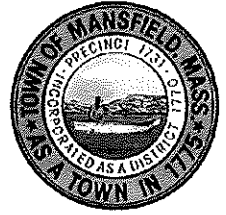


# Town of Mansfield

6 Park Row, Mansfield, Massachusetts 02048

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## Finance Committee

### Meeting Minutes 5.18.2023

**Present:** Ms. Sara Walsh, Chair, Mr. Scott Feely, Vice Chair, Ms. Greta Thurston, Clerk, Mr. Walter Wilk, Mr. Mr. Jack Cooney, and Ms. Melinda Tarsi.

**Absent:** Michael Flaherty

**Guest:** Mr. Barry LaCasse, Assistant Town Manager

**Minutes:** Sharon Varricchione

1. **Call the Meeting to order:** Ms. Sara Walsh, Chair, called the meeting to order at 7:09pm.

2. **Approval of Minutes: 4/27/23**

**Motion:** To adopt the meeting minutes 4/27/2023

**Passes:** 6:0 (Feely/Cooney)

3. **FY23 Financial Update and FY24 Budget Updates:**

Ms. Walsh updated the Committee as Mr. LaCasse was unable to join the meeting.

**FY23 Updates:** watch list of four items work about \$169,000 for the reserve.

- Town Clerk: early voting expenses of \$18,000
- Workers Comp Claims: \$31,000
- DPW Admin Rubbish and Recycling: \$61,000
- Various Electrical Account Rate Increases: \$59,000

Mr. Cooney confirmed that a watch list is when you have gone over your FY budget and Ms. Walsh stated yes and that they don't have other budget items so they want to take it from Fin Com reserves.

Ms. Walsh then stated they would end the year with about \$506,000 in Free Cash and then mentioned a list of items that would be going to the Annual Town Meeting that would use up the rest of the current balance of \$1.44 million.

**FY24 Updates:** Ms. Walsh shared that based on the current numbers from the state there's about \$40,000 in a positive direction which reduced the Free Cash used amount and they continue to watch it.

4. **CIP Review:**

Mr. Feely walked the Committee through the CIP items that would be discussed at the Town Meeting and mentioned they are also listed on the Town website.

#### **General Fund Capital Projects**

- MIS: More server capacity and hardware and software upgrades
- Stormwater Permits requirements are ongoing: \$90k for another year or two and then it pops up a little more for the last few years
- DPW Highway: Roadway/Sidewalk/Bridge & Parking Lot Maintenance, Brake Lathe, Sidewalk Snowblower and Tracked Loader that can also get out on the trails to help with maintenance
- DPW Public Buildings: Town Hall – Exterior & Interior Improvements and Town-wide HVAC Upgrades
- Police Department: Line Cruiser Replacements and Police Mountain Bikes
- Schools: QMS Boiler replacement, Lighting upgrades, Elevator upgrades, SPED Bus replacement and Alumni Complex rebuild – Feasibility Study. Mr. Wilk asked what the term was on the loan we were getting and Mr. Feely was unsure and that we could ask Mr. LaCasse at the next meeting. Mr. Cooney noted the Feasibility Study but do we know what the actual cost of the project will be. Mr. Feely said they gave a detailed proposal and to replace the track and the field it will be close to \$2.5 million and that the gym floor would likely be done first. Ms. Walsh stated that she would like to see the study when it comes out.

#### **Enterprise Fund Capital Projects**

- DPW Sewer: Sewer Collection System Improvements
- DPW Water: Water Meters & Radio Readers, Dustin & Prescott Well Improvements and PFAS Treatment Infrastructure, Risk & Resiliency Improvements

Ms. Thurston asked if it stated “No Projects Submitted” does that mean that they don’t have any CIP projects? Mr. Feely and Mr. Wilk explained the process where the Town would reach out to the Departments regarding their needs and then they in turn would submit any needs to the Town and then it goes in front of the CIP Committee via presentations from the Department Heads.

- Airport: PAPI Reimbursable Agreement, Runway 32 Permitting. Mr. Feely explained that the Federal Government pays for 90%, the State Government pays for 5% and the Town pays for 5%. The Federal Government also tells us what we are going to do and when we are going to do it.
- MMED: Mr. Feely explained that MMED has a long list of items that will be needed throughout the year.

Ms. Walsh commented that there is a great deal of information on the CIP spreadsheets that are also located on the website. Mr. Feely stated that Mr. Dumas bought the idea of the spreadsheets from his time in Attleboro. He then mentioned that the corresponding Green Sheets for each item is not on the website but he will have Mr. LaCasse add them as they contain more detailed information for each item.

**Motion:** To approve the CIP articles as outlined by Scott Feely  
**Passes:** 6:0 (Walter/Cooney)

The Committee discussed how the CIP would be voted again at Town Meeting in groups vs line items. For example, the Electric Dept (MMED) will be in a bucket Mr. Wilk mentioned. He then mentioned that every couple of years they would clean up the outstanding items that we don’t spend all the money on, it would then be transferred and redirected so there is not unused money sitting in the account. Mr. Wilk stated they should find out if there is any money outstanding from any Warrant Articles where the projects have been finished.

**5. Article 1 Discussion:**

Ms. Walsh stated that Mr. LaCasse shared the budget vs actual over the last two years so you could see where there was money movement between departments for Town and Schools. Ms. Tarsi offered that she asked her colleagues and the Association of Town Finance Committees and the most similar one was Billerica that allows the Town Manager to make transfers up to \$5,000, anything over needs to come to Fin Com. Other Towns do allow transfers for certain Departments like DPW. There was no consistency among the Towns regarding moving money or waiting to the end to do line transfers. The Committee discussed the pros and cons of getting permission vs notifying and all agreed that notifying the Finance Committee of any transfers \$50,000 and over would suffice. Ms. Walsh can draft a blurb to make the change to the Article. The Committee then discussed a time limit and that the notification should be by the next Finance Committee meeting. Ms. Tari said another option would be to raise the reserve fund and to be able to use that money with Fin Com’s permission. The Committee discussed being able to answer questions legally at Town Meeting regarding this Article and Mr. Wilk added that he didn’t think there were many large money transfers between departments over the past few years.

**6. Goals Discussion:**

Ms. Thurston said she reviewed the goals with Mr. Cooney and Mr. Flaherty.

1. **Initiate yearly cycle of engagement with each Town Department to understand current year objectives, future economic needs and how those influence budget planning and requests:**

They discussed how they could achieve this, perhaps having the committees come to Fin Com or for Fin Com to go to their meetings throughout the year to have these conversations. The Committee discussed doing this throughout the year and speaking with Mr. Dumas regarding what Departments make most sense to come before Fin Com.

2. **Work to understand revenue projections and forecasts to better inform long term budget planning and work to understand expense projections:**

Ms. Thurston stated that revenue was already in there and they added expenses so they could help determine how this would affect them in three or more years, will it create a cliff and what will those affects

be. She then mentioned Mr. Cooney's idea to show what the budget could look like over the next few years. Mr. Wilk offered that Mr. LaCasse did provide them with a guesstimate of the budget for the next few years. Ms. Walsh said they could modify this to be a two to three-year budget which shows the cliffs etc. Mr. Cooney agreed and that doing anything past three years may be unrealistic.

- 3. Prepare recommendations for the Select Board regarding the right metrics to measure economic development/growth to aid in determining Mansfield's financial and economic strength in coordination with the IDC and the Economic Development Director:**

Ms. Thurston stated that Mr. Flaherty is capable with helping with this. Ms. Walsh said that this may be too narrow and that metrics need to be determined. Mr. Wilk offered maybe one of them could be looking at the number of vacancies and that there should be four to five different ones. Ms. Tarsi agreed as many companies went virtual during Corvid and there were many vacancies so just having vacancy would not have been a great metric. Another metric could be an outreach to major businesses within 25 miles with a letter asking their rental status so we would know when they would be leaving. Also, to capture this in a database so we would know when all the leases are coming up. The Committee discussed getting Mr. McDermott, the Economic Development Director back into one of the Fin Comm meetings for an update. Mr. Wil also mentioned that the Town Manager does have pod casts that he shares with the public regarding economic development updates. Mr. Cooney suggested meeting about this quarterly for updates.

- 4. Increase Communication to the Public regarding the budget and financial matters and present the information to Citizens in a digestible manor:**
- 5. Increase the amount of feedback we get from the community via a yearly survey.**

Ms. Thurston mentioned that this was similar to last year however they added having this be more digestible as they already give this information to the public. She also mentioned that the survey will help with this so we understand how the public would like to receive the information. Ms. Walsh mentioned that the Town Managers office is doing a great job spear heading this, they have the Town Newsletter that Ms. Griffin is working on, Fin Com can also post communications on the website. Ms. Thurston mentioned having a section in the Newsletter that speaks about key bullet points from the Fin Com monthly agenda. Mr. Cooney mentioned that the Town Manager also has a Mansfield Cable show and maybe they could have a Fin Com member on it to give updates as people like to watch vs looking at a spreadsheet to get the financial information. Ms. Tarsi offered to have one of the survey questions be how the residents would like to receive their information and we could even have a right in space. Ms. Tari then mentioned citizens academy's where the residents could come on a Saturday where they could learn different things like how the levy is set etc.

Ms. Thurston asked how they would tackle the goal list to make sure it gets done. Ms. Walsh mentioned the Committee would discuss it and then decide who would own the goals and action items.

- 6. Work with the Town Manager and Assistant Town Manager Recommend 1-time and ongoing state and federal funding opportunities and plan for the long-term effects of the grants on future budgets:** Ms. Thurston stated that they changed this one a bit and that Fin Com is not responsible for finding the grants however they are responsible for making sure the grants do not have negative impacts on future budgets so we added in that part about planning on the long-term effects. Ms. Walsh also mentioned that during the Select Board meetings Mr. Dumas always mentions the grants that they have received and what they are doing with them. Mr. Wilk mentioned that some Towns have a grant writer but he does not know if there are enough grants out there to support a grant writer. Mr. Feely mentioned we did hire an Economic Development Director and he is also a grant writer.

- 7. Request and review a capital/infrastructure (including cybersecurity) risk analysis to identify financial threats to Town finances and budget plans:**

Ms. Thurston said for this goal they spoke about how Fin Com is on the Audit Committee. They don't meet until November and there will be an update after that.

Mr. Cooney asked about what could be discussed openly about Cybersecurity. Mr. Wilk mentioned that they could go into Executive Session for security purposes as they would not want to discuss this in open public.

Ms. Thurston said she will draft an updated version to share with the committee. Ms. Walsh stated that she would share the revised list with the Select Board.

7. Schedule of Meetings for Summer: Ms. Walsh stated that June 1<sup>st</sup> is feasible for the next meeting to discuss the Warrant/Articles and the next meeting would be 6/15 to meet before the Town Meeting. The Committee stated that they would not be meeting in July.

8. Questions from Community:

Ms. Doherty from 3 Darby Drive, Mansfield spoke about how she is excited to hear about the idea of the citizens academy and that she tried to do that several years ago. She will bring this up with the Select Board as new business for the agenda as she would like to see residents involved. Mr. Feely believes that Mr. Dumas has done a citizen's orientation in the past and he feels like it would be a good thing as it would get more people involved. He then stated sessions could be taped and viewed later on our website. Ms. Doherty mentioned there is a whole process they have done under the Massachusetts Municipal Association with a certain format and she knows that Mr. Dumas has done open houses for new residents. Mr. Tarsi mentioned there is also the Division of Local Services from the Department of Revenue who has a really great website for new Fin Com members and has training videos regarding how the levy is calculated and how your property taxes are set which would be a good building block for any training they do for the public. Ms. Walsh said they could add any of this information to their web page and keep building/adding onto it.

Ms. Doherty then added that one of the things she learned during her Select Board campaign is that often Seniors feel left behind and it is the largest population in town because everything is on the website and that is not their main means for communication and I wanted to make you aware as we are outpacing them in technology.

9. Committee Updates:

Mr. Cooney – has a conflict with the Downtown Tuesday and does not have any updates.

Ms. Walsh had a discussion with the Vice Chair regarding getting quarterly updates from the Schools and will pass it along when they get it.

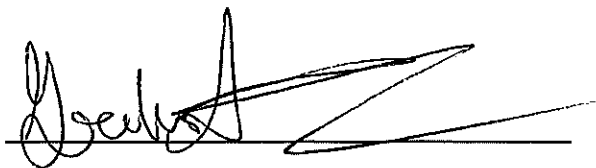
10. Items Not Known in 48 Hours: None

11. Finance Committee Member Comments: None

12. Adjournment:

Motion: To adjourn the meeting at 8:29pm.

Passes: 6:0 (Feely/Tarsi)



5.31.2023

Date