

Finance Committee Notes
March 26th, 2025
Town Offices, 4:00 pm

Present: Katherine DiMatteo (Selectboard member) Erica Jensen (Selectboard member)

Ginger Robinson (Finance Committee), Nate Messer (Finance Committee), Pam Brown (Finance Committee), Paul Hake (Finance Committee), Chris Maguire (COA Chair)

The meetings were called to order at 4:07 p.m.

The name of Janell Woods was changed to Janell Howard in the minutes.

Pam Brown moved to accept the March 19, 2025 minutes as corrected and seconded by Nate Messer. Motion passed unanimously.

Katherine suggested that procedures for the submission of the budget proposals be written. Pam volunteered to write a draft and to bring to the committee on April 16th for review.

Pam suggested that the Finance Committee and the Selectboard meet after the FY26 budget process is completed to discuss the FY27 budget predictions and to begin to do contingency planning for potential budget difficulties. All agreed.

Ken Spatcher and Bob DePalma presented the Assessor's proposed FY26 budget. The Assistant Assessors salary was updated to include the COLA increase of 3.5% to be \$12,889.20. Approximately \$4,000 will be withdrawn from either the Overlay Surplus or the Assessors Stabilization account in order to do property assessments. Ginger will request the balance in the stabilization accounts from the Accountant and share the information with the Assessors, Finance Committee and Selectboard. Ginger inquired as to whether the assessments included a full measure and list as required every ten years by state statute and stated that this to happen. Bob and Ken agreed to see if the assessment done by the consultant Roy Bishop met this standard and to find out what the cost would be to do so. There was a discussion about the privacy rights of homeowners and landowners and whether assessors have the legal authority to go into someone's home who does not want to allow an inspection. The assessors explained that GPS technology allows for excellent measurements of external dimensions and the existence of new structures are easily determined. This technology is actively used by the Assessors Office and the consultant.

Assessors continued review their current workload:

- 273 residential properties in town
- The Finance Committee discussed getting the stabilization account balances for the Assessors (and others).
 - Ginger will talk to the accountant to get these balances

Council on Aging Budget

- Chris mentioned applying for a grant though she noted that most of the grants she had looked at previously are currently frozen.
- Chris mentioned collaborating with the Rec Committee (and other town committees) to potentially work on events together to create "Multigenerational Activities"
- There had not been a line in the COA salaries in the budget but the Finance Committee agreed that there should be a separate line from the overall budget for the salaries
- Chris talked about the idea of having transportation to town, which is something other towns have.
 - There are a lot of hurdles, though, for getting bus transportation from Leyden.

Chair Notes

- The Finance Committee and Selectboard discussed the school budgets and whether or not it made sense to bring the Tech School Superintendent in to discuss future plans and what impact Federal funding may impact their budget.
- The Committee discussed the salary increases for highway department at 3.5%
- Committee and Board Stipends: Katherine noted that no changes were anticipated for these stipends.
- Ginger confirmed that the Finance Committee is only determining the stipends for elected officials.
- Erica mentioned that there was a big requested increase in the EMD stipend and the addition of the Deputy EMD was quite a big overall budget increase. The Finance Committee agreed to meet with the EMD before the end of budget season to discuss further.
- In addition, the Selectboard and FC discussed the budget for the Fire Department Clerk.
 - Proposed moving to \$21-\$22/hr and make this a \$3168 proposed budget for the Fire Department Clerk
 - \$22 per hour at 12 hours per month.
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Paul made a motion to adjourn at 5:58. Nate seconded. All in favor.