



Town of Reading Meeting Minutes

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Board - Committee - Commission - Council:

Finance Committee

Date: 2023-03-15

Time: 7:00 PM

Building: Reading Town Hall

Location: Select Board Meeting Room

Address: 16 Lowell Street

Session: Open Session

Purpose: General Business

Version: Final

Attendees: **Members - Present:**

Chair Ed Ross, Vice Chair Jeanne Borawski, Joe Carnahan, Geoffrey Coram, Marianne Downing, Joe McDonagh, Emily Sisson, Mark Zarrow

Members - Not Present:

Others Present:

Town Manager Fidel Maltez, Fire Chief Greg Burns, Police Chief David Clark, Deputy Police Chief Christine Amendola, Public Health Director Ade Solarin (remote), Town Accountant Sharon Angstrom (remote), Public Works Director Jane Kinsella (remote), Community Services Director Jenna Fiorente (remote), Town Treasurer Diane Morabito (remote), Facilities Director Joe Huggins (remote), Jackie McCarthy (remote 8:23 pm), Karen Gately Herrick

Minutes Respectfully Submitted By: Jacquelyn LaVerde

Topics of Discussion:

This meeting was held in-person in the Town Hall Select Board Meeting Room and remotely via Zoom.

Chair Ed Ross called the meeting to order at 7:01 pm.

Liaison Reports:

Emily Sisson shared that the Recreation Committee had a meeting, and Pickleball was on the agenda, as it is every month. There was going to be discussion of whether it would be appropriate to start building or relining Sturges and Washington parks with pickleball courts. The Recreation Committee tabled it, but the Chronicle reported that the Select Board was ready to move forward with approving it, which was not true.

Ed Ross noted that the Killam School Building Committee is meeting next week, and will be his first meeting as a member of the KSBC.

FY24 Budget Presentations (Continued):

Public Safety - Fire/EMS:

Fire Chief Greg Burns reviewed the Fire Department and Emergency Medical Services budget. Expenses are decreased 0.3% due to fewer new firefighters. The total budget increases 4.8%, as salaries increase 5.1% due to the pay and class study. Chief Burns is requesting four firefighters be promoted to Lieutenant, increasing the number of Lieutenants to eight. It is a \$60,000 increase to the budget, but allows the department to move that person off the engine and replace with a supervisor. Overtime has decreased, as there were firefighters out injured, and some going through the retirement process. But the

retirees were replaced with new firefighters, restoring shift strength, and resulting in less OT needed.

Some grants in progress include: \$18,000 state grant to fix radio equipment, two grants for fire safety education, \$5,000 grant for school based SAFE program, and \$6,500 federal grant for training and emergency supplies.

Public Safety - Police, Coalition, Dispatch:

Police Chief David Clark and Deputy Police Chief Christine Amendola presented the budget for the Police Department, Public Safety Dispatch, and the Coalition for Prevention and Support.

There is no increase requested in staff. The increase in Police salaries is due to step increases. There is an additional expense line item for \$4,000 requested for the three dogs: comfort dogs Cooper and Rusty, and K-9 Tango. The Police postage and parking program line items were each decreased by \$1,000. Other requests include: an additional \$5,000 for police cruisers and equipment, additional \$2,500 for less-lethal police weapons and trainings, additional \$2,000 in equipment maintenance for message boards, \$500 for professional services, \$1,000 for registrations, \$1,000 for professional reimbursement, \$1,000 for radar units, \$500 for medical supplies, and \$2,000 for office supplies.

For Dispatch, salary increases are based on new employees. An additional \$500 is requested for expenses for the increased cost of uniforms and clothing.

The increase in Coalition salaries is due to step increases and adjustments from the pay and class study. Expenses are level funded.

Public Safety - Public Health

Health Director Ade Solarin provided a description of the key responsibilities and mission of the Health Department. The proposed budget decreased 5.9% from the prior year. The number of staff decreased from 4.6 to 4 FTEs, as the part-time public health nurse is no longer needed now that COVID is under control. Those funds will be used to offset COLA and salary adjustments, and fund professional development and health clinical supplies. Requested increases to expenses include an additional \$6,000 for professional development and professional services, and an extra \$500 to cover health clinic supplies. Other expense line items were level funded.

Discussion and Vote on FY24 Budget and Annual Town Meeting Warrant Articles

Town Manager Fidel Maltez reviewed each warrant article on which the Committee needed to vote.

Article 4 – Change to Capital Plan:

On a motion by Jeanne Borawski, and seconded by Joe McDonagh, the Finance Committee voted 8-0-0 to recommend the subject matter of Article 4 as presented.

Joe McDonagh to present the Finance Committee report on Article 4 to Town Meeting.

Article 5 – Changes to FY23 Operating Budget:

On a motion by Jeanne Borawski, and seconded by Marianne Downing, the Finance Committee voted 8-0-0 to recommend the substance of Article 5 as presented to Town Meeting.

Geoffrey Coram will present the Finance Committee report on Article 5 to Town Meeting.

Article 7 – Other Post Employment Benefits (OPEB) Contribution:

On a motion by Jeanne Borawski, and seconded by Joe Carnahan, the Finance Committee voted 8-0-0 to recommend the substance of Article 7 as presented to Town Meeting.

Mark Zarrow will present the Finance Committee report on Article 7 to Town Meeting.

Article 9 – Revolving Funds:

On a motion by Jeanne Borawski, and seconded by Joe Carnahan, the Finance Committee voted 8-0-0 to recommend the substance of Article 9 as presented to Town Meeting. Joe Carnahan will present the Finance Committee report on Article 9 to Town Meeting.

Article 10 – Housing Trust Fund:

On a motion by Jeanne Borawski, and seconded by Joe Carnahan, the Finance Committee voted 8-0-0 to recommend the substance of Article 10 as presented to Town Meeting. Marianne Downing will present the Finance Committee report on Article 10 to Town Meeting.

Article 11 – Special Education Revolving Fund:

On a motion by Jeanne Borawski, and seconded by Joe Carnahan, the Finance Committee voted 8-0-0 to recommend the substance of Article 11 as presented to Town Meeting. Jeanne Borawski and Geoffrey Coram will present the Finance Committee report on Article 11 to Town Meeting.

Article 13 – Trash and Recycling Carts:

On a motion by Jeanne Borawski, and seconded by Joe Carnahan, the Finance Committee voted 8-0-0 to recommend the substance of Article 13 as presented to Town Meeting. Ed Ross will present the Finance Committee report on Article 13 to Town Meeting.

Article 14 – Birch Meadow Complex:

On a motion by Jeanne Borawski, and seconded by Geoffrey Coram, the Finance Committee voted 8-0-0 to recommend the subject matter of Article 14 as presented to Town Meeting, which includes both the infrastructure and the building.

On a motion by Jeanne Borawski, and seconded by Emily Sisson, the Finance Committee voted 8-0-0 to recommend funding sources for Article 14 to Town Meeting as follows: Unspent money from the Parker Middle School roof and Police Department renovation, and any remaining balance from the 40R Incentive Account. Emily Sisson will present the Finance Committee report on Article 14 to Town Meeting.

Article 15 – Transfer previously borrowed funds to the Gazebo Circle Pump Station Project:

On a motion by Jeanne Borawski, and seconded by Mark Zarrow, the Finance Committee voted 8-0-0 to recommend the subject matter of Article 15 as presented to Town Meeting. Joe McDonagh will present the Finance Committee report on Article 15 to Town Meeting.

Article 16 – Transfer previously borrowed funds to Downtown Water Main Project:

On a motion by Jeanne Borawski, and seconded by Joe Carnahan, the Finance Committee voted 8-0-0 to recommend the substance of Article 16 as presented to Town Meeting. Geoffrey Coram will present the Finance Committee report on Article 16 to Town Meeting.

Article 17 – MWRA No-interest Loan:

On a motion by Jeanne Borawski, and seconded by Joe Carnahan, the Finance Committee voted 8-0-0 to recommend the substance of Article 17 as presented to Town Meeting. Mark Zarrow will present the Finance Committee report on Article 17 to Town Meeting.

Article 18 – Reduction of Debt Authorization:

On a motion by Jeanne Borawski, and seconded by Geoffrey Coram, the Finance Committee voted 8-0-0 to recommend the substance of Article 18 as presented to Town Meeting. Joe Carnahan will present the Finance Committee report on Article 18 to Town Meeting.

Article 12 – FY24 Budget:

On a motion by Jeanne Borawski, and seconded by Emily Sisson, the Finance Committee voted 8-0-0 to recommend FY24 budget line item B99 as presented.

On a motion by Jeanne Borawski, and seconded by Joe McDonagh, the Finance Committee voted 8-0-0 to recommend FY24 budget line item C99 as presented.

On a motion by Jeanne Borawski, and seconded by Joe McDonagh, the Finance Committee voted 8-0-0 to recommend FY24 budget line item M91 as presented.

On a motion by Jeanne Borawski, and seconded by Joe McDonagh, the Finance Committee voted 8-0-0 to recommend FY24 budget line item M92 as presented.

On a motion by Jeanne Borawski, and seconded by Joe McDonagh, the Finance Committee voted 8-0-0 to recommend FY24 budget line item U99 as presented.

On a motion by Jeanne Borawski, and seconded by Joe McDonagh, the Finance Committee voted 8-0-0 to recommend FY24 budget line item W99 as presented.

On a motion by Jeanne Borawski, and seconded by Joe McDonagh, the Finance Committee voted 8-0-0 to recommend FY24 budget line item X99 as presented.

On a motion by Jeanne Borawski, and seconded by Joe McDonagh, the Finance Committee voted 8-0-0 to recommend FY24 budget line item Y99 as presented.

On a motion by Jeanne Borawski, and seconded by Joe McDonagh, the Finance Committee voted 8-0-0 to recommend FY24 budget line item Z99 as presented.

On a motion by Jeanne Borawski, and seconded by Joe McDonagh, the Finance Committee voted 8-0-0 to recommend FY24 budget line item ZZ99 as presented.

Marianne Downing will present the Finance Committee report on Article 12 to Town Meeting.

Discuss FINCOM Report to Town Meeting

Ed Ross asked Committee members to email him with anything they would like included in the report to Town Meeting.

The meeting scheduled for next week is not needed, as the Committee was able to vote all Warrant Articles tonight. If needed, the Committee can meet the night of Town Meeting, otherwise, the next meeting will be after Town Meeting.

On a motion by Jeanne Borawski, and seconded by Emily Sisson, the Finance Committee voted 8-0-0 to adjourn at 10:45 pm.