

Event Details

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Finance Committee

Tuesday, January 10, 2023

Date: January 10, 2023

Time: 7:00 PM

Location: Resource Room

Douglas Finance Committee
Agenda
Town Hall, Depot Street
January 10, 2023

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

1. Call to order
2. Report from Town
Administrator Matt Wojcik:
 - a. Current financial situation
 - b. Issues or concerns as we work on the FY 24 budget
3. Discuss FY 24 budget schedule: who will appear before us and when, etc.
4. SharePoint platform: questions, developments, etc.
5. Reserve Fund transfers as needed
6. Approve meeting minutes as needed
7. Review of our town's bylaws on attending committee meetings, absences, etc.
8. Upcoming meetings:
 - a. Jan. 24
 - b. Feb. 14
 - c. Feb. 28
 - d. March 14
 - e. March 28
 - f. April: Tuesdays are the 11th and 25th; town meeting Monday, May 1 (?)
9. Open session for topics not reasonably anticipated 48 hours in advance.
10. Adjournment

Douglas Cable is inviting you to a scheduled Zoom meeting.

Topic: Finance Committee: January 10

Time: Jan 10, 2023 07:00 PM Eastern Time (US and Canada)

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+1 719 359 4580 US

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Meeting ID: 868 7799 3954

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For information about the Zoom platform, including how-to videos and forms for requesting a Zoom meeting:

<https://douglas-ma.gov/530/Remote-Meetings>



CONTACT

The Town of Douglas

Municipal Center

29 Depot Street

Douglas, MA 01516

[Contact Us](#)



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FINANCE COMMITTEE
TUESDAY, JANUARY 10, 2023
RESOURCE ROOM

Attendance: Chair Dick Vandenberg, Vice chair Sandy Kuipers, Carol Gogolinski, Mike Hutnak, Ryan Hogan, Heather Morin, Lynne Mussulli, Matt Wojcik Town Administrator, Jeanne Lovett Finance Director

Absent: Howard D'Amico

1. Chair Dick Vandenberg called the meeting to order at 7:03 PM
2. (7:03 PM) (0:22 TS) Report from Town Administrator Matt Wojcik:

- a. Current financial situation

Mr. Wojcik stated that this year will be odd because the town is still operating under the existing constraints as a community with a tax base that is almost entirely residential. State Aid is the major part of the town's budget and that remains flat and the town will be making its second and last allocation of free cash to the school teacher contract that the town pledged. So this year's budget will come down to priorities, which Mr. Wojcik will recommend to the selectboard and the selectboard will recommend to the finance committee. Once we enter FY25 the impact of economic development should start to filter in. Mr. Wojcik talked about the health insurance increase due to the big claim previously filed and other health insurance items. The town will also see an increase in property and casualty insurance due to the oil spill claim. The money from the override in 2017 since it had passed was allocated and about 53% of it went to education, about another quarter if it went to pensions, health insurance, property insurance, and municipal departments got about 24% of the money. Public Safety did receive the largest amount of the 24% and Information Technology (IT). Over the course of 5 years the total increase in the IT budget is a little over \$300k (for 5 years, not in 1 year). There have also been some savings that have offset some of the budget increases which are replacing the town street lights with LED lights, the savings in that over the last 5 years is about \$150k total, there has also been a drastic decrease in the amount of veterans that are receiving veteran's benefits from the town. He talked about the two water/sewer project that the town must choose which one to do, and the public safety project/highway barn design and the options with this project and his opinion on hiring one firm to do all the work with these public safety project/s.

- b. Issues or concerns as we work on the FY24 budget

Mr. Wojcik mentioned December 2024 is the deadline for the use of the ARPA funds. The things on the ARPA fund list that that will be decided on by the selectboard are the phone system for the school and the town, the building security system for school and for the Fire Station, a cruiser. Mr. Wojcik stated that the goal is to fully wrap up the budget for presentation to the finance committee in early March, so he would like to meet with department heads in the first two weeks in February, he will be on vacation from January 19th to the 29th. The committee will pencil in meetings for March 21st and April 4th. Mr. Wojcik suggested to the committee to take another approach than just meeting by department to discuss the budget, like maybe by compensation table reform and other aspects of the budget like what is being recommended for a change might make it easier and more streamlined. Carol Gogolinski commented on the fact that she thinks the town could market the advantages of working for a municipality with hours and health benefits, pensions, etc. Mr. Vandenberg asked the opinion of the committee on what they would prefer to do with the budget meetings, focus on the changes and just have the budget printout in front of them for review, or go through items line by line. Ms. Gogolinski would

like to get a better idea of what positions are in the union and not in the union and who is contracted versus non-contracted employees. Mr. Wojcik responded that he believes that is a very important part of this process for everyone to know and that information is going to be provided to the committee. The town hall staff is nonunion and up until recently the dispatchers and the fire department were nonunion, there is a clerk in the fire department that is nonunion and the entire Highway department is nonunion, and there are some department heads that do not have a contract because they are not eligible according to the state and they are the highway superintendent, library director, adult social center director, building commissioner, community development director, treasurer, collector. Mr. Wojcik will provide a list of all these positions. Sandy Kuipers asked if the town has any kind of internship for the high school students to see if they have any interest in municipal jobs. Mr. Wojcik responded that there is seasonal work for the highway and an intern sort of carve out there for BVT and last year they didn't get any applications but in terms of other town function they do not. Mr. Wojcik's profession is involved with Suffolk University and tries to inspire MPA students to get involved to be an assistant Town Administrator or an HR director, which is modestly successful. Mr. Hogan asked Mr. Wojcik to explain what exactly he is changing with the compensation table reform. Mr. Wojcik stated town meeting votes for 2 things; a chart that maps each position to a grade and step, and then the chart with the numbers which is the pay for that grade and step. He is looking to revamp that so many of the position titles might change a little bit, currently there are 10 steps and 5 grades of pay rates and he would like to change that to maybe 7 or 8 steps and 3 grades. Knowing that the changes involve redoing the whole chart system, Mr. Hogan thinks it would be beneficial to have a meeting specifically about that with Matt Wojcik and the department heads. Mr. Hogan also asked Mr. Wojcik if he had a value to the increase salary that will be in the budget, and Mr. Wojcik responded that he has a target number which can change but currently has set that amount equivalent to what would be a 7% goal, and to keep in mind that the reform does not require a cola so there will be no cola in this year's budget. He will be using the money that would have been used for the cola to go towards the comp reform, so to think of it at a 4.5% or 5% increase, the dollar figure is close to \$250k. The committee asked Mr. Wojcik different questions about the compensation reform to gather more understanding of the cost and the value of the changes to the table. To try and explain it further Mr. Wojcik stated that not everyone will receive the same percent raise, if there was a new employee recently hired their pay will be a more competitive rate and therefore will not receive as high an increase as an older position that is far from the currently competitive rates for that position. Mr. Wojcik's number one priority in this reform is that the employees that have been here for example 30 years that are not even close to the salary rate of other municipalities that that changes and to fix this now and stay current going forward. The committee asked Mr. Wojcik if he would be able to have the comp reform grid ready for them to review it for the meeting on February 14th, and Mr. Wojcik responded that he will be able to have it ready for them for that meeting. Jeanne Lovett suggested that for the next meeting on February 24th to see if IT can be present to get the committee sorted with using SharePoint so that they are ready for the February 14th meeting, and the February 28th meeting will be with department heads and March 14th with the school department and BVT.

3. Discuss YF24 budget schedule: who will appear before us and when, etc.
4. SharePoint platform: questions, developments, etc.
5. Reserve Fund transfers as needed
6. (8:58 PM) (1:55:20 TS) Approve meeting minutes as needed – June 21, 2022, October 11, 2022, November 16, 2022

(8:59 PM) (1:56:00 TS) Motion to approve the June 21, 2022, meeting minutes as written made by Howard D'Amico, seconded by Lynne Mussulli. Ryan Hogan abstained and all other members in favor.

(8:59 PM) (1:56:40 TS) Motion to approve the October 11, 2022, meeting minutes as written made by Carol Gogolinski, seconded by Heather Morin. All members in favor.

(9:00 PM) (1:57:32 TS) Motion to approve the November 16, 2022, meeting minutes as written made by Sandy Kuipers, seconded by Heather Morin. Lynne Mussulli and Ryan Hogan abstain and all other members in favor.

7. Review of our town's bylaws on attending committee meetings, absences, etc.
8. Upcoming meetings: January 24, 2023, February 14, 2023, February 28, 2023, March 14, 2023, & March 28, 2023. April: Tuesdays are the 11th and 25th; town meeting Monday, May 1 (?)
9. Open session for topics not reasonably anticipated 48 hours in advance.
10. (9:01 PM) (1:58:15 TS) Motion to adjourn the meeting made by Lynn Mussulli, seconded by Heather Morin. All members in favor.

Respectfully submitted,



Stephenie Gosselin
Recording Secretary