



**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**

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 9, 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 (not present)
Robert Miller
Jane Fuccillo
Barbara Marchione
John Pshenishny

Others Present: Mari Enoch, Town Administrator
Michelle Castellano, Administrative Secretary
Freddy Friedman, Solid Waste Coordinator
Marsha Pshenishny

Beth Reynolds called the meeting to order for the Finance Committee at 6:01 p.m.
Mark Carson called the meeting to order for the Select Board at 6:01 p.m.

Review and approve minutes of previous meetings

A motion was made by Bill West on behalf of the Select Board, seconded and so voted to approve the joint Select Board and Finance Committee minutes from February 23rd, as amended.

Mark Carson	Aye
Tara White	Aye
Bill West	Aye

A motion was made by Barbara Marchione on behalf of the Finance Committee, seconded and so voted to approve the joint Select Board and Finance Committee minutes from February 23rd, as amended.

Beth Reynolds	Aye
Steve Klein	Aye
Robert Miller	Aye
Barbara Marchione	Aye
John Pshenishny	Aye
Jane Fuccillo	Aye

Meet with Department Heads to discuss FY24 budget requests:

- **Transfer Station**

Mari Enoch gave an overview of the transfer station services budget and advised both the Finance Committee and the Select Board that the current 3-year contract with Casella Waste Systems expires on March 9th (today). Because the smaller companies have been bought out by our current vendor, there aren't many options for the transfer station services. However, the invitation to bid went out a few weeks ago and the town formally received bids from Casella Waste Systems and Roger Trucking. After careful review, Roger Trucking proved to be the lower bid. Mari shared a spreadsheet of the summary of pricing showing the current prices and the bid prices which have gone up significantly. Open containers have gone up from \$45 per container / month to \$75 per container / month, Closed containers have gone up from \$125 per container / month to \$250 per container / month. Tipping fees have also risen in cost from \$92 per ton for wet trash / bulky to \$120 per ton for the 1st year and will gradually increase in year 2 and year 3. Recycling is based on market value, the town was paying \$50 per ton and the new pricing is about \$100 per ton. This number could go down, based on market value but there is no way to predict that. The hauling pricing has also risen. The town currently pays between \$250 - \$350 per haul and the new pricing for the 1st year is between \$225 - \$525 per haul and will increase in year 2 and year 3 as well.

Mari also advised that the town has received an IT grant for an online permitting software which will allow for residents to apply for a transfer station permit online.

Steve Klein commented that because the cost for the transfer station services will be increasing by approximately 40%, he recommends that the Select Board consider raising the prices of the transfer station permit fee for FY24 to match the 40% increase. He also recommend that the Select Board maintain the percentage match for the permit fee vs. rise in cost of transfer station services in the future to make up the rising costs in services.

Barbara Marchione mentioned that a lot of the surrounding towns are including the cost of the transfer station permits in the tax base for a flat fee for all households. Those households that pay for private hauling, bring their bills to the town hall and they get an abatement on their tax bill.

Steve then mentioned that there is another approach that is currently being implemented by Great Barrington where instead of purchasing a transfer station permit, the residents in GB purchase stickers from town hall to apply to every bag of wet garbage.

Freddy Friedman advised that Sheffield tried this method about 10 years ago and it's a huge undertaking to administer. The town would have to hire approximately (3) more employees at the transfer station to monitor that each bag has a sticker. He prefers the approach that Barbara mentioned where a flat fee is added to the tax base and those households that use private hauling get an abatement on their tax bill. In any case, Freddy said that it is too late to implement any changes for FY23, but he would work with the Transfer Station Working Group on implementing a new structure for FY24.

Marsha Pshenishny noted that if the town goes with adding the transfer station fee into the tax base and abatements need to be issued to those households that use private hauling, there would need to be a lot more money in the overlay to cover the costs which goes on the recap. It will also require a lot more administrative work.

Freddy thanked Mari for diligently working on the transfer station budget. While most of the numbers are estimated and based on the last two years of tonnage and hauling, they do not allow for too much "fluff". Freddy is confident that they can stay within budget for FY24. The new compactor installed in December should help with the wet trash to better reduce number of hauls. They also purchased a larger recycling container to reduce the number of hauls for recycling.

Mari quickly discussed salaries and reiterated that the COLA has been set at 3.5% with an additional 1.5% to the positions who fell below the minimum quartile. The hours for each employee pretty much stayed consistent with last year. The FY24 requested budget for transfer station salaries is for \$33,005.00, which is only about a \$1,574 increase from last year.

Freddy added that he toured the transfer stations of the surrounding towns and wanted to note that the Town of New Marlborough salaries are still low and not comparable and they should be further reviewed.

- Any other Department
None
- Update on Southern Berkshire Regional School District FY24 budget
Tara White briefly discussed the school budget as she attended the school budget presentation but she did not have a lot of insight because she did not know how the budget was prepared. What she did note was that they tried to keep expenses down and the increased cost to the town would be about \$104,000, which is a percentage increase of 3.86% from last year. The SBRSD Public Hearing Informational Booklet is available online for anyone to review.

Discuss FY24 Budget-Operating and Capital

Mari discussed the overall budget, noting that it is still a work in progress but she noted as follows:

The allowable tax levy increase for Proposition 2.5% is \$143,290 and the estimated new growth is about \$58,000. Mari noted that there will be an additional \$17,000 loss in tax dollars because Construct is building affordable housing in town which will be

exempt from paying Real Estate taxes after July 1. The Town is negotiating a PILOT with them, but there will still be a loss in tax revenue.

That puts the FY24 budget allowable increase at roughly \$200,000, in which 50% of that is used for the school budget. The town does have the option to use the excess capacity and they will need to decide how much is to be used for the operating budget. As of now the excess capacity is at approximately \$431,000. Mari recommends the Committee set a percentage, such as 50%, on the amount of excess capacity to be used in the operating budget so excess capacity can be reserved for future years. She presented a short list of the budget accounts where the numbers have been pretty much set by contracts and assessments and cannot be reduced.

Steve Klein discussed moving any capital related items from the operating budget into the capital budget. This will require a further conversation once the final budget numbers have been received and reviewed.

Mari then presented a total budget roll up spreadsheet that is still a work in progress and should have a better presentation in the next week or two so the Finance Committee and Select Board can begin to discuss.

Steve noted that the Capital Planning Committee met and the capital planning budget has not dramatically changed from last year.

Review and approve Finance Committee Budget requests

To be discussed at a future meeting.

A motion was made, seconded and so voted unanimously by roll call vote to adjourn the Select Board meeting at 7:20 p.m.

A motion was made, seconded and so voted unanimously by roll call vote to adjourn the Finance Committee meeting at 7:20 p.m.

Submitted by Michelle Castellano, Administrative Secretary

Date Approved by Select Board: March 27, 2023

Date Approved by Finance Committee: May 25, 2023