



**Town of Swampscott**  
**Finance Committee Meeting Minutes**  
Wednesday, March 23, 2022 – 7 PM  
Virtual Meeting

**FINANCE COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT**

Tim Dorsey (Chair), Mary Ellen Fletcher (Vice-chair), Joan Hilario, Cinder McNerney, Erik Schneider, Naomi Dreeben, Suraj Krishnamurthi (did not stay until the end of the meeting), Eric Hartmann.

**FINANCE COMMITTEE MEMBERS ABSENT**

Matthew Kirschner

**OTHER TOWN OFFICIALS PRESENT**

Amy Sarro, Director of Admin. & Finance; Patrick Luddy, Treasurer/Collector; Trang Vu, Asst. Town Accountant; Max Kasper, Director of Facilities.

The meeting was called to order at 7:02 pm.

**Public Comment**

None.

**Approvals of Meeting Minutes**

None.

**Discussion on FY 23 proposed budget and, as applicable, meeting with department heads and/or Town or School leadership**

**Board of Health**

MaryEllen Fletcher would like to know the main role of the Nurse in Board of Health. Amy Sarro responded that the nurse plays an important role during pandemic time. She works with the Health Director to make the community aware of any public health emergencies; works on the flu clinic, water testing at the beach and other initiatives regarding health which have been tying in with solid waste and recycling lately.

Naomi Dreeben mentioned that the nurse also stays in touch with the state on the numbers and risk levels during pandemic as well as does some health education for seniors and monthly blood pressure clinic.

**Senior Center**

MaryEllen Fletcher had question about Senior Center operating hours and whether the department gets funding from state. Amy Sarro mentioned that Senior center is trying to get back to normal hours before COVID and gets funding from COA Formulas grant and Revolving fund to support Department activities as well.

MaryEllen Fletcher and Eric Hartmann expressed their concerns about whether the budget level will fully support growing senior community in Swampscott.

### Debt Service

Tim Dorsey mentioned to a significant increase in Principal line under this budget and would like to know if this increase follows the financial guideline.

Patrick Luddy commented that the portion of the principal and interest that related to the new school project that we have a debt exclusion is not affected, and we are going to add that on top of our normal increase to the tax levy. He also responded to Eric Hartmann's questions regarding the principal and interest portion relating to new elementary school. About \$1,080,000 in principal and \$1,935,000 in interest out of the total are the debt service expenses relating to the new school project.

Cinder McNerney asked the balance of outstanding debt excluded and anticipated stabilization fund we are planning to use in FY2023 to appropriate in Town meeting.

Patrick Luddy commented that we expect to project \$900,000 or slightly more than that in Stabilization fund. He also confirmed that there is about \$225,000 of debt excluded interest, and \$1.3M of debt excluded principal included in the proposed total.

Tim Dorsey made a recommendation to have a debt management documentation to broadly share with the committee.

### Employee Benefit

Amy Sarro mentioned that there was no update compared to last meeting on Retirement Board meeting this week regarding the pension funding schedule. She also shares the plan to have conversations with Town Treasurer to discuss potentials of bonding the pension.

Cinder McNerney commented that the time frame to issue POBs would be between six to nine months. We need to evaluate the pros and cons of issuing then have Town authorize special legislation, get state approval from the State office of Administration and Finance and some more. She would like to confirm if the Town special legislation for POBs issuing is still in effect.

### Facilities

Joan Hilario would like to have a better understanding of Facilities FTE and reporting structure and whether he shares any personnel with DPW.

Max Kasper confirmed that his position is a split one between school and town; there are three other split positions under him: Maintenance technician, HVAC technician, Operations and Maintenance Coordinator. He described each person's role and confirmed that the amount under "Maintenance Salaries" represents 40% of those three individuals who are school and town employees. He confirmed that Facilities does not share any personnel with DPW. Max Kasper

mentioned to hire another 50/50 split position which is Administrative Assistant. He confirmed “Assistant Director of Facilities” line is a stipend which goes to Building Commissioner Director.

Eric Hartmann asked if the overall personnel cost for FY2023 which is up by \$45,781 or 27.62% over last year is the result of shifting people and sharing costs between departments or a new cost added.

Amy Sarro responded that this is not a new cost but a cost shifting between the Town and School to better serve each.

Cinder McNerney asked if Facilities department has caught up with evaluating the shape of Town’s assets. Max Kasper mentioned that he and his team have been working on develop a more extensive asset list and work order system. He felt totally financially supported by the town and would like to have some time to work on this issue.

Joan Hilario would like to know Max Kasper’s thought on citizen petition about MS windows.

Max Kasper expressed that he is in support of doing the major windows project along with HVAC system project in upcoming years using MSBA grant funded. In the meantime, he has been working on an alternative minor project to maintain the MS windows in an acceptable condition. He emphasized that the department clearly recognizes the issue and has been working on a temporary solution before having it comprehensively renovated.

MaryEllen Fletcher mentioned that this has been a long-term concern and asked if we can stop water coming into the MS building and funding needed to do so. Max Kasper commented that his team has been working with some experts to find the exact needs of the specific window and impact of weather to this issue.

Max Kasper commented on Erik Schneider’s concern about the major failure if we keep waiting for the comprehensive repair in a few years that this issue just happens to be on one side of middle school (in the so-called “Shaw-Wing). His recommendation is to only replace all the windows in the northeast side, but we need more time to analyze and will be having this as an MSBA project, partially paid by state.

#### Employee Benefits

Amy Sarro mentioned to \$72,000 potential increase in “Employee group/health” and some adjustments to “Workers’ comp benefits”, “Injured Police/Fire” and “Legal insurance” lines. She anticipated to have all updated information next meeting.

#### Regional Voc Tech

MaryEllen Fletcher asked the cost for town to have student attend in this school in the past. Amy Sarro said we had 36 students at the end of this year with roughly \$16,000 per student.

After careful consideration, the committee decided to leave the following Departments’ budget open for further discussion:

Legal/ Insurance

Debt Service

Police

Fire

Employee benefits  
Public schools

The committee is going to have meeting with representatives from Police and Fire Department next meeting.

**Committee and Working Group Updates.**

CIC – Reported by MaryEllen Fletcher

- Joe Douillette’s presentation for FY2024 budget to update the audio, lighting in the auditorium.
- Senior Center areas updating for multiple uses using PEG funding.
- Possibility of open space related request.
- ARPA monies for King Beach capital project.

Tim Dorsey mentioned to his Tri-Chair meeting this Friday and will report on it next time.

**Old and New business**

None.

On **MOTION** (MaryEllen Fletcher) and **SECONDED** (Naomi Dreeben), it was **VOTED** by **ROLL CALL** to adjourn the meeting at 8:20pm. **ROLL CALL:** Eric Hartmann (YES), Erik Schneider (YES), Joan Hilario (YES), Cinder McNerney (YES), Tim Dorsey (YES).

True Attest,

Trang Vu

Trang Vu, Assistant Town Accountant

*Minutes APPROVED by vote of the Finance Committee 04/20/2022*