

Event Details

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Finance Committee

Tuesday, December 12, 2023

Douglas Finance Committee
Agenda

Town Hall, Resource Room
Depot Street, Douglas MA
December 12, 2023

Date: December 12, 2023

Time: 7:00 PM

Location: Resource Room

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

7:00 p.m.

1. Call to order
2. Town administrator update
 - a. Current situation
 - b. Looking ahead to the upcoming budget process
3. Review minutes
 - a. October 10, 2023–held over from a prior meeting
 - b. November 6, 2023–day of the Special Town Meeting
4. General discussion on how to prepare for the upcoming budget process
5. Open session for topics not reasonably anticipated 48 hours in advance
6. Adjournment

Finance Committee: December 12, 2023

Time: Dec 12, 2023 07:00 PM Eastern Time (US and Canada)

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<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89188014539>

Meeting ID: 891 8801 4539

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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](#)

FINANCE COMMITTEE
TUESDAY, DECEMBER 12, 2023
RESOURCE ROOM

Attendance: Chair Dick Vandenberg, Vice chair Sandy Kuipers, Howard D'Amico, Carol Gogolinski, Mike Hutnak, Ryan Hogan (remote), Matt Wojcik Town Administrator

Absent: Lynne Mussulli (excused), Heather Morin

Dick Vandenberg called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM.

1. (0:35 TS) Town Administrator Update:

Matt Wojcik stated that they are in the process of negotiating contracts with the Police and Fire Unions and will be negotiating 3 contracts on the school side this year which includes the paraprofessionals, cafeteria staff and the custodial staff. Mr. Wojcik stated that this is the year that they anticipate that the new growth generated by the warehouse on Gilboa Street will become part of the tax roll and that they will be able to recognize the assessed value of the shell of the building in new growth. At this point to remain conservative that is the only value for new growth that he is putting into the budget forecast. Mr. Wojcik's stated that the revenue assumption is that the town will have new growth of 1.15 million in fiscal 25 which will be absorbed into the levy. Ms. Gogolinski asked if there was a way for them to challenge the assessment and Mr. Wojcik stated that there was not. The Committee and Mr. Wojcik discussed the Highway Barn project and if there were meetings the Committee could watch to get more information. Mr. Wojcik stated that at this point there is a meeting that can be seen that is a walkthrough of the Highway Barn by the Adam Furno, but the town is still negotiating the cost and design that needs tweaking. Ms. Gogolinski stated that she would like to see this project progress from the ground up, and Mr. Wojcik suggested going back and watching the last summers meeting of the Building Facilities Committee for the discussion of the needs etc. of the Highway Barn to get the information they are looking for. Mr. Wojcik spoke about the town's bond rating and that he is optimistic about it and spoke about the town's debt retirement schedule. Mr. Wojcik stated that his suggestions for the budget and the new growth allocation are to set aside a portion of it for departments and the rest to purchase real estate. There are two recommendations for the department's side, which one has already been approved at town meeting which is to staff a paramedic at the fire station 10 hours a day (70 hours a week) instead of hiring full-time medics. The second recommendation that Mr. Wojcik has is to add one new police officer as a second school resource officer. The other budget aspects are the school will get a 3% year-over-year bottom line increase. Mr. Wojcik went over the other department increases. Mr. Wojcik should be able to have the budget for the committee by their meeting in January. The Finance Committee is asking Mr. Wojcik to hand them the proposed budget numbers first before the BOS gets them and here his recommendations before the BOS recommendations. Ms. Gogolinski would like to know how much Douglas is paying out in school choice to other municipalities, excluding the tech schools for the last few years, and how much Douglas receives from other towns. Mr. Hutnak would also like to see the numbers from the school of what they have in their reserve accounts and

APPROVED
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what they have used. The Committee decided to have the next meeting to discuss the proposed budget on January 9, 2024, and if there is not enough information, they will do it January 23, 2024. Ms. Gogolinski would also like to get information on the Ambulance Receipts for the last few years and how much was actually billed. Ms. Lovett stated that she can update the schedule and show the receipt trend for the year. In regard to the Highway Barn the current location is just not feasible for their needs. Carol Gogolinski asked about the use of the current highway building and Mr. Wojcik stated that he doesn't think it has practical purpose for the town and might end up being more of a liability.

(1:30:00 TS) Motion to approve the meeting minutes of October 10, 2023, as written, made by Sandy Kuipers, 2nd by Carol Gogolinski. Roll call vote – Howard D'Amico, Sandy Kuipers, Dick Vandenberg, Carol Gogolinski, Mike Hutnak all in favor. Ryan Hogan abstained.

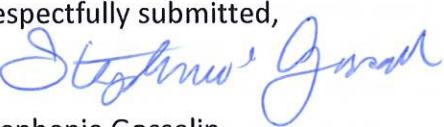
(1:30:45 TS) Motion to approve the meeting minutes of November 6, 2023, made by Sandy Kuipers, 2nd by Carol Gogolinski. Roll call vote – Howard D'Amico and Mike Hutnak abstained, Sandy Kuipers, Dick Vandenberg, Carol Gogolinski, Ryan Hogan all in favor.

(1:32:15 TS) For the January 23, 2024, Ryan Hogan suggests that they ask the school to be present for that and discuss their budget on some of the big issues. Howard D'Amico is opposed to that because they wanted to use that meeting to speak with Matt Wojcik alone on the budget and suggests having them come another night.

Upcoming Meetings: January 9, 2024 (tentative), January 23, 2023

(1:35:30 TS) Motion to adjourn the meeting made by Sandy Kuipers, 2nd by Carol Gogolinski. Roll call vote – Howard D'Amico, Sandy Kuipers, Dick Vandenberg, Carol Gogolinski, Mike Hutnak, Ryan Hogan all in favor.

Respectfully submitted,



Stephenie Gosselin