

Finance Committee Meeting

April 3, 2024 7:00 PM EST
Veterans Memorial Building – Room #229
900 Main Street Millis, MA 02054

Committee Members In Attendance:

Jonathan Loer, Chair
Michael Krone, Vice Chair
Peter Underhill, Clerk
Peter Berube
Joyce Boiardi
Jodie Garzon
Cathy MacInnes
Sara Reyes
Jen Zarutskie

Invited Guest in Attendance:

Michael Guzinski, Town Administrator
Carol Johnston, Finance Director
Craig Schultze, Select Board Chair
Ellen Rosenfeld, Select Board Vice Chair
John McVeigh, Board of Health Director
Sarah Ward, Public Health Nurse
Robert Mullaney, School Superintendent
Marc Conroy, School Committee Chair
Lisa Hardin, Town Clerk

Jon Loer called the meeting to order at 7:01 PM, the meeting is being broadcast live on Comcast Channel 6, Verizon Channel 38 and is available to view on YouTube and the Town's Website <https://millismedia.org/>. Meeting Materials are available on the Town's Website <https://www.millisma.gov/meeting-materials/pages/fy24-meeting-materials>. He reminded the committee and attendees to speak into the microphone.

Board of Health FY25 Budget Presentation:

John McVeigh gave an overview of the department's functions which include protecting the community through health promotion and permitting activities. Annual permits and licenses are issued for:

- Retail Food, Restaurants and Food for one day events
- Drinking Water Wells, Septic Systems, Trash Haulers and Hazardous Waste
- Beaver Permits, Camps and Body Art Establishments

The department consists of a Director, a Principal Assistant and a Public Health Nurse. The FY25 Budget Request includes:

Salaries	\$157,168.00
Expenses	<u>\$ 9,975.00</u>
Total	<u>\$167,143.00</u>

Salaries include Contractual Cost of Living and Step Increases. Revolving Funds Include:

- Vaccines and Medical Services \$5,000.00
 - Vaccine Clinics continue to be frequented often. Children are free and many Public Employees use the clinics.
- Food Inspections \$5,000.00
- Rabies Clinic \$ 700.00

An Opioid Litigation Funds Request Includes:

• School Therapist	\$ 5,040.00
• Chris' Corner Recovery Center	\$ 8,460.00
• Stipends	\$ 7,419.00
• Harm Reduction	<u>\$ 4,500.00</u>
Total	<u>\$25,419.00</u>

Schools FY25 Budget Presentation:

Bob Mullaney and Marc Conroy reviewed a slide presentation available on the Town's Website:

https://www.millisma.gov/sites/g/files/vyhli901/f/uploads/millis_public_school_fy25_presentation.pdf

The School Committee held a Public Hearing on March 27, 2024 to present the FY25 School Budget. Enrollment is expected to increase in the next ten years by 4.6%. The increase is due to anticipated new housing. Current enrollment is 1,189 students and 6 students participating in the TIES Program. The School Choice In Program currently has 68 students. The town receives approximately \$5,000.00 per student in revenue which is used to offset staffing and services. The School Choice Out Program has 22 students. Out of District Students include 32 students attending Tri-County Vocational School, 8 students attending Norfolk Agricultural School, 78 students attending Private School, 8 students are Home Schooled and 2 students attend Charter Schools. FY22 Per Pupil Expenditure in Millis Schools is slightly above the State Average. \$19,570.00. FY22 Out of District Per Pupil Expenditure is \$20,251.00. The Demographics in Millis Schools has changed across all grades over the last ten years which has increased the level of need in the classroom.

The FY25 Operational Budget consists of:

• Salaries	\$17,229,731.00
• Out of District Tuition	\$ 1,855,806.00
• Other Expenses	\$ 2,080,253.00
Total	\$21,165,790.00

FY25 Overall Salaries increased by 4.93% which include new mandated positions, contractual increases, lanes and HCA Positions. Salaries make up 82% of the Overall Budget. The Teachers CBA (Collective Bargaining Agreement) expires in June 2025.

The HCA (Host Community Agreement), which has been in place since FY20 funded many positions throughout the town including a School Resource Officer, Town Wide Social Worker, Teen Program Coordinator, Police Training, Administrative Support at the Select Board's Office, Extended Hours at the Library, School Adjustment Counselor and two Social Emotional Learning Program Teachers.

The Town has made strides in transitioning some of the positions into the Overall FY25 Operating Budget including:

• Administrative Support at the Select Board's Office	\$18,000.00
• Town Wide Social Worker	\$35,000.00
• Recreation Teen Program Coordinator	\$40,481.00
• School Department	\$83,336.00

FY25 Overall Expenditures increased by 3.16%. The driving forces of the increase are:

• Out of District Tuition	\$1,855,806.00
◦ Circuit Breaker totals \$763,064.00 which offsets the OOD Tuition	
◦ FY24 SPED Tuition increased 14% and will increase in FY 4.9%	
• Contractual/Consulting Services	\$ 432,247.00
◦ Includes Special Education, Tutoring and Translation Services	
• Utilities/Energy	\$ 375,304.00
• School Bus Leases	\$ 163,320.00
• Capital Technology	\$ 162,324.00

The School Department receives \$774,446.00 in Grants. The School FY25 Level Funded Budget will have a shortfall of \$1,070,767.00. The shortfall is part of a 2 ½ Proposition Operational Override, Warrant Article 4, which will be voted on at the May Town Meeting and Election. If the override does not pass, 15.8 FTEs (Full Time Equivalents) will be cut. The cuts will be across all three schools and will impact support in reading, math, technology, art, TV production and the Spanish Immersion Program. The Bridge Program will be eliminated, the program assists students after medical injury, mental health issues and works to transition the student back to school. It was noted the SPED Stabilization Fund's maximum balance can be 2% of the School Budget.

Finance Committee FY25 Budget Presentation:

Jon Loer outlined the budget increases which include an increase in the Administrative Support Stipend, Printing, Subscription to ClearGov, Postage, Advertisements and Dues and Subscriptions.

May 2024 Town Meeting Warrant Article Review, Discussion and Vote:

Joyce Boiardi made a motion to recommend approval of Article 1, Unpaid Bills, in the amount of \$720.30; Pete Berube seconded. Vote: 9/0 motion carries unanimously.

Peter Underhill made a motion to recommend dismissal of Article 2, FY24 Additional Wages and Expenses, as no additional funding will be necessary; Jodie Garzon seconded. Vote: 9/0 motion carries unanimously.

Jen Zarutskie made a motion to recommend approval of Article 5, Sewer Enterprise Fund, Peter Underhill seconded. Vote: 8/1 motion carries.

Jen Zarutskie made a motion to recommend approval of Article 6, Water Enterprise Fund, Peter Underhill seconded. Vote: 8/1 motion carries.

Jen Zarutskie made a motion to recommend approval of Article 7, Stormwater Enterprise Fund, Peter Underhill seconded. Vote: 8/1 motion carries.

Jodie Garzon made a motion to recommend approval of Article 8, Consent Agenda, Peter Underhill seconded. Vote: 9/0 motion carries unanimously.

Cathy MacInnes made a motion to recommend approval of Article 9, Sewer Enterprise Infiltration and Inflow Investigation Project, Pete Berube seconded. Vote: 9/0 motion carries unanimously.

Cathy MacInnes made a motion to recommend approval of Article 10, Water Enterprise Lead Service Line Inventory Compliance Project, Sara Reyes seconded. Vote: 9/0 motion carries unanimously.

Peter Underhill made a motion to recommend approval of Article 11, Community Preservation Oak Grove Farm Trail Improvements, Sara Reyes seconded. Vote: 9/0 motion carries unanimously.

Peter Underhill made a motion to recommend approval of Article 12, Community Preservation Oak Grove Farmhouse Renovations, Jodie Garzon seconded. Vote: 9/0 motion carries unanimously.

Sara Reyes made a motion to recommend approval of Article 14, Transfer of Funds to the Opioid Settlement Special Revenue Account, Peter Underhill seconded. Vote: 9/0 motion carries unanimously.

Sara Reyes made a motion to recommend approval of Article 15, New Police Cruiser Lease, Peter Underhill seconded. Vote: 9/0 motion carries unanimously.

Pete Berube made a motion to recommend approval of Article 16, Library Parking Lot Environmental Study/Monitoring, Jodie Garzon seconded. Vote: 9/0 motion carries unanimously.

Pete Berube made a motion to recommend approval of Article 17, Rescind Debt Authorization for Drainage Improvements at Village and Birch streets; Jodie Garzon seconded. Vote: 9/0 motion carries unanimously.

Pete Berube made a motion to recommend approval of Article 18, Request Special Act for a Town Charter Change – Authorize the Town Administrator to Approve Payroll and Expense Warrants; Sara Reyes seconded.

- Further discussion included explaining the Town Charter requires the Select Board to sign both Payroll and Expense Warrants. Payroll Warrants are bi-weekly and Expense Warrants are weekly. Two Select Board Members are required to sign the Warrants prior to their release.
- Mike Guzinski and Carol Johnston assured the committee that “checks and balances” would be in place.

Vote: 8/1 motion carries.

Joyce Boiardi made a motion to recommend approval of Article 19, Increase Maximum Tax Abatement for Senior Tax Work-Off Program; Cathy MacInnes seconded. Vote: 9/0 motion carries unanimously.

Joyce Boiardi made a motion to recommend approval of Article 20, Acceptance of MGL Chapter 59 Section 5C-1/2 Veterans Tax Exemptions; Peter Underhill seconded. Vote: 9/0 motion carries unanimously.

- This article would increase the Real Estate Tax Exemption for qualifying Veterans under the “Hero Act” from \$825.00 to \$1,650.00.

Sara Reyes made a motion to recommend approval of Article 21, MGL Chapter 41 Section 111F Injury Leave Indemnity Fund, Jodie Garzon seconded. Vote: 9/0 motion carries unanimously.

Finance Committee Meeting Minutes Approval:

Jodie Garzon made a motion to approve the March 20, 2024 Meeting Minutes as written; Peter Underhill seconded. Vote: 8/0 1 abstained. Motion carries.

Adjourn Meeting:

Jodie Garzon made a motion to adjourn the Finance Committee Meeting at 10:07 PM; Pete Berube seconded. Vote: 9/0 motion carries unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,
Deirdre Gilmore