

Town of Holliston
Finance Committee
Meeting Minutes
February 7, 2023

Video Recording of Meeting:

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1BprLJn13WRHkoT3TGPYKRPD9T5fYIhcA/view>

The meeting was held remotely under the guidelines that were issued because of the emergency caused by COVID-19 virus. All votes taken during this meeting were done as a roll call vote.

Dr. Szajda called the Finance Committee to order at 7:00 p.m. In attendance were Chairperson Ken Szajda, Vice Chairman Daniel Alfred, Michelle Zeamer, Vincent Murphy, Julie Winston and Mark Whittaker.

Dr. Szajda and Mr. Robinson will meet later on this week to iron out the whole process of the minutes.

The group discussed the Reserve Fund transfer for the AC unit for the equipment in the Technology office. Dr. Szajda pointed out that the quote was for \$11K+ and the request was for \$12K.. Dr. Szajda then said he would entertain a motion to approve the Reserve Fund transfer of \$12K to go to the Building and Grounds, Organization #01422, Object #52400. So moved by Mr. Murphy and seconded by Mr. Whittaker.

Conservation Commission budget was presented by Ryan Clapp. The bulk of the budget is in Administrative Salaries, in which he proposed a 3.5% increase based on the Town Administrator's recommendation. Being a department of only one, there are no clerical salaries and also no longevity that he is eligible for. Professional Services are generally reserved for legal counsel. For FY23 they have not yet needed to deposit into this fund. Communications, which is for the phone bill of approximately \$40/month as well as postage, has not been used very much in the past year.. We have been pushing for the applicants to come in to pick up the permits when they are ready as opposed to mailing them out certified mail. Office Supplies, in the past \$100 has roughly covered the operating expenses for that. He is proposing to bump it up to \$150 since the office chair is in desperate need of replacement. Educational Supplies, this line was dissolved and incorporated into the Professional Development line. Professional Development covers the attendance of the Conservation Commission and himself at various webinars, meetings and other professional development opportunities. He has a conference coming up next month that he will be attending with a typical cost of \$125. The Professional Development line also covers other membership dues to the Massachusetts Association of Conservation Commissions which amount to \$700. They are proposing a 2% increase this year which is why there is an increase there. They have a Wetlands Protection Revolving account and have had revenues roughly matching the expenses out of that account. The account can be used for administering and enforcing the Wetlands Protection Act. They also have the Wetlands By-law Revolving account, which has Revenues of \$8,825 thus far into FY23. So similar to the Wetlands Protection Revolving account this line item also can be used for anything and

everything related to enforcing and administering Holliston Wetlands and Protection By-laws. Next is Conservation Trust Fund with revenue of \$35 so far for FY23. This is not revenue by tax dollars; this is a donation based account. So the revenues of that account are strictly limited. The only reason for the high balance in the account of \$80K is from a grant from Mass Audubon Society several years ago.

Council on Aging budget is being presented by Lisa Borchetta. There has been an increase in Administrative salaries based on the Town Administrator's recommendation. The Administrative Assistant salaries are both the Outreach and Transportation Coordinator and the Assistant Director. They are in the process of searching for an Assistant Director so there are some possible adjustments there. The regular salaries cover the benefits for the drivers, so that line has remained the same. Clerical salaries is for the part time administrative assistant and the hours were shifted a little and have now gone down. There is no longevity or bonuses for 2024 so the request is for \$223,146 for the personal services segment of the budget. The utilities line has an increase due to the increased cost for electricity. These figures were given to us by facilities for what the anticipated costs will be. Gas will stay the same as they have been able to lock in that price. Buildings and grounds maintenance is for some painting that needs to be done. There was discussion about installation of panic buttons for the staff since the buildings are on the far side of town. There are several entrances into the building and it is hard to monitor all of them. There was no increase to Professional Services and for Communications there was just a slight increase based on the anticipation that the phone will be going up a little bit. Office Supplies remain the same and Vehicle Supplies also remain the same. Professional Development has also remained level so the overall request is for \$287,025. It has been a good year for the center. They got an additional grant to cover their new taxi grant services. They had applied for and received the grant quite a while ago and just received the check in the account a couple weeks ago. This increases their ability to give services to bring people to hospitals in Boston and Worcester and other local areas. They also have a partnership with Habitat for Humanity for home repairs. They have 2 projects that are done or near completion and another about 3/4s of the way done. Habitat for Humanity has agreed that on the jobs that go over the \$20K they can spend a \$5K buffer for the overages. Further discussion ensued about the Senior Safe Program with the Fire Department. Members of the Finance Committee asked some questions about the revenues and other things and a short discussion followed.

John Love Spoke about the Zoning Board of Appeals budget. He stated it was pretty much flat across. Clerical Support is a portion of Karen Sherman, the Town Planner's time who attends their meetings and puts together our minutes and takes care of the people coming in at town hall. There was agreement with the Planning Board to allocate a portion of her time to cover this as well. Diane Lynch has roughly 10 hours a month of her time to put together the minutes and send things out etc. That is the biggest line item with the budget. Professional Services line item covers the board's costs in the event that they need to bring in a professional consultant on any of their hearings. The Office Supplies & Communications line is for the phones and paper and pencils and are rather small numbers. Professional Development is for attending some training classes that are offered through the state and agencies like that.

Jaclyn Winter presented the Youth and Family Services budget. There are two administrative salary lines that cover 5 staff members. They have a full time clinician and also have an ARPA

funded part time position. They utilize Masters in Social Work students to help fill in the gaps as well. That makes up about 89% of their overall budget, those personal services. Professional Services has a \$620 increase which has to do with the Clinical Consultant who has raised rates. The clinical consultant has remained steadfast in her rates through the course of the pandemic and they knew the rates would increase soon. Also included in that line item is the cost of their electronic medical record system that provides a streamlined documentation system for their clinicians. The Communications line has a \$500 increase. Office Supplies includes an increase because they are running more support programs in the community. Lengthy discussion followed about the work they do with the families and the community as well as the programs that are being run within the schools as well as the DA's office.

Building Inspector budget was presented by Mark Kaferlain. Personnel, Administrative Salaries, Clerical Salaries is the Office Manager and the floating position between them and the Board of Health which is Ann Adams. Inspector salaries is the new position created last year. The department had a hard time filling the position so they had to shorten the hours and pay more per hour and they were able to get Bonnie to commit to 22.5 hours per week. They put in an extra 120 hours to cover 10 hours per month for as needed time so that comes to around \$50K which is less than what was approved last year, Vehicle Maintenance will be transferred to James Keast's Facilities budget. The electric vehicles for the Building Inspector and the Assessor will be housed along with Mr. Keast's vehicle that are parked at Town Hall. Professional Services has been the same and covers expenses outside what is covered with Town Counsel Serving people papers and things like that. Communications – this is all our phones and postage, same as last year. Computer license and software for online permitting has gone up \$900. Additional money in communications is to cover increases for handling electronic payments. Office Supplies are the same and Professional Development is the same as last year. He explained that they have new energy codes coming which will be effective in August. Purchase of Equipment he left the same because still trying to figure out how Bob fits in the office and they have rearranged some guys and he already had to get a phone and new phone line for him. A discussion followed regarding the Revolving Account Revenues and Expenses and the current balances in them.

Planning Board was presented by Karen Sherman. This is a personnel heavy budget. Clerical position back at Step 1 as of August, decrease in clerical. Longevity belongs to Ms. Sherman. Purchased Services included some increases to meet the goals on the performance reviews and one of the increases is to provide the land use departments with better tools. They need to improve the zoning maps making it parcel based so that all departments can just click on an address and have the zoning readily available. Communications are sort of a moving target in terms of legal ads and our requirements under general law requirements of notice to the public. The Planning Board does things differently than the Conservation Commission. There were discussions regarding additional mail requirements and certified mail cost increases. Office Supplies were static. Professional Development is for the planner and the planning board now that training workshops are moving back to in-person.

Board of Health, Scott Moles presented the budget. He stated it is straightforward, increase are in personnel, being the administrative salaries of himself and the 2 clerical positions and includes a step increase and a merit increase. The longevity changed as Lisa Deering came off and Mr. Moles has achieved his 5 years, so it will go up an extra \$50. Inspectors account for the majority

of the change in the budget, with everything else being level. The only change in the budget is salaries.

Town Administrator updates – Mr. Ahern will look into Mr. Alfred's question about fixing the longevity and how it is paid and handled. The Public Safety budget will take a holistic look at what the police department is asking for and what the fire department is asking for in the context of our transition for public safety dispatching. Additionally, he sent it out as an attachment to the Finance Committee, but he also put it in the Facilities budget. This includes a summary of every department that has a stand-alone facility related to it (Library, Council on Aging, Highway, Water, Town Hall, 1750 Washington) and a summary of everything we are looking at for electricity rates, which is substantial. A lengthy discussion followed with regard to the electricity rates and how it will affect the town.

The two things that went through last night at the Select Board meeting that were of importance: Select Board signed the pilot agreement for the private solar project on Marshall Street, now known as 39 Marshall Street. So that will be \$147K a year in payment in lieu of taxes and that half a year impacts FY23 and the full year of \$147K is now built into the revenue model for FY24. FY24 Revenue model does not include the Town's solar project, the system that will sit atop the landfill on Marshall Street. Lengthy discussion followed with regard to the agreement and everything about it and the funds that will be received from it.

Liaison updates – Mr. Alfred, Ms. Zeamer and Mr. Robinson had a working group meeting with members of the School Committee, School Staff, Mr. Ahern and Mr. Cronin from the Select Board. They had a productive conversation with Mr. Cronin about going back to the Select Board with a plan to work on a memo containing details around what the Select Board was looking for exactly for additional projects. Mr. Cronin, Mr. Ahern and Mr. Heymanns had a conversation about giving Mr. Cronin the information he needs for the memo so Select Board can consider at one of their future meetings and then present to the group.

Mr. Alfred made a motion to adjourn and was seconded by Mr. Whittaker. It was Voted 6-0 to adjourn at 8:15 p.m.