



**COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS
TOWN OF NEW MARLBOROUGH
OFFICE OF THE SELECT BOARD
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Mark S. Carson, Chair
Tara B. White
Bill West
Select Board

**Minutes Joint Meeting
Select Board and Finance Committee
In Town Hall and on Zoom
Tuesday, January 17, 2023
6:00 p.m.**

Select Board Members Present: Mark Carson, Chair -- in person
Tara B. White -- in person
Bill West -- in person

Finance Committee Members Present: Beth Reynolds, Chair --zoom
Barbara Marchione --in person
Steve Klein --zoom
Doug Newman --zoom
Robert Miller--in person
Jane Fuccillo--zoom
John Pshenishny--in person

Others present: Mari Enoch, Town Administrator
Marsha Pshenishny
Michele McAuley, NM5VN

Mark Carson called the meeting to order for the Select Board at 6:00 p.m.
Beth Reynolds called the meeting to order for the Finance Committee at 6:02 p.m.

Michele McAuley was given permission to record the meeting.

FY 24 Budget Calendar and Process

Mari shared a proposed budget calendar for the FY 24 budget process which set dates based on the May 1 Annual Town Meeting date. Some key calendar dates are: February 10 -- Budget requests due, February and March--joint meetings with department heads, March 17--Warrant articles close, April 18--tentative date to post ATM warrant, April 24--final date to post warrant.

For the Finance Committee, a motion was made by Barbara, seconded by Doug, and voted unanimously by roll call vote to approve the FY 24 Budget calendar.

For the Select Board, a motion was made by Mark, seconded by Tara, and voted unanimously by roll call vote to approve the FY 24 Budget calendar.

The following members will work with department heads on the budget requests: Barbara—Police and Fire/Rescue; Mark—Highway; Steve—Transfer Station.

The Board and Committee approved the budget memo to be sent out with the request forms. The memo instructs budget requesters to level fund the compensation until the Select Board sets the FY 24 COLA.

Mari also said that until the Capital Plan has been updated by the Capital Planning Committee, she would hold off discussing the Capital Budget. Barbara stated the Highway Planning Committee would be meeting soon and would send Highway's capital needs to the Capital Planning Committee.

Financial Policies

Mari pointed out that the financial policies need to be updated. As the Town now has a Capital Planning Committee, its existence and responsibilities need to be inserted into the document. Additionally, the budget timeline in the document is no longer being followed. Mari suggested either the document be amended or a greater effort be made to follow the timeline. The group agreed to revisit changes to the Financial Policies at a future meeting.

FY 22 close out and FY 23 year to date

Mari updated the group on the status of the FY 2022 financial close out. She explained that free cash has not yet been certified.

Regarding FY 23, COVID has become less of an issue but there are supply chain challenges and steep increases in materials and services, particularly in highway work. Another challenge has been staffing as there have been several open positions that have taken months to fill. Mari reported that several open positions have been recently filled—part time Human Resources, Administrative Secretary, 32 hour per week Police Office, Police Department Clerical, and two part time Firefighters/EMTs. The Town is still seeking one or two more Firefighter/EMTs and a highway equipment operator.

The Town has borrowed the \$500,000 (first year interest rate of 4.5%) for road projects as authorized at the last Annual Town Meeting. Steve asked if the financing will be used for the purposes that the Capital Planning Committee contemplated. Mark and Tara explained that the road projects that had been bid in the fall were not awarded as they were well above the budget. The projects will be bid out again in the spring.

Mari reviewed the FY 23 tax rate recap. The tax rate has been set at \$8.37. The levy limit is \$5,948,805 (which includes \$45,364 in new growth) and the total tax levy is \$5,511,747.29 resulting in excess capacity of \$437,057.71. The total value of the town is \$658,512,220. Mari noted that though the tax rate decreased by \$0.93, values generally increased so taxes did not necessarily go down.

FY 2024 Budget preliminary discussion

As far as additional revenue in FY 24, Mari noted that the town is working on a PILOT agreement with the second solar project. It was also noted that Casselis Farm will be coming off the tax rolls

as it will be used for affordable/work place housing and will be tax exempt. The Town is negotiating a PILOT agreement with Construct for that property.

The Select Board is exploring the assessment of a local meal and room tax which cannot be assessed without an affirmative vote at Town Meeting.

The Select Board will make a recommendation on a COLA.

A motion was made by Tara, seconded by Mark and so voted unanimously by roll call vote to adjourn the Select Board meeting at 7:22.

A motion was made by Beth, seconded by Doug, and so voted to adjourn the Finance Committee meeting at 7:22.

Submitted by Mari Enoch, Town Administrator

Date Approved by Finance Committee February 16, 2023

Date Approved by Select Board March 27, 2023