

## Event Details

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### Finance Committee - Public Hearing

Tuesday, April 9, 2024

**Date:** April 9, 2024

**Time:** 7:00 PM

**Location:** Resource room

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

Douglas Finance Committee  
Agenda

Town Hall, Resource Room  
Depot Street, Douglas MA  
April 9, 2024  
7:00 p.m.

1. Call to order
2. Public Hearing regarding the FY24 and FY 25 Budgets
  - a. Review/vote on all articles for the Special Town Meeting of May 6, 2024
  - b. Review/vote on all articles for the Annual Town Meeting of May 6, 2024 (note Art. 1 includes the text of the FinCom report)
3. Town administrator report
4. FinCom budget discussion: questions or comments in preparation for the annual town meeting
5. Review minutes of February 27, 2024
6. Upcoming meetings:
  - a. May 6, 2024: 6:30 p.m. before the Annual Town Meeting, room 102
  - b. June meeting? Stay tuned
7. Open session for topics not reasonably anticipated 48 hours in advance
8. Adjournment

FINANCE COMMITTEE  
TUESDAY, APRIL 9, 2024  
RESOURCE ROOM

Attendance: Chair Dick Vandenberg, Vice chair Sandy Kuipers, Mike Hutnak, Lynne Mussulli, Heather Morin, Carol Gogolinski

Absent: Ryan Hogan, Howard D'Amico (both excused)

Dick Vandenberg called the meeting to order at 7:04 pm.

1. (0:25 TS) Public Hearing regarding the FY24 and FY 25 Budgets
  - a. Review/vote on all articles for the Special Town Meeting of May 6, 2024  
Article 1 – FY24 Budget transfers and amendments, Jeanne Lovett Finance Director explained where the transfers will come from.  
(2:43 TS) Motion to amend the action taken on article 2 of the annual town meeting of May 1, 2023, by transferring from available the following sums of money as listed in the warrant before you in the fiscal year 2024 budget made by Heather Morin, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Mike Hutnak. All members in favor of recommending to the town meeting article 1 as presented, the vote passed unanimously.
    - Article 2 – Snow & Ice Transfer for \$75k  
(4:20 TS) Motion to transfer from free cash the sum of \$75k for the fiscal year 2024 snow and ice account made by Lynne Mussulli, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Mike Hutnak. The vote passed unanimously.
    - Article 3 – Prior year bills for a total of \$5,639  
(5:40 TS) Motion to recommend the town vote to transfer from free cash \$5,068.07 and from cable receipts reserved \$571.28 for a total of \$5,639.35 made by Sandy Kuipers, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Mike Hutnak. The vote passed unanimously.
    - Article 4 – Transfer from free cash to the Opioid Special Revenue account.  
There was discussion about what this was, and the changes made.  
(8:15 TS) Motion to recommend the town vote to transfer the amount of \$73,365.40 from free cash to the Opioid Special Revenue account made by Heather Morin, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Lynne Mussulli. The vote passed unanimously.
    - Article 5 – Capital Improvement Supplemental budget for a total of \$324,800, Jeanne Lovett spoke briefly about this article and the items in it. Mr. Wojcik spoke about the EV Charger replacement project. There was a discussion about the charging station.  
(20:10 TS) Motion to recommend to the town that they approve the following as submitted by the Capital Improvement Committee for the grand total of \$324,800 made by Heather Morin, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Sandy Kuipers. The vote passed unanimously.
    - Article 6 – Municipal Center oil spill for \$77,680. Adam Furno spoke about the details of what is left on this project.  
(23:20 TS) Motion to recommend to the town to transfer the sum of \$77,680 from free cash to work on expenses related to the municipal center oil spill made by Lynne Mussulli, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Mike Hutnak. The vote passed unanimously.
    - Article 7 – North Street project additional match for \$67k, Bob Minarik Economic Development spoke about the details of this project and the changes needed to the project.



(27:15 TS) Motion to recommend to the town to transfer the sum of \$67k from free cash for the purpose of being able to finish the engineering study for the work on North Street made by Sandy Kuipers, 2<sup>nd</sup> Mike Hutnak. The vote passed unanimously.

b. (27:50 TS) Review/vote on all articles for the Annual Town Meeting of May 6, 2024 (note Art. 1 includes the text of the FinCom report)

- Article 1

Total General Government budget \$2,025,708

Total Public Safety \$4,381,323

Total Public Works \$1,270,130

Total Health & Human Services \$368,434

Total Culture and Recreation \$411,605

Total Education \$17,538,750

Total Insurance and Employee Benefits and Court Judgments \$5,570,584

Total Debt Services \$2,004,878

**Total Budget \$33,571,412**

(39:30 TS) They discussed the Fin Com and the Library budgets in more detail.

(48:05 TS) The Committee agreed by consensus on Article 1.

(49:35 TS) Motion to recommend that the town vote to hear and act upon the report recommendations of the finance committee and further to fix the salaries and compensation of elected officials as presented in the finance committee's FY25 budget recommendations and further to approve a total budget of \$33,571,412, consisting of \$15,629 transferred from the reserve reduction of excluded debt account, \$385k transferred from the ambulance receipts reserved for appropriation, \$10k transferred from the wetlands protection fund and the remaining \$33,160,783 to be raised and appropriated all as set forth in the column entitled FY25 made by Heather Morin, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Mike Hutnak. The vote passed unanimously.

- (51:00 TS) Article 3 – Salaries of elected officials

(51:35 TS) Motion to recommend the finance committee and the selectmen administrator recommended budget in the handout entitled "The Finance Committee Budget Message for a Fiscal Year 2025 for the purpose of funding the annual appropriation budget of the town for fiscal year 2025 made by Heather Morin, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Mike Hutnak. The vote passed unanimously.

- (52:15 TS) Article 4 – BVT (Blackstone Valley Tech), Jeanne Lovett spoke on the reason for this being a separate article.

(53:40 TS) Motion to recommend that the town vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$1,882,492 for the operating and capital assessment by Valley Tech made by Heather Morin, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Mike Hutnak. The vote passed unanimously.

- (54:20 TS) Article 5 – Transfer Station for \$361,800

(54:50 TS) Motion to recommend the town vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$301,800 from the transfer station charges and fees and transfer the sum of \$60k from obtained earnings for a total of \$361,800 to operate and maintain the transfer station made by Heather Morin, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Mike Hutnak. The vote passed unanimously.

- Article 6 – FY25 Water/Sewer Enterprise Fund

(55:50 TS) Motion to recommend the town vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$1,581,065 from water sewer charges and fees and transfer the sum of \$356,658 from water sewer retained earnings. Retained earnings had \$160k, sewer system development had \$45k, water sewer development had \$50k, and the reserve for debt had \$101,658 for a total

- budget of \$1 937,23 to operate and maintain the Water and Sewer Department made by Heather Morin, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Mike Hutnak. The vote passed unanimously.
- (56:45 TS) Article 7 – Public Educational and Government accessing cable receipts.  
(57:00 TS) Motion to recommend to the town to transfer the sum of \$118,766 from these various receipts, etc. made by Lynne Mussulli, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Sandy Kuipers. The vote passed unanimously.
  - (57:40 TS) Article 8 – Recurring Business  
(58:35 TS) Motion to move that the town vote to approve subsections A through I as printed in the warrant for article 8 made by Mike Hutnak, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Heather Morin. The vote passed unanimously.
  - (59:20 TS) Article 9 – Personnel Bylaw classification and Update, Mr. Wojcik spoke about the salary tables for the departments provided and the COLA amounts.  
(1:02:10 TS) Motion that the Finance Committee recommend the town to vote and approve the personnel classification and compensation plans for fiscal year 25 as printed in the warrant made by Mike Hutnak, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Heather Morin. The vote passed unanimously.
  - (1:02:45 TS) Article 10 – Adoption of Revised FY25-FY29 Capital Improvement Plan, Jeanne Lovett discussed the free cash amount if all articles pass.  
(1:04:05 TS) Motion that the Finance Committee recommend the town to vote and transfer the sum of \$1,345,000 from free cash to fund the following capital projects and associated costs: roadway paving repairs and associated costs for \$360k post office HVAC unit replacement for \$65k, Municipal Center HVAC units for \$130k, post office interior and exterior painting for \$60k, Highway department loader with plow for \$315k, Highway department 6-wheel dump truck with plow and sander for \$285k, Highway department lawnmowers and associated costs for \$30k, and transfer to Capital Stabilization fund for \$100k made by Mike Hutnak. 2<sup>nd</sup> by Heather Morin. The vote passed unanimously.
  - (1:05:20 TS) Article 11 – Ratify Fire Union Contract, Mr. Wojcik spoke to the committee about this process and who was involved in it. Both Chief Furno and Chief Miglionico stated they were very pleased with the process and the outcome.  
(1:07:00 TS) Motion that the Finance Committee recommend the town to vote and ratify the Douglas Firefighters Union contract executed by the Board of Selectmen and the Douglas Firefighters Union on April 2, 2024, made by Mike Hutnak, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Sandy Kuipers. The vote passed unanimously.
  - Article 12 – Ratify Police Union Contract  
(1:07:25 TS) Motion that the Finance Committee recommend the town to vote and ratify the Douglas Police Union contract executed by the Board of Selectmen and the Douglas Police Union of April 2, 2024, made by Mike Hutnak, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Lynne Mussulli. The vote passed unanimously.
  - (1:07:55 TS) Article 13 – Amend General Bylaw Article 8 Wetland Bylaw Section 13 (Citizen's Petition) – Matt Benoit spoke about the article and what it is for and there was a brief discussion about it.  
(1:16:00 TS) Motion for the town to vote to amend general bylaws of article 8 wetlands section 13 as printed in the warrant made by Heather Morin, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Dick Vandenberg. The vote failed unanimously.
  - (1:17:40 TS) Article 14 - Amend Zoning Bylaw Section 6.8 – Solar Bylaw, Mr. Benoit gave the background on this article.



- (1:18:20 TS) Motion that the Finance Committee recommend the town to vote and amend section 6.8 of the Douglas Zoning Bylaws as written in the warrant made by Mike Hutnak, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Heather Morin. There were 5 members in favor and 1 abstention.
- (1:19:15 TS) Article 15 – Transfer of Land Ownership May/Parcel 118-2 Caswell Ct., Mr. Benoit gave a background on this article to the Committee, and they had an in-depth discussion with many questions about it.  
(1:30:50 TS) Motion that the Finance Committee recommend the town to vote to transfer ownership of Map/Parcel 118-2 from the Town of Douglas to the Conservation Committee or take any action relative thereto made by Mike Hutnak. 2<sup>nd</sup> by Dick Vandenberg. Two members voted in favor and 4 members voted in opposition to the article passing.
  - (1:31:50 TS) Article 16 – Stormwater Bylaw – Mr. Benoit went over the MS4 (Municipal Separate Storm System) that Douglas is under and the background for the bylaw and this will bring the town more in line with state regulations. The Committee discussed at length this bylaw with Mr. Benoit. The Committee feels there are too many unanswered questions, and the bylaw is confusing.  
(1:41:40 TS) Motion that the Finance Committee recommends the town to vote and approve the revisions as printed in the warrant for the storm water bylaw article 16 made Heather Morin, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Dick Vandenberg. The vote did not pass unanimously.
  - (1:45:00 TS) Article 17 – BVT Roof Reconstruction & Replacement of Rooftop HVAC  
Mr. Benoit spoke about what has been going on with the other towns and what they would like the project's conditions and contingencies to be. Mr. Wojcik stated that Bond Counsel for the Town of Douglas is okay with this current language. The recommendation is for the Town of Douglas to exclude this debt.  
(2:00:50 TS) Motion to that the Finance Committee recommend that the town vote to approve the BVT roof reconstruction and replacement of the rooftop HVAC project as printed in the warrant made by Heather Morin, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Dick Vandenberg. The vote passed unanimously.
  - (2:01:30 TS) Article 18 – Town Owned Land in Uxbridge – Bob Minarik explained the project and location to the Committee.  
(2:06:45 TS) Motion to transfer the custody of the two parcels identified in the warrant to the Board of Selectmen for general municipal purposes or disposition in case the town needs it in the future made by Heather Morin, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Mike Hutnak. The vote passed unanimously.
  - (2:07:40 TS) Article 19- Easement for 75 NW Main Street – Mr. Benoit explained the history of the reason for this easement.  
(2:08:40 TS) Motion to approve this stormwater maintenance easement made by Lynne Mussulli, 2<sup>nd</sup> Mike Hutnak. The vote passed unanimously.
  - (2:09:10 TS) Article 20 – Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System Compliance – Year 7 Funding – Mr. Benoit explained what this is and the funding amount and that this is for serviced provided by the MS4 consultant.
  - (2:10:00 TS) Motion to recommend the town to transfer \$40k from free cash to fund that part of the stated program the town is involved in made by Lynne Mussulli, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Mike Hutnak. The vote passed unanimously.
  - (2:11:00 TS) Article 21 – Master Plan CMRPC Contract Funding – Mr. Benoit explained that this is for updated the towns Master Plan and stated that they are asking for \$30k in funding for a \$145k project.  
(2:14:25 TS) Motion that the Finance Committee recommend the town to vote to transfer from free cash the sum of \$30k for the Master Plan services provided by the Central Mass

**Approved  
June 25, 2024**

Regional Planning Commission made by Heather Morin, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Mike Hutnak. The vote passed unanimously.

(2:14:55 TS) Mr. Wojcik went over a study of Douglas and some surrounding towns for the growth in terms of single-family residences and the tax burden for the residents. He spoke about the comparison to Douglas and some of the surroundings and that Douglas is doing very well and much more conservatively run.

(2:24:55 TS) Motion to adjourn the meeting made by Mike Hutnak, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Lynne Mussulli. The vote passed unanimously and adjourned at 9:30 pm.

Respectfully submitted,



Stephenie Gosselin