

Event Details

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Finance Committee - Time change from original posting

Tuesday, March 26, 2024

Date: March 26, 2024

Time: 6:30 PM

Location: Community Meeting Room

Address: Douglas Municipal Center
29 Depot St.
Douglas, MA 01516

Douglas Finance Committee Agenda – REVISED TIME

Town Hall, Community Room

Depot Street, Douglas MA

March 26, 2024

6:30 p.m.

Call to order

Budget presentations:

Capital Improvement

Water/Sewer

Community Development

Town administrator report: budget overview, process, etc.

FinCom budget discussion: warrant articles, other topics in preparation for the
Public Hearing of April 9

Upcoming schedule:

April 9: public hearing regarding the warrant for the town meeting

Town meeting is May 6, 2024

Open session for topics not reasonably anticipated 48 hours in advance

Adjournment



CONTACT

The Town of Douglas

Municipal Center

29 Depot Street

Douglas, MA 01516

[Contact Us](#)

FINANCE COMMITTEE
TUESDAY, MARCH 26, 2024
COMMUNITY ROOM

Attendance: Chair Dick Vandenberg, Vice chair Sandy Kuipers, Howard D'Amico, Lynne Mussulli, Ryan Hogan, Mike Hutnak

Absent: Carol Gogolinski, Heather Morin (both excused)

Dick Vandenberg called the meeting to order at 6:34 pm.

1. (0:50 TS) Budget Presentations:
 - a. Capital Improvement – Mike Fitzpatrick, chairman of the Capital Committee, to present the budget to Fin Com, the following are for Special Town Meeting.
 1. Roadway paving repairs part of Northeast Main Street project
 2. EV Charging stations replacement, the approval from the state has been made.
 3. Post Office parking lot, the estimates came in much higher than originally appropriated.
 4. Highway dump truck with plow and sander, cost of these are now up to \$285k
 5. School Security system has \$225k ARPA fund money designated to this and after the design they found there were things missing and they reallocated the oil tank money to cover the security project.
 6. Cable broadcast server, the money will come out of the \$50k voted for the cable studio which came out of the cable funds that they are not pursuing any longer.

The following are for FY25 Annual Town Meeting:

1. Article 10 - Chapter 90 Road paving match for \$360k which would give them about \$720k.
2. Post Office HVAC unit replacement this went up \$5k from last year and now is around \$65k.
3. Municipal Center HVAC unit replacement for the first floor \$130k.
4. Post Office painting per the contract for every five years estimated at \$60k.
5. Highway department loader with plow is up to \$315k.
6. Highway dump truck with plow and sander for \$285k
7. Highway department lawn mowers.
8. Transfer to the capital stabilization account for the purchase of the large apparatus at the fire department for \$100k.
9. Replacement of Highway department barn/building.

The Capital Five-year plan for FY26, 27, & 28 are the same and they had to create FY29 and put the tanker truck on FY29 and they used the amount of the last truck for a place holder of \$750k, and by FY29 they should have about \$600k in the stabilization account for that. Mr. Fitzpatrick has asked the department heads to give an updated list of the capital items every January. They discussed the highway barn project and Mr. Wojcik stated that they really need to get something on the town meeting for November for this. Mr. Wojcik was not comfortable with what the design had come back at and they need to basically cut it in half so that is what they have been working on to get this project to what the town needs and can afford.

(23:15 TS) Ryan Hogan had to leave the meeting and Mike Hutnak joined the meeting.

- b. (23:25 TS) Water/Sewer – Bob Sullivan, systems manager for the water/sewer department. Mr. Sullivan went through his budget in detail with the Committee and the increases and reason for the increases. They talked about the water/sewer retained earnings and the fees for water/sewer connections. Jeanne Lovett stated that the retained earnings that the Department of Revenue approved was \$1,230,511.00, and the debt will roll off this year.
- c. (48:30 TS) Community Development – Matt Benoit the Community Development Director to go through the Annual Town Meeting articles.
 - 1. Article 13 - Mr. Benoit stated that the Conservation Commission voted unanimously to support the citizen's petition. This is to increase the enforcement of the stormwater for the wetland's regulations for the general bylaws from \$200 to \$300.
 - 2. Article 14 – Zoning Amendment Solar bylaw – This was passed over at the Town Meeting in November. This is the recommended changes by the Attorney General after the town's solar bylaw had already passed two falls ago.
 - 3. Article 15 – Transfer of land ownership from the Town of Douglas to the Conservation Commission which was taken in tax title. This was identified in the Master Plan and the town may have an opportunity to gain access to the land locked property in the near future.
 - 4. Article 16 – This is to approve the adoption of a new stormwater bylaw, to allow the Conservation Commission to govern stormwater for clearing of anything over an acre. This bylaw was drafted by the town's MS4 consultant and reviewed by Town Counsel.
 - 5. Article 21 – Easement at 75 Northwest Main Street to fix a stormwater issue that has been happening over there, the property owner drafted the easement for the town to gain access to be able work there and fix the issue.
 - 6. Article 22 – This engages the town's MS4 (Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System) consultant to keep doing certain mapping, recommendations for infiltrations and infrastructure.
- 2. (1:04:50 TS) Town Administrator's Report: Budget overview, process, etc.

Ms. Lovett distributed the budget for the members to review. Mr. Wojcik spoke about the goal he has had to build the town's reserves for the market for bonded indebtedness the town would get a good credit rating while also creating a balance with using free cash to fund the needs of the town. Mr. Wojcik went over the property and casualty increase and the other large increases that were for police and fire that have recently settled contracts that will be on the warrant. They discussed the highway department new hires and now that John Furno has accepted the 3-year contract as Fire Chief, Adam Furno with no long be acting highway superintendent but promoted to highway superintendent, and what other positions need to be filled for highway. Mr. Wojcik is looking to fill Adam Furno's previous position of Facilities Manager with someone knowledgeable with buildings and to be able to share the position town wide with the school. For the police department they are looking to add a head and a second school resource officer (from within). He is adding a part-time person at the Adult Social Center and agreeing with the library's request to have a larger schedule to be open more hours. Ms. Kuipers feels that the research she did on other town libraries Mr. Snook is not really addressing the issue of availability in his proposal for the new hours, other members countered that the late-night availability is adding to the people that work late and now will have time to get there. Mr. Wojcik will have Justin Snook come in and explain his proposal to the Committee to answer the questions. Mr. Wojcik and the committee members talked about the highway barn and how that is going to be addressed financially for the town. Mr. Wojcik stated that he is going to try and task the designer to think about modular construction and adding on to a building as the

town's needs grow. Ms. Lovett reminded the members about the BVT piece with the assessment and the debt assessment that will be in a special article.

3. (1:36:00 TS) FinCom budget discussion: warrant articles, other topics in preparation for the Public Hearing on April 9.

Bob Minarik talked about his two articles:

1. Article 7 for the special addresses the North Street project additional match, there was a \$529k site readiness grant award and the total is \$750k for design and engineering and the remainder of that is \$100k from a town meeting match from spring or fall of 2022 and also ARPA funds of \$120,700. There was more design than anticipated so they need an additional \$67k to finish the design and engineering of this project. Mr. Minarik is working on writing a MassWorks grant to support the project itself, which is about \$13.5 million, which the max for the grant is \$5 million and the remainder would be picked up by a developer and other federal money. The other article 20 is in the annual that is the town owned property in Uxbridge, in preparation in case it is needed for the Pine project. Ms. Lovett stated that article 19 on the annual will be removed.

Upcoming Meetings: April 9, 2024, and town meeting on May 6, 2024

(1:44:30 TS) Motion to adjourn the meeting made by Lynne Mussulli, 2nd by Mike Hutnak. The vote passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,



Stephenie Gosselin