dept Heads are aware of and OK with the proposed adjustments. It is noted that the Oil  
43 & Paving is a one-year adjustment that is possible because of the proposed Road Construction  
44 article. The other line items were adjusted based on expected costs. The combination of these  
45 adjustments leaves us with \$3,500 of a balanced budget.

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47 **Discuss remaining budget process and meetings:**

48 The next meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, April 9. The meeting will take place at the  
49 Community Center. The expected agenda will include a discussion with the Lakes, Ponds and  
50 Streams Committee for Article 37 as well as review, discussion and voting for the line-item  
51 budget, warrant articles as well as the recommendation letter. We are still on target to deliver the  
52 FC recommendation docs by April 11. However, Mr. Laydon states again that we have some  
53 time. We also need to confirm the layout and presentation of the VADAR line items for the  
54 book.

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56 **Motion to adjourn** is made by Paul Flaherty at 10:07pm, seconded by Nick Ensko. Unanimous  
57 approval.

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59 Respectfully submitted,  
60 Stephen M. Bern, co-chair of the Finance Committee