



Town of Reading Meeting Posting with Agenda

2018-07-16 LAG

Board - Committee - Commission - Council:

Finance Committee

Date: 2024-03-13

Time: 7:00 PM

Building: Reading Town Hall

Location: Select Board Meeting Room

Address: 16 Lowell Street

Agenda:

Purpose: General Business

Meeting Called By: Jacquelyn LaVerde on behalf of Chair Ed Ross

Notices and agendas are to be posted 48 hours in advance of the meetings excluding Saturdays, Sundays and Legal Holidays. Please keep in mind the Town Clerk's hours of operation and make necessary arrangements to be sure your posting is made in an adequate amount of time. A listing of topics that the chair reasonably anticipates will be discussed at the meeting must be on the agenda.

All Meeting Postings must be submitted in typed format; handwritten notices will not be accepted.

Topics of Discussion:

This meeting will be held in-person in the Select Board Meeting Room of Town Hall and remotely via Zoom:

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/86395374067>

Meeting ID: 863 9537 4067

One tap mobile

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AGENDA:

- Liaison Reports
- Budget Presentations: FY25 Town Manager Recommended Budget & Town Departments (Continued)
 - Finance Department
 - Department of Public Works
 - Water, Sewer, & Storm Water Enterprise Funds
 - Library
 - Facilities
- Discussion and Vote on FY25 Budget and Annual Town Meeting Warrant Articles
- Discuss FINCOM Report to Town Meeting
- Future Agendas
- Approval of Prior Meeting Minutes

This Agenda has been prepared in advance and represents a listing of topics that the chair reasonably anticipates will be discussed at the meeting. However the agenda does not necessarily include all matters which may be taken up at this meeting.

COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS

Middlesex, ss. Officer's Return, Town of Reading:

By virtue of this Warrant, I _____, on _____, 2024 notified and warned the inhabitants of the Town of Reading, qualified to vote on Town affairs, to meet at the place and at the time specified by posting attested copies of this Town Meeting Warrant, in the following public places within the Town of Reading:

Precinct 1	J. Warren Killam School, 333 Charles Street
Precinct 2	Reading Police Station, 15 Union Street
Precinct 3	Reading Municipal Light Department, 230 Ash Street
Precinct 4	Joshua Eaton School, 365 Summer Avenue
Precinct 5	Reading Public Library, 64 Middlesex Avenue
Precinct 6	Barrows School, 16 Edgemont Avenue
Precinct 7	Birch Meadow School, 27 Arthur B Lord Drive
Precinct 8	Wood End School, 85 Sunset Rock Lane
	Town Hall, 16 Lowell Street

The date of posting being not less than fourteen (14) days prior to April 22, 2024, the date set for Town Meeting in this Warrant.

Constable

A true copy Attest:

Laura Gemme, Town Clerk



TOWN WARRANT

COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS

Middlesex, ss.

To any of the Constables of the Town of Reading, Greetings:

In the name of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, you are hereby required to notify and warn the inhabitants of the Town of Reading, qualified to vote in the Local Elections and Town affairs, to meet at the Reading Memorial High School, 62 Oakland Road, in said Reading on

MONDAY, the TWENTY-SECOND DAY of APRIL A.D., 2024

at seven-thirty o'clock in the evening, at which time and place the following Articles are to be acted upon and determined exclusively by Town Meeting Members in accordance with the provisions of the Reading Home Rule Charter.

ARTICLE 1 The following Town Officers were elected on March 5, 2024

A Moderator for one year;
One member of the Select Board for three years;
Two members of the Board of Library Trustees for three years;
Two members of the Municipal Light Board for three years;
Two members of the School Committee for three years;

Each of Reading's eight (8) precincts elected eight (8) Town Meeting members for a three-year term.

In addition, the following Town Meeting members were elected:

Precinct 1 – One (1) Town Meeting member for a 2-year term
Precinct 2 – One (1) Town Meeting member for a 1-year term
Precinct 3 – Two (2) Town Meeting members for a 1-year term

ARTICLE 2 To hear and act on the reports of the Select Board, School Committee, Library Trustees, Municipal Light Board, Finance Committee, Bylaw Committee, Town Manager, Town Accountant and any other Town Official, Board or Committee.

Select Board

Background: This article appears on the Warrant for all Town Meetings. At this Annual Town Meeting, the Moderator has requested that reports be submitted in writing in advance for the following:

-State of the Town (Select Board Chair)

ARTICLE 3 To choose all other necessary Town Officers and Boards or Committees and determine what instructions shall be given to Town Officers and Boards or Committees, and to see what sum the Town will vote to appropriate by borrowing or transfer from available funds, or otherwise, for the purpose of funding Town Officers and Boards or Committees to carry out the instructions given to them, or take any other action with respect thereto.

Select Board

Background: This Article appears on the Warrant for all Town Meetings. There are no known Instructional Motions at this time. The Town Moderator requires that all proposed Instructional Motions be submitted to the Town Clerk prior to Town Meeting so that Town Meeting Members may be "warned" as to the subject of an Instructional Motion in advance of the motion being made. Instructional Motions are normally held until the end of all other business at Town Meeting.

ARTICLE 4 To see if the Town will vote to amend the FY 2024-34 Capital Improvements Program as provided for in Section 7-7 of the Reading Home Rule Charter and as previously amended, or take any other action with respect thereto.

Select Board

Background: This Article is included in every Town Meeting Warrant. The Reading General Bylaw (section 6.1.3) states "... *No funds may be appropriated for any capital item unless such item is included in the Capital Improvements Program, and is scheduled for funding in the Fiscal Year in which the appropriation is to be made.*" Bond ratings agencies also want to ensure that changes to a long-term Capital Improvements Program (CIP) are adequately described.

The following changes are proposed to the FY2024 – FY2034 CIP (current year plus ten years):

General Fund

FY24: +\$295,000

\$200,000 RMHS Field House Floor/Bleachers (move project up 1 yr. design FY24 then debt)
\$ 95,000 Coolidge Alarm Panel

FY25: -\$ 0 net change

\$85,000 Bobcat Utility – Snowplow (2013) (increase by \$45k and move up 1 yr. to FY25)
\$45,000 Driver's Ed Vehicle (2013) (move up 5 yrs., FY29 to FY25)
\$55,000 Computer Aided Dispatch (increase by \$55k)
\$50,000 Police unmarked vehicle (earmark grant went away)
- \$240,000 Sander Truck #18 (2006) (move out 1 yr.)
\$ 5,000 Cemetery Ford Sedan #4 (2006) (move out 1 yr.)

FY26: -\$63,000

-\$ 55,000 Coolidge Alarm Panel Design – (remove different direction taken)
- \$ 45,000 Bobcat Skid S130 – Snowplow (2008) (move out 3 yrs., FY26 to FY29)
-\$ 35,000 Bobcat Utility 3650 – Snowplow (2013) (move up 1 yr. FY26 to FY25)
\$ 7,000 School Doors & Windows (increase by \$7k)
\$ 65,000 Hwy Small Dump Truck #7 (2012) (move up 1 yr.)
\$240,000 Sander Truck #18 (2006) (from FY25 to FY26)
-\$240,000 Sander Truck #19 (2007) (move out 1 yr. to FY27)

Enterprise Funds – Water**FY24: +\$0****FY25: -\$300,000**

-\$300,000 Water Main Repairs – (not needed)

FY26: -\$400,000

-\$400,000 Water Main Repairs – (not needed)

Enterprise Funds – Sewer**FY24: +\$200,000**

\$200,000 Prefab Longwood Rd. Sewer Station

FY25: +\$0**FY26: +\$0****Enterprise Funds – Storm Water****FY24: +\$0****FY25: +\$0****FY26: +\$0**

Finance Committee Report: The Finance Committee recommends the proposed amendments to the FY 2024 – FY 2034 Capital Improvements Program by a vote of ___ at their meeting on March ___, 2024. Placing items in the Capital Improvement Program is a prerequisite first step but in itself does not authorize spending funds toward these items.

Bylaw Committee Report: No Report.

ARTICLE 5 To see if the Town will vote to amend the Town's Operating Budget for the Fiscal Year commencing July 1, 2023, as adopted under Article 12 of the Annual Town Meeting of April 24, 2023 and amended under Article 4 of the Subsequent Town Meeting of November 13, 2023; and to see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate, borrow or transfer from available funds, or otherwise provide a sum or sums of money to be added to the amounts appropriated under said Article, as amended, for the operation of the Town and its government, or take any other action with respect thereto.

Finance Committee

Background:

General Fund – Wages and Expenses

<u>Account Line</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>Decrease</u>	<u>Increase</u>
B99 – Benefits	Health Insurance+\$300,000 Medicare + \$75,000 OPEB - \$200,000 Indemnification -\$30,000		\$145,000
E99 – Regional Vocational Education	Essex North +\$65,000		\$65,000
H91 Public Services Wages	Attrition Savings	20,000	
G92 Admin Services-Expenses	Town Manager Search		\$20,000
G92a Technology Expenses	Phone Service Migration		\$20,000
I91 Finance Wages	Retirement Vacation Buybacks \$17k Collector Transition \$17k		\$34,000
J91 – Public Safety Wages	Health -Sealer Weights & Measures +\$6,000 Health - Attrition Savings -\$15,000 Fire - Vacation Buyouts \$50,000		41,000
J92 -Public Safety Expenses	Health Weights & Measures -\$6,000	\$6,000	
K91 – Public Works Wages	Attrition savings	\$50,000	
K-93 Snow & Ice	Snow & Ice Expenses		\$75,000
K-94 Street Lights	Street Light Expenses -\$25,000	\$25,000	
M-92 Facilities Town Buildings	Vacation Buyback \$14,000		\$14,000
	Subtotals	\$101,000	414,000
	Net Operating Expenses		\$313,000
	From Free Cash		\$313,000

Enterprise Funds

<u>Account Line</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>Decrease</u>	<u>Increase</u>
S99 Sewer EF	Longwood Rd Sewer Station		200,000
	Subtotals	-	200,000
	Net Operating Expenses		200,000
	From Sewer EF Reserves		200,000

Finance Committee Report: At their meeting on March __, 2024, the Finance Committee voted ____ to recommend this Article to Town Meeting.

Bylaw Committee Report: No Report.

ARTICLE 6 To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate, transfer from available funds, borrow or otherwise provide a sum or sums of money to pay bills remaining unpaid from prior fiscal years for goods and services actually rendered to the Town, or take any other action with respect thereto.

Select Board

Background: There are no prior years' bills; this Article is expected to be tabled.

Finance Committee Report: No Report.

Bylaw Committee Report: No Report.

ARTICLE 7 To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate, transfer from available funds, borrow or otherwise provide a sum or sums of money for the purpose of funding the irrevocable trust for "Other Post-Employment Benefits Liabilities", or take any other action with respect thereto.

Select Board

Background: Each year at Annual Town Meeting, we ask to transfer funds budgeted for OPEB from that line to the actual OPEB Trust in this Article. Sometimes due to budget surpluses in health insurance premiums we have increased the budgeted contribution figures; this year we have to ask to lower the budgeted contribution by \$200,000 to cover a health insurance premium deficit. Recent contributions to the Trust on behalf of the General Fund have been \$700,000 (FY20), \$793,400 (FY21), \$350,000 (FY22), and \$500,000 (FY23).

This year, Town Meeting is requested to make the annual transfers of funds previously budgeted and held for the OPEB Trust Fund. This practice is followed each year in case health insurance costs are higher than budgeted, and therefore may be needed to fund a deficit. In FY24, we recommend transferring \$300,000 out of the \$500,000 budgeted to OPEB in the general fund.

Original annual transfers designed to fully fund OPEB liabilities in the Enterprise Funds should continue: \$85,000 in the water fund, \$25,000 in the sewer fund and \$10,500 in the storm water fund. This Article will therefore move the total \$420,500 of all these OPEB contributions to the trust for Other Post Employment Benefit liabilities.

The most recent OPEB valuation shows the Town's OPEB liability at \$59.9 million and 13.84% funded as of June 30, 2023. The three Enterprise Funds and the Light Department are on a full funding schedule, and the General Fund is on a partial funding schedule. As noted, the General Fund will transition to a full funding schedule as soon as possible, as is required by law or immediately after the Pension Fund is fully funded.

Finance Committee Report: At their meeting on March __, 2024, the Finance Committee voted __ to recommend this Article to Town Meeting.

Bylaw Committee Report: No Report.

ARTICLE 8 To see if the Town will vote to transfer funds received from the Commonwealth of Massachusetts in payment for development within the Town's 40R Smart Growth Zoning Districts from Free Cash into the Smart Growth Stabilization Fund, or take any other action with respect thereto.

Select Board

Background: No Smart Growth revenue has been received to transfer, therefore, this Article is expected to be Indefinitely Postponed.

Finance Committee Report: No Report.

Bylaw Committee Report: No Report.

ARTICLE 9 To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate, borrow, transfer from available funds, including the reallocation of funds from the Parker Roof Project borrowing authorized under Article 14 of the 2021 Annual Town Meeting, or otherwise provide a sum or sums of money for the purpose of installing a new replacement fire alarm panel at Coolidge Middle School, including the costs of installation, consulting services, plans, documents, bidding services and all related expenses incidental thereto and necessary in connection therewith, said sum to be expended under the Town Manager, or take any other action with respect thereto.

Select Board

Background: This request is for a full replacement of the entire fire alarm system at the Coolidge Middle School. After discussions with the fire alarm company and electrical engineer, it was decided that a more cost-effective solution would be to replace the panel and some of the devices within the school that are not compatible with the new panel. Due to the invasiveness of replacing the panel and all the field devices, it was decided that an updated panel install and a replacement of some of the devices would be a more prudent approach.

Reading Fire Department has been engaged in this entire process and is fully aware of the plan. As soon as school ends, the new panel and necessary devices will be replaced and tested by the contractor, as well as Reading Fire Department.

Finance Committee Report: At their meeting on March __, 2024, the Finance Committee voted __ to recommend this Article to Town Meeting.

Bylaw Committee Report: TBD.

ARTICLE 10

To see if the Town will vote to take the following actions:

- a) Raise and appropriate, borrow, transfer from available funds, including the reallocation of funds from the Parker Roof Project borrowing authorized under Article 14 of the 2021 Annual Town Meeting, or otherwise provide a sum or sums of money for the purpose of designing a new floor at the Reading Memorial High School Field House, including the cost of consulting services, plans, documents, cost estimates, bidding services and all related expenses incidental thereto and necessary in connection therewith, said sum to be expended under the direction of the Town Manager; and
- b) Raise and appropriate, borrow, transfer from available funds, or otherwise provide a sum or sums of money for the purposes of making improvements, including full replacement of the floor at the Reading Memorial High School Field House, including the costs of installation, construction, consulting services, audits, plans, documents, cost estimates, bidding services and all related expenses incidental thereto and necessary in connection therewith, said sum to be expended by and under the direction of the Town Manager; and, for the purpose of meeting such appropriation, authorize the Town Treasurer, with the approval of the Select Board, to borrow said sum in accordance with G.L. c. 44, §7(1), or any other enabling authority, or take any other action with respect thereto.

Select Board

Background: The RMHS Field House floor was installed in 2005 using sheet goods adhered with glue and a vinyl center court also adhered with glue. The Town has experienced issues with the Field House since installation as it wasn't appropriately sealed/water proofed. As a result, the glue never cured properly, the floor has buckled and lifted in certain areas, and seams have separated. Furthermore, areas of the floor have needed ongoing repair where cracks are transmitting through the surface. This has resulted in consistent repairs needed to the floor each year.

In addition to repairs needed, the thin layer of glue on the surface has raised concerns around injuries for students/community members who use the field house. While there are no injuries necessarily attributable to the floor, we do know that a new floor would provide a safer experience for all, with more give and compliance with updated guidelines around safe floor surfaces. The new surface for the track and center court will meet ASTM 7227 requirements with a minimum thickness of 10mm as opposed to a current 7mm thickness.

The project would also include new bleachers. While the bleachers are safe and inspected each year, they are original to the building and are not ADA compliant. They only have 2 motorized sections, and a trolley is needed to get the other bleachers up and running, which is a significant lift for our facilities team. We continue to invest money in maintaining the safety of the current bleachers, representing an ongoing yearly cost. A new bleacher system would be fully aluminum, ADA compliant, and fully motorized.

In all, the Field House project would provide an enhanced and accessible athletic experience for our community, prioritize the safety of students and community members, and ensure the durability needed to save costs on maintenance.

Finance Committee Report: At their meeting on March __, 2024, the Finance Committee voted ___ to recommend this Article to Town Meeting.

Bylaw Committee Report: TBD.

ARTICLE 11 To see if the Town will vote to (1) establish the limit on the total amount that may be expended from each revolving fund established by Article 9 of the Town of Reading General Bylaw pursuant to Section 53E½ of Chapter 44 of the Massachusetts General Laws for the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2024; and (2) amend Section 6.5.2 of the General Bylaw, establishing the Inspection Revolving Fund, as shown below, with the deletions being in bold and struck through:

6.5.2 Inspection Revolving Fund

Funds held in the Inspection Revolving Fund shall be used for legal costs, oversight and inspection, plan review, property appraisals and appeals, public services general management, pedestrian safety improvements, records archiving, and other costs related to building, plumbing, wiring, gas, and other permits required for large construction projects and shall be expended by the Town Manager. Receipts credited to this fund shall include building, plumbing, wiring, gas and other permit fees for Johnson Woods, Eaton Lakeview (23-25 Lakeview Avenue and 128 Eaton Street), 258 Main Street, ~~**531 Main Street (Chronicle 40R)**~~, ~~**18-20 Woburn Street (40R)**~~, 6-16 Chute Street (Green Tomato), 25 Haven Street (Rite Aid), ~~**413 Main Street (McDonald's)**~~, ~~**431 Main Street (Chase Bank)**~~, and 459 Main Street (128 Tire) developments.

Or take any other action with respect thereto.

Select Board

Background:

Revolving Account	Spending Authority	Revenue Source	Allowed Expenses	Expenditure Limits	Year End Balance
Conservation Commission Consulting Fees	Conservation Commission	Fees as provided for in Reading General Bylaws Section 5.7, Wetlands Protection	Consulting and engineering services for the review of designs and engineering work for	\$25,000	Available for expenditure next year

			the protection of wetlands.		
Inspection Revolving Fund	Town Manager	Building, Plumbing, Wiring, Gas and other permits for the projects listed in the Article.	Legal, oversight and inspection, plan review, initial property appraisals and appeals, Public Services planning and general management, curb, sidewalks and pedestrian safety improvements, records archiving and other project related costs.	\$250,000	Available for expenditure next year
Public Health Clinics and Services	Board of Health	Clinic fees, charges and third-party reimbursements	Materials and costs associated with clinics and public health programs	\$25,000	Available for expenditure next year
Library Fines and Fees	Library Director and Trustees	Charges for lost or damaged Library materials and fees from printing, faxing or similar supplementary fee-based services.	Acquire Library materials to replace lost or damaged items, and for the maintenance, upkeep and supplies for supplementary fee-based services	\$15,000	Available for expenditure next year
Mattera Cabin Operating	Facilities Director	Rental Fees	Utilities and all other maintenance and operating expenses	\$10,000	Available for expenditure next year
Community Gardens at Mattera Cabin	Conservation Administrator	Rental and user fees	Utilities and all other maintenance and operating expenses, and project supplies and equipment	\$10,000	Available for expenditure next year
Solid Waste Revolving Fund	Director of Public Works upon the recommendation of the Town Manager	Lease of second barrels and overflow bags,	Offset the cost of curbside trash & recycling collection, disposal of solid waste, replacement totes, and any other costs associated with the administration of the trash and recycling program	\$250,000	Available for expenditure next year
Town Forest	Director of Public Works upon the recommendation	Sale of timber; fees for use of the Town Forest	Planning and Improvements to the Town Forest	\$10,000	Available for expenditure next year

	tion of the Town Forest Committee				
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- **Conservation Consulting Revolving Fund** - These funds are used to receive payments from applicants, hire expert consultants where required, and return the balance to the applicant. The balance in this Fund as of March 2024 is \$33,257.
- **Inspections Revolving Fund** – The balance available as of March 2024 in this fund is \$781,916 and of that total \$175,250 is proposed by the Town Manager as part of the FY24 budget {\$125,250 to support General Admin and Economic Development wages and expenses; and \$50,000 to offset Building Inspections division wages}.
- **Health Clinic Revolving Fund** - The Reading Health Division contracts for third party payments for a number of immunizations. The funds are used to augment the influenza vaccine supply from the State Department of Public Health to insure vaccine for the homebound clients and first responders. The Division also uses these funds for materials for other screening clinics. Clinic client fees are also deposited into this fund to offset vaccine and clinical supply costs. The balance available as of March 2024 in this fund is \$16,663. The State has been cutting back on the free flu and other vaccines to be distributed to cities and towns, and the Town therefore needs to purchase extra doses. The necessary amounts used for clinic vaccine, supplies and staff salaries related to the clinics each year directly from the revolving fund is therefore approximately \$25,000.
- **Library Fines and Fees Fund** – The balance available as of March 2024 in this fund is \$15,837. The added flexibility in use of this fund approved by Annual Town Meeting two years ago has been helpful.
- **Mattera Cabin Operating Fund** – Some of the use of the Cabin is revenue generating, and this Article allows those revenues to be used directly for the operating expenses of the cabin. The balance available as of March 2024 in this fund is \$0. In response to a previous instructional motion by Town Meeting, the Town Manager moved the responsibility for both the Mattera Cabin and Cemetery garage to the Facilities department.
- **Community Gardens at Mattera Cabin Operating Fund** – This fund was created at Annual Town Meeting in April 2022. This new revolving fund is proposed to provide a mechanism for the Conservation Commission to generate revenue (e.g., fees from the gardeners) and expend it on utilities, other maintenance as well as operating expenses, equipment, and supplies. The Community Garden continues to grow and attract regional support. This year the Community Garden received \$73,500 in external grants towards the expansion of the garden into Phase 2. The balance available as of March 2024 in this fund is \$2,188.
- **Solid Waste Revolving Fund** was created in 2023. The purpose is to offset the cost of curbside trash and recycling collection, disposal of solid waste, replacement totes, and any other costs associated with the administration of the trash and recycling program. The balance available as of March 2024 in this fund is \$0.

- **Town Forest Revolving Fund** was created in 2011. The purpose is to allow revenues from controlled timber harvesting and permit fees to then be spent by the DPW Director upon the recommendation of the Town Forest Committee, on improvements to the Town Forest. The Town Forest Committee has had a forest stewardship plan created (through a grant) to make recommendations on forest management including controlled timber harvesting. The balance available as of March 2024 in this fund is \$0.

Finance Committee Report: At their meeting on March __, 2024, the Finance Committee voted __ to recommend this Article to Town Meeting.

Bylaw Committee Report: At their meeting on March __, 2024, the Bylaw Committee voted __ to recommend this Article to Town Meeting.

ARTICLE 12 To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate, transfer from available funds, borrow or otherwise provide a sum or sums of money for the operation of the Town and its government for Fiscal Year 2025 - beginning July 1, 2024, or take any other action with respect thereto.

Finance Committee

Background: Please see the Budget pages after this Warrant Report, which includes full details of the FY25 Finance Committee budget.

Finance Committee report: Please see the FY25 Spending Scorecard for the votes of the Finance Committee on line items in the FY25 budget. The Finance Committee recommends the subject matter of Article 11 as explained by these votes at their meeting on March __, 2024.

Bylaw Committee Report: No Report.

ARTICLE 13 To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate, transfer from available funds, or otherwise provide a sum or sums of money for the purpose of developing a zoning plan compliant with the requirements of G. L. c.40A, §3A, so called the "MBTA Communities Act", including the hiring of consultants, the preparation of plan documents, and the distribution of relevant information, and all related expenses incidental thereto and necessary in connection therewith, said sum to be expended under the direction of the Town Manager, or take any other action with respect thereto.

Select Board

Background: Due to the change in nature of the MBTA Communities process, the Town is now facing many more months of engagement, research, and concept building. To aid with this endeavor we request \$75,000 in funding for Planning and Consultant Support from Town Meeting.

If approved we would be able to pair this with our current grant award to conduct town-wide mailers, develop engagement material, planning design work, and other needed resources.

Finance Committee report: At their meeting on March __, 2024, the Finance Committee voted __ to recommend this Article to Town Meeting.

Bylaw Committee Report: No Report.

ARTICLE 14 To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate, borrow, transfer from available funds or otherwise provide a sum or sums of money to pay the costs of infrastructure improvements to the Haven Street Infrastructure Project, including replacement of roadway, sidewalks, and related improvements, including the payment of any and all other costs incidental and related thereto, said sum to be expended under the direction of the Town Manager; and, for the purpose of meeting such appropriation, authorize the Town Treasurer, with the approval of the Select Board, to borrow said sum in accordance with G.L. c. 44, §7(1), or any other enabling authority, or take any other action with respect thereto.

Select Board

Background: Since the onset of the Downtown Smart Growth District, the downtown has welcomed multiple redevelopment projects. One area where the Town has seen significant development has been Haven Street. In order to accommodate this growth, the Town has invested in an extensive utility improvement plan. Additionally, the need has risen to revitalize the Haven Street streetscape for better access for both vehicles and pedestrians. The goal would also be to activate the street to help improve economic growth with improved lighting and amenities to support local businesses. The project would focus on Haven Street (Main St. to High St.) and High Street (Washington St. Woburn St.), with potential improvements to side street approaches and adjacent parking lots as funding allows.

In 2019, the Town hired Beta Group, Inc. to develop a 25% conceptual plan for Haven Street. This conceptual plan included a full topographic survey, traffic analysis, and the 25% design. Beta Group was instrumental in the Main Street improvements and was asked to extend their design and input from Main Street to the Haven Street corridor. During the initial phase of the design, staff input was compiled and incorporated into a functioning conceptual plan. In 2020 Beta Group provided an engineering budget which estimated the reconstruction of Haven Street to be approximately \$7M. Beta Group also extended costs for the adjacent streets and the Town owned Upper Haven parking lot.

At the November 2022 Subsequent Town Meeting, members voted to approve \$750,000 in design funds. Subsequently, Beta Group was tasked with finalizing the design and bid documents in addition to assisting the Town in pursuit of a Mass Works grant. In September 2023, the State awarded Reading \$2.6 million from the Mass Works Infrastructure Program to support construction of this Project. Furthermore, the Town is hopeful that Governor Healey will bond funds under Bond Bill (H5151), which would provide Reading with an additional \$3.75M. Until the bond bill funds are officially granted to the Town, we are expecting to borrow the difference.

The proposed article is requesting Town Meeting to authorize a total project of \$6.4M. This is expected to cover construction cost for High Street (Washington St. to Woburn St.) and Haven Street (Main St. to High St.).

Finance Committee Report: At their meeting on March __, 2024, the Finance Committee voted __ to recommend this Article to Town Meeting.

Bylaw Committee Report: No Report.

ARTICLE 15 To see if the Town will vote to authorize the Select Board to grant an easement to the Reading Municipal Light Department to install, construct, reconstruct, repair, replace, add to, inspect, maintain, and operate for the transmission of high and low voltage electric current and for the transmission of intelligence, overhead lines and all necessary equipment and appurtenances thereto, and an underground electric distribution system consisting of lines of buried wires and cables and lines of wires and cables installed in underground conduits, together with all equipment and appurtenances thereto for the transmission of intelligence and for the furnishing of electric service, on a portion of 160 Hopkins Street (Assessor's Parcel 8-0061), or take any other action with respect thereto.

Select Board

Background: RMLD has a current license agreement with the Town of Reading. Because the land is used to feed the pump station and many residents on Gazebo Circle, RMLD needs to supply electrical services to the station. RMLD is submitting a formal Easement request for the Town's consideration and signature.

Finance Committee Report: No Report.

Bylaw Committee Report: No Report.

ARTICLE 16 To see if the Town will vote, pursuant to Section 2-6 of the Reading Home Rule Charter, to declare the seats of certain Town Meeting Members to be vacant and remove certain described persons from their position as Town Meeting Members for failure to take the oath of office within 30 days following the notice of election or for failure to attend one-half or more of the Town Meeting sessions during the previous year, or take any other action with respect thereto.

Select Board

Background:

Town Meeting Members Attendance
2024 Annual Town Meeting – Article 16

Total of 2 Town Meetings resulting in 5 evenings of attendance

Listed below are those who attended 1 evening or less

Precinct Vote

Precinct	First Name	Middle	Last Name	Term	Total	Precinct Vote	Remain on Town Meeting	Remove from Town Meeting
3	Richard	P	Bova	2026	0			
3	Richard	W	Eagleston	2026	0			

3 Mark S Giardina 2026 1

58 Town Meeting Members had perfect attendance in 2023

Remove from List or Remain on the List:

Town Meeting Members that have low attendance are added to the list to be removed from Town Meeting.

If you vote to leave the name on the list, they are removed from Town Meeting.

If you vote to remove the name from the list, they remain on Town Meeting.

Finance Committee Report: No Report.

Bylaw Committee Report: No Report.

and you are directed to serve this Warrant by posting an attested copy thereof in at least one (1) public place in each precinct of the Town not less than fourteen (14) days prior to April 22, 2024, or providing in a manner such as electronic submission, holding for pickup or mailing, an attested copy of said Warrant to each Town Meeting Member.

Hereof fail not and make due return of this Warrant with your doings thereon to the Town Clerk at or before the time appointed for said meeting.

Given under our hands this ____th day of _____, 2024.

Mark L. Dockser, Vice Chair

Karen Gately Herrick, Secretary

Carlo Bacci

Chris Haley

SELECT BOARD OF READING

, Constable



Town of Reading Meeting Minutes

2016-09-22 LAG

Board - Committee - Commission - Council:

Finance Committee

Date: 2024-03-06

Time: 7:00 PM

Building: Reading Town Hall

Location: Select Board Meeting Room

Address: 16 Lowell Street

Session: Open Session

Purpose: General Business

Version: Draft

Attendees: **Members - Present:**

Chair Ed Ross, Vice Chair Joe Carnahan, Geoffrey Coram, Endri Kume, Joe McDonagh, Marianne McLaughlin-Downing, Emily Sisson, John Sullivan, Mark Zarrow

Members - Not Present:

Others Present:

Acting Town Manager Matt Kraunelis, Chief Financial Officer Sharon Angstrom (remote), Director of Operations Jayne Wellman, Human Resources Director Sean Donahue, Town Clerk Laura Gemme, Chief Technology Officer Kevin Furilla, Community Development Director Andrew MacNichol (remote), Community Services Director Jenna Fiorente, Public Health Director Ade Solarin, Fire Chief Greg Burns, Assistant Fire Chief Rick Nelson, Deputy Police Chief Christine Amendola (remote), Facilities Director Joe Huggins (remote), Karen Gately Herrick (remote)

Minutes Respectfully Submitted By: Jacquelyn LaVerde

Topics of Discussion:

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

Chair Ed Ross called the meeting to order at 7:00 pm.

Liaison Reports

Marianne Downing shared that Select Board incumbent Chris Haley was re-elected by 498 votes in yesterday's election.

Geoffrey Coram shared that Sarah McLaughlin and Shawn Brandt were both re-elected to the School Committee.

Ed Ross shared updates from the Killam School Building Committee. The designer, Lavallee Brensinger Architects (LBA), hosted a sustainability session last Thursday, where they reviewed their process, introduced their sustainability expert, and talked about the sustainability options available to the district. The group also launched a project website: killamschool.com.

Budget Presentations: FY25 Town Manager Recommended Budget & Town Departments:

Town Accountant Revenue, Financial Forecast, Spending Scorecard, Shared Costs:

Chief Financial Officer Sharon Angstrom reviewed the information that she presented at the first Financial Forum in the fall, and changes that have been made since that forum. Property taxes increase 1.8% because excluded debt for the Wood End School and High School will be paid off. Local revenues increased 16.3%, state aid increased 2.5 %, transfers increased 3.7%, and free cash increased 29.9%. In the share of the budget, property taxes account for 72%, Local revenues 9%, state aid 13%, transfers 4%, and 3% from free cash. Actual new growth increased for several years, but decreased in FY23 likely due to inflation.

Financial forecast revenues increase 3.14% before free cash and increase overall 3.87%. Accommodated costs increased 3.2%. Projected interest earnings were increased from \$500,000 to \$1.99 million, as interest returns are still high, to absorb the increase in the retirement assessment.

On the Spending Scorecard, shared costs are up 2.3%, which includes benefits, capital, debt service, vocational schools, and FINCOM reserves. Other accommodated costs, such as casualty and liability insurance, utilities, and fuel, are included in department budgets. The overall operating budget has increased 4.5%. The school department budget is increased 4.3% due to accommodated costs for special education. The grand total for the operating budget from the General Fund is \$124,060,725.

Shared costs are up 2.3%: benefits are up 8.1%, capital is up 3.3%, debt has a 20.6% reduction due to excluded debt for the Library project being paid off, vocational schools are up 21.7% due to the extra \$160,000 for capital for the new building, and FINCOM reserves are level funded.

For benefits, the retirement pension assessment increases 16.8%. Due to a 5.65% increase in health insurance for next year, Other Post Employment Benefits (OPEB) is reduced 33.3% to \$200,000 to ensure there is enough for health insurance.

Proposed capital spending is \$3,035,000 and includes: \$50,000 for the Permanent Building Committee, \$85,000 for a bobcat for Facilities, \$10,000 for telephone upgrades at the schools, \$125,000 for school technology projects, \$45,000 for a driver's ed vehicle, \$100,000 for Town technology projects, \$455,000 for computer aided dispatch, \$50,000 for an unmarked Police vehicle, \$45,000 for a cemetery passenger car, \$80,000 for a Highway pickup truck, \$250,000 for a Public Works blower unit, \$50,000 for fence improvements, \$215,000 for Birch Meadow School parking lot and walkway improvements, \$100,000 for field, playground and court improvements, \$100,000 for the rock wall repair program, \$50,000 for parking lot improvements, \$100,000 for sidewalk, curb, and pedestrian safety improvements, \$100,000 for skim coating, \$600,000 to pave Lowell Street, and \$425,000 for road paving.

Karen Gately Herrick suggested eliminating the \$50,000 for the Permanent Building Committee (PBC). Ms. Angstrom stated that the funds are for unforeseen projects for the PBC. The PBC does not always use all the funds, but they have used them in the past, though she would not mind changing the amount.

Mr. Zarrow asked what the \$215,000 is for Birch Meadow. Mr. Kraunelis stated that he would get the definitive answer and report back to the Committee.

Administrative Services:

Operations:

Operations Director Jayne Wellman reviewed the Operations and Town Manager's budget. Operations is a level services budget, there is no new staffing, and expenses increase for postage due to elections. Some costs are reimbursable, but presented for full transparency. In the Town Manager's Office budget, there is no change in FTEs, and there is a 10% increase in property & casualty insurance. Ms. Wellman stated that she is watching insurance costs closely. The increases are not driven by the Town's loss ratios, rather what

is happening in the property and casualty market such as convective storms, aging infrastructure, and volatility in the insurance market.

Joe Carnahan asked if the Town Manager Reserve fund and Select Board funds are usually spent. Ms. Wellman and Acting Town Manager Matt Kraunelis explained that the Select Board reserve fund used to be allocated to a few different committees, but they would not always spend them. The previous Town Manager, Bob LeLacheur, combined those costs and asked those committees to come to the Select Board to request those funds. The Town Manager Reserve Fund is used at the discretion of the Town Manager to cover unanticipated expenses.

Human Resources:

Human Resources Director Sean Donahue explained that the division consists of three employees, though the budget only lists two employees, as support staff is part of the Operations budget. Salary increases are in line with the compensation plan. Expenses are level funded. The division is currently working with the Technology Department to update its application tracking system. However, there might be a request in the future for an updated system.

Town Clerk/Elections:

Town Clerk Laura Gemme reviewed the Town Clerk and Elections budget. The Town Clerk budget is level funded with a slight increase in salaries. The Town Clerk's office is finally fully staffed.

With Elections, there is an increase due to the Presidential election. Election costs will increase going forward due to voting by mail, largely due to postage. For any state elections, postage is reimbursable from the state, but not for the local elections.

Ms. Gemme thanked all the volunteers who helped make the elections successful.

Technology:

Chief Technology Officer Kevin Furilla presented the Technology budget. The Technology Department is fully staffed with five full-time employees. Percentages for expense line items appear to have significant changes, as Mr. Furilla stated that he recategorized several things. The overall Technology budget increases 3.7%.

Public Services:

Community Development:

Community Development Director Andrew MacNichol presented the Community Services budget. He noted that there were no unexpected changes or increases, just a few slight increases in salaries. The department has seven full-time staff and six part-time staff. Expenses stayed level with no increases. Most projects are done internally. The department tries to get grants to match or fund planning and construction projects.

Community Services:

Community Services Director Jenna Fiorente reviewed the Community Services budget, which consists of three divisions: Recreation, Elder & Human Services, and Veterans' Services. There are ten full-time staff, and several part-time and seasonal employees. Most of the part-time and seasonal employees work for Recreation, and are funded through the Recreation revolving fund. The number of residents serviced by the department grows each year, and the services provided by the department are highly valued. Ms. Fiorente noted that a future request will be for a therapeutic recreation specialist to provide more inclusive programming.

Public Safety:

Public Health:

Health Director Ade Solarin provided an overview of the Public Health budget. The Health Department is a small department with a small budget and four full-time employees and one part-time seasonal employee. There are also independent contractors such as the

Animal Control Officer, and Tobacco Control Coordinator. The salary budget is consistent with FY25 salary projections, which includes a 1.25% cost of living adjustment (COLA), a 2.35% step increase for non-union non-management employees, and a 2.5% step increase for non-union management employees. To keep up with the increased demand, the Health Director position was recently reclassified as a forty-hour-per-week salaried position, which is reflected in this budget. There is \$8,200 added to the Support Staff line item for the new part-time Weights and Measures Inspector, as the state is no longer providing those inspections. There is a \$1,500 increase to supplement the overtime line item to cover overtime pay for inspection and work-related activities performed outside of working hours. In the expenses budget, there is a \$10,000 reduction to the Animal Disposal line item, as \$25,000 for Animal Control was just reassigned to Health from the Police Department. There was also a \$4,000 line item transfer from DPW for sharps disposal. There is also a \$500 requested increase for supplies, and a \$1,000 increase for mileage reimbursement and travel expenses. Overall, there is a \$5,500 decrease in expenses, and a \$28,375 increase in salaries, with a total net budget increase of 5.3% in the amount of \$22,875.

Fire/EMS:

Fire Chief Greg Burns was joined by new Assistant Fire Chief Rick Nelson, and presented the FY25 budget for the Fire Department. The Fire Department is responsible for four major functions: Fire Prevention, Fire Suppression, Emergency Medical Systems, and Emergency Management. There is no proposed increase in staffing for the FY25 budget. There are grants in progress including: \$1,000 SAFE grant for educating school children in fire safety, \$2,200 senior safe grant, \$14,110 for firefighter safety equipment which will be used to outfit new firefighters, and a \$6,500 planning grant used to purchase specialized equipment to put out electric vehicle fires. The department received notification that MEMA approved a \$418,191 reimbursement for the Town's response to COVID, which brings the total COVID reimbursement from FEMA to \$501,000. The FY25 budget increase is 4.1% over FY24. Expenses increase 1.1% and wages increase 4.3%. The increase in salaries is largely driven by the pay and class study for non-union employees, and collective bargaining agreements with unions. There is a \$2,300 increase in expenses driven by EMS costs and service contracts.

Police/Coalition/Dispatch:

Deputy Police Chief Christine Amendola presented the budget for the Police Department, Coalition for Prevention and Support, and Dispatch. Wages for the Police Department have increased 4.6% due to union contracts step increases and COLA, as well as non-union pay and class adjustments. The department is fully staff with 46 police officers. Expenses are level funded.

The Coalition salaries increased 3.5% based on the pay and class study. There are no grants funding salaries. Expenses decrease 35.5%, as programs will be funded with the opioid settlement money.

Salary increases for Dispatch were based on the pay and class study for the Head Dispatcher who is non-union, and a 5.5% increase for union contracts steps and COLAs. An E-911 grant for \$65,000 enabled a decrease in requested funding for overtime. Also, as of today, Dispatch is fully staffed. Expenses were level-funded.

Town Department budget presentations will continue at the next meeting with Finance, Public Works and Enterprise Funds, Library, and Facilities.

Discussion and Possible Vote on Ex-Officio FINCOM Member for Ad Hoc Community Preservation Act Study Committee:

Mr. Ross shared the charge and composition of the Ad Hoc Community Preservation Act Study Committee, which includes one ex-officio member of the Finance Committee, and asked if any members were interested in being the FINCOM designee. Joe Carnahan stated that he is interested. Marianne Downing requested that Mr. Carnahan find out about the true cost to residents, and whether the additional tax would be on the rate with debt exclusions, or the rate without debt exclusions.

On a motion by Emily Sisson, seconded by Endri Kume, the Finance Committee voted unanimously 9-0-0 to appoint Joe Carnahan as the ex-officio Finance Committee member to the Ad Hoc Community Preservation Act Study Committee.

Future Agendas:

Mr. Ross noted that the Committee is scheduled to meet next week and the week after, but might be able to finish everything and vote on the budget and warrant articles next week.

Approval of Prior Meeting Minutes:

On a motion by Emily Sisson, seconded by Mark Zarrow, the Finance Committee voted unanimously 9-0-0 to approve the meeting minutes of February 28, 2024 as presented.

On a motion by Emily Sisson, seconded by Joe Carnahan, the Finance Committee voted unanimously 9-0-0 to adjourn at 9:25 pm.