



**COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS  
TOWN OF NEW MARLBOROUGH  
OFFICE OF THE SELECT BOARD  
807 Mill River Southfield Road, Mill River, MA 01244-0099  
Phone: 413-229-8116 Fax: 413-229-8253  
E-mail: [nmbos@newmarlboroughma.gov](mailto:nmbos@newmarlboroughma.gov)**

Mark S. Carson, Chair  
Tara B. White  
Bill West  
Select Board

**Meeting Minutes  
Joint Meeting of the Select Board and Finance Committee  
Hybrid Meeting  
In Person and Via Zoom  
Thursday, March 23, 2023  
6:00 p.m.**

**Select Board Members Present:** Mark Carson, Chair  
Tara B. White  
Bill West

**Finance Committee Members Present:** Beth Reynolds  
Steve Klein  
Doug Newman  
Robert Miller  
Jane Fuccillo  
Barbara Marchione  
John Pshenishny

**Others Present:** Mari Enoch, Town Administrator  
Michelle Castellano, Administrative Secretary  
Chuck Loring, Highway Superintendent  
Mike Britton, Board of Assessors  
Wendy Miller, Board of Assessors  
Graham Frank, Police Chief  
John Halbreich  
Marsha Pshenishny

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

The Finance Committee and the Select Board requested that the meeting agenda be taken out of order.

**Review and take action on Reserve Fund request for Highway Fuel Account**

The cost of fuel has gone up in the last year and Chuck Loring, Highway Superintendent advised that his fuel budget is down to \$5,452.26 and he will not have enough money in the budget to get through the remainder of FY23. He submitted a Reserve Fund request for the Highway Department in the amount of \$25,000.00 for Propane and Diesel Fuel in which the Select Board has voted to recommend that the transfer be made to cover the remaining costs for FY23.

**A motion was made by Barbara Marchione on behalf of the Finance Committee, seconded and so voted to approve the transfer of \$25,000.00 from the Reserve Fund to the Highway Department Fuel Account in accordance with Chapter 40, section 6 of the Massachusetts General Laws.**

<b>Beth Reynolds</b>	<b>Aye</b>
<b>Steve Klein</b>	<b>Aye</b>
<b>Robert Miller</b>	<b>Aye</b>
<b>Barbara Marchione</b>	<b>Aye</b>
<b>John Pshenishny</b>	<b>Aye</b>
<b>Doug Newman</b>	<b>Aye</b>
<b>Jane Fuccillo</b>	<b>Aye</b>

Discuss FY24 Budget -Operating and Capital

Mari Enoch shared the FY24 Budget and noted that 95% of the numbers are in. She level funded the budget numbers that she has not received just to show the Select Board and the Finance Committee where the current budget is.

The requests for the operating budget by category: General Government increased by \$25,943.00, Highway Public Works \$118,062.00, Schools \$104,425.00, Culture & Recreation \$15,323.00, Protection Persons & Property \$75,361.07, Health & Human Services \$36,549.00, Debt & Interest \$46,362.00 and Unclassified Expenses \$17,059.00. Total Town operating budget increase is \$334,659.07 and total school increase is \$104,425.00 resulting in a total budget request of \$439,084.07 above last year's budget. Mari advised that it's about \$220,000.00 to stay within Proposition 2 ½ without tapping into the town's excess capacity. Including the estimated new growth, the allowable budget levy increase is approximately \$201,088.00 of which the school gets 50%, which leaves the town with approximately \$100,544.00. Mari stated that the remainder of the \$334,659.07 of the town operating budget would need to be taken from excess capacity. The current excess capacity is \$437,058.00, so roughly about 50% would be used.

Steve Klein wanted to review the budget first to see if there were areas where the budget could be adjusted. He began with the Highway Department Roads and Bridges budget. Because this budget of \$52,000.00 is primarily made up of culverts and guard rails, he suggested that these are capital expenditures and not operating expenses and they should be funded through a one time appropriation from the free cash or stabilization budget. He suggested that \$50,000.00 be moved into the capital expense eaving an increase of \$2,000.00 in the operating budget. Doug Newman, John Pshenishny and Mark Carson all agreed with Steve that this could be considered a capital expense and the \$50,000.00 from this budget should be moved. Chuck Loring, Highway Superintendent discussed that once replaced, the guard rails last a very long time. The only road left to change out the guard rails is Route 57. Chuck also discussed that the culverts costs have gone up significantly and again, once they are replaced, they also last for a very long time.

Since Steve sits on the Capital Planning Committee, Mari asked if there was room to add \$50,000.00 to the Capital budget. Steve said that there was still some questions that needed to be answered but he believes that there is room for additional items. He suggested that the \$50,000.00 be moved to capital subject to the approval of the Capital Planning Committee confirming that there is room enough to fund it.

Beth Reynold then asked Chuck if the \$20,000.00 increased cost in the machinery expense budget could be reduced. Chuck said that the parts and labor expenses have increased so much that he recently had a repair done on one of the vehicles that cost \$16,000.00. He can plan for regular maintenance of the vehicles which are mostly done in-house, but it is difficult to plan for some of the truck breakdowns which mainly have to be sent out for repair. Mark noted that Chuck should keep track of the hours and costs spent on repairs that have to be done off site as this may warrant the hiring of a mechanic instead and possibly save the town money in the future.

Barbara Marchione requested a review of the Roads and Bridges Salaries, specifically the office manager salary. As Chuck noted at a prior meeting, the (16) hour / week part-time office manager position has evolved and is no longer an entry level position. This position is a part-time position and offers no health benefits or paid holidays. Because of this, he feels that the salary which is currently \$19.66/hour, is on the lower end of the scale. Barbara agreed with this and would like to see the office manager salary increased to a minimum of \$22.00/hour. She added that there are positions with the current office manager's qualifications that are hired at a much higher salary and it would be very difficult to replace the person who is currently holding this position because of her knowledge and experience. Mari noted that for FY24, the office manager budget includes (3) additional hours per week, increasing it from (16) hours to (19) hours /week plus a 3.5% COLA and an additional 1.5% increase that the Select Board recommended. Mark Carson advised that this request will be given consideration by the both the committee and the board.

Chuck advised that there was an error on the Fire Protection budget regarding the air packs being listed twice and he will review it, revise and resubmit the budget.

Mari wanted to note that on the EMT / Fire Paid Shifts budget that last year \$40,000.00 was paid out of the town budget and \$20,000.00 was paid out by Comstar Ambulance, for a total of \$60,000.00. Mari anticipates that this will be the same for FY24. If not, it will increase the total budget.

The next budget to be reviewed was Police Department budget-specifically the salary budget which is up about \$54,500.00. Steve wanted to know if there were additional shifts being covered and wanted clarification on the large increase in the budget. Steve indicated that he felt like he would have a difficult time explaining this increase in the budget to the taxpayers if they weren't being offered any additional police protection. Chief Frank noted that he updated the salary budgets due to an increase in hours and an increased pay rate discussed with the Select Board at the March 6<sup>th</sup>, 2023 meeting. He also adjusted the holiday pay budget because it was incorrect and increased the overtime hours because he budgeted 100 hours for FY23 and year to date, he is up to approximately 169 hours in overtime. Chief Frank explained that it is difficult to manage overtime hours because of arrests, court time involved with the arrest, etc. He also asked officers to come in during last week's storm which also increased the overtime budget. Steve requested that he provide documentation to the Finance Committee supporting the amount of overtime spent to date, which will explain to the taxpayers the reason for the increase.

Chief Frank further explained that the 24 additional hours added will provide more police protection / shift coverage and will allow two officers, instead of one, to be working the day shift from 8am-4pm. This will further allow for radar details and areas of coverage when there are reported incidents during this time. The officers are also getting a pay rate increase because they are better trained.

Steve circled back to the overall budget and wanted to confirm with the Select Board if the overall salary budget was “a final decision or still a topic of discussion”. Mark confirmed that the 3.5% COLA and the additional 1.5% increase to positions that fell below the 25 percentile was a final decision made by the Select Board. Mari further explained that the COLA and the additional 1.5% is not driving the Police Salary budget. The larger increases in the salary budget are due to already agreed upon contracts and the additional 24 hours per week of time added to the police budget.

Steve estimated that the budget is still about \$50,000.00 over where they want to be and the budget will need to be further reviewed. Mark agreed.

Barbara added that the costs of goods is up and that is also driving the budget. Fuel, electricity and the transfer station contract all contribute to the overall increase in budget.

A discussion regarding the Police Department occurred.

Mari then moved on to the Assessors budget and explained that they did some re-evaluating of the budget codes and lumped most of them into one code to make it easier. To further explain, the Assessors Computer Contract budget currently shows a \$27,679.00 increase and other budget lines show a decrease because of this change.

Wendy Miller explained that there was an overall increase of approximately \$6,000.00 in their budget because they are adding online mapping through Access GIS data viewer which will allow the Board of Assessors and public to view the property lines on line and tie it in with the property cards, etc. This will eliminate the need for anyone to go to Town Hall and get an actual print out of a property map. The initial fee of \$6,000.00 includes the purchase and set up and a \$3,000.00 annual fee. In subsequent years, the fee will only be \$3,000.00 annually. Both the Finance Committee and Select Board agreed that the initial \$3,000.00 should go into capital expense and the \$3,000.00 annual fee remain in the operating budget.

Mark suggested that the Finance Committee review the operating budget to see if any further cuts can be made and it will need to be discussed at the next Finance Committee meeting as the total budget is due ASAP.

Barbara and Mark thanked everyone for their participation and cooperation during the snow storm on March 13<sup>th</sup>-15<sup>th</sup>. Specifically the police department, highway department and fire department.

Review and approve Finance Committee Budget requests  
To be discussed at a future meeting.

Review and approve minutes of previous meetings  
No meeting minutes were reviewed at this time.

**A motion was made, seconded and so voted unanimously by roll call vote to adjourn the Select Board meeting at 8:03 p.m.**

**A motion was made, seconded and so voted unanimously by roll call vote to adjourn the Finance Committee meeting at 8:03 p.m.**

Submitted by Michelle Castellano, Administrative Secretary

Date approved by the Select Board: May 8, 2023

Date approved by the Finance Committee: May 25, 2023