

## Finance Committee Meeting

September 29, 2021 7:00 PM EST  
Veterans Memorial Building – Room #229  
Millis, MA 02054

Zoom Remote Platform

### In Attendance:

Pete Berube, Chair  
Jodie Garzon, Vice Chair – Remote  
Joyce Boiardi  
Jim Borgman – Remote  
Cathy MacInnes  
Sara Reyes  
John Steadman  
Peter Underhill – Remote

### Invited Guest:

Michael Guzinski, Town Administrator – Remote  
Carol Johnston, Finance Director  
Peter Jurmain, Select Board Chair – Remote  
Erin Underhill, Select Board Vice Chair – Remote  
Craig Schultze, Select Board Clerk – Remote  
John McVeigh, Board of Health Director – Remote  
James McKay, DPW Director – Remote  
Teri Gonsalves, Assistant Assessor

Pete Berube called the Finance Committee Meeting to order at 7:01 PM.

Pete Jurmain called the Select Board Meeting to order at 7:02 PM.

### Request Special Act – Town Charter Changes:

Craig Schultze, member of the Charter Review Committee and former member of the Finance Committee, outlined the committee's recommendations to be adopted at the November Town Meeting. The Town's Charter is a governing document and changing it requires a multi-step process. The committee's first step was determining Millis' very limited Charter in comparison to surrounding towns.

The committee's recommendations include:

- Giving the Town Moderator the ability to appoint a Deputy Town Moderator to conduct Town Meetings in the event the Elected Town Moderator is unable to.
- Change the Finance Committee's name to Warrant Committee; several surrounding towns have moved in this direction. Doug Riley, Finance Committee liaison to the Charter Review Committee, supports the change.  
The reasoning for the name change is to illustrate the Finance Committee's role in its recommendations regarding Town Meeting Warrant Articles as opposed to having a significant say in the overall finances of the town. Pete Berube disagreed, the Finance Committee spends plenty of time reviewing the finances of the town in determining their recommendations to Town Meeting; changing the name to Warrant Committee may very well confuse the public. Further discussion will be made on recommending the name change to possibly Warrant and Budget Committee. Pete Jurmain, former Finance Committee Member, suggested Warrant Recommendation Committee.
- The article would also include changing the Town's Executive Branch's Select Board from three members to five. Pete Jurmain is in favor of this change; the amount of work a Select Board Member is tasked with is tremendous. The change would alleviate some issues with meeting quorum and distribute the responsibilities. Joyce Boiardi believes this change is long overdue.
- Changing the Town Clerk position to appointed as opposed to elected; the change would bring more accountability to the position and allow the Town Administrator to have better control over the Town Clerk Office's operations. The change would potentially change the department's structure with a Full-Time Town Clerk with Part-Time assistants. The position would be advertised and applications and interviews would commence; similar to other Department Head positions. If the change takes place, the current Elected Town Clerk would finish her term, expiring May 2023. Craig Schultze noted that the change would be a two-year process and the Charter Review Committee looked at the long-term goals of the town and the position. The change would certainly adjust the structure of the department with potentially changing the hours and pay grade of the current staff.

- Changing the Town Administrator to Chief Administrative Officer of the town. A lengthy description of the duties is outlined in the article and been has vetted with Town Counsel.

Peter Underhill questioned how the article is being presented to Town Meeting; should each element be its own article as opposed to lumping into one. The Select Board has considered this option but is not in a full consensus. Mike Guzinski admitted this is a possible option but then each item would be a Town Election Ballot question for voters to decide.

#### Stormwater ByLaw Regulation Amendment:

This article will address the Board of Health's concerns with homes built too close to the water table and amend Article 1, Section 7.1B of the Town's Stormwater Regulations by adding a subsection 10:

*Setting bottom floor elevation of buildings, a minimum of two feet above Seasonal High Groundwater Elevation.*

The Board of Health is working with Beta Engineering in an effort to reduce flooding, stormwater runoff and contamination as well as requiring sump pumps in new developments. The committee had several questions regarding the amendment's impact on developable land in town. John McVeigh would defer the questions to an expert, Beta Engineering. Jim McKay clarified that the amendment would affect five of the forty-eight homes at the Emerson Place development, located off Ridge Street. Cathy MacInnes supports this article. Perhaps Beta Engineering can be scheduled at an upcoming Finance Committee Meeting to further discuss and clarify.

#### Senior Work Program Abatement Amendment:

Teri Gonsalves outlined the program and explained the amendment would increase the amount to \$1,500.00, the maximum the state allows. The total amount of the program will not exceed \$31,500.00. The town has a Veteran's Program in addition to the Senior Work Program. She asked the committee for their support on this article.

#### PFAS Water Treatment Plant:

Jim McKay provided the committee with a breakdown of the cost for the PFAS Water Treatment Plant; \$5,590,000.00. This is a substantial amount considering PFAS is a manmade substance. It is anticipated the project will be put out to bid over the winter months and will be online in early 2023. The DPW had a major chemical leak last Friday at Well #4 and is running on Wells #3 and 6. Kleinfelder will have the design for the project 100% complete in the next two weeks. The DPW has qualified staff to operate the Treatment Plant. Due to the DEP's (Department of Environmental Protection) restrictions, the department is limited in operating either Wells #5 or 6. PFAS testing results for Well #3 are pending, the well is tested monthly; all other wells are tested quarterly. Lead and Copper testing has been complete and the DPW Director is confident in the town's mitigation of asbestos.

#### Review Draft November Town Meeting Warrant Articles:

Mike Guzinski made the committee aware that the Select Board closed the November Town Meeting Warrant at their meeting on September 27, 2021. Although there are several gaps in the financials on the Warrant, he hopes to have the gaps filled by next week. Three additional articles were added:

- Fire Engine Purchase – a borrowing in the amount of \$750,000.00.
- Tree Pruning/Removal – in the amount of \$40,000.00. The tree removal will be in collaboration with the Tree Warden, Brutus Cantoreggi and the DPW Director, Jim McKay.
- Rescind Balance of Unneeded Borrowing Authorizations – this article will rescind debt authorization for several approved projects including the Water Street Pump Station, the DPW Street Sweeper and the Water System Chlorine Contact Loop Project. The authorized borrowing was not needed to complete the projects or purchase the equipment.

The Capital Planning Committee Report will be finalized in the next couple of weeks. A new Ambulance is part of the Capital Items being considered for approval at the November Town Meeting. Once Free Cash is certified, Capital Item Requests can then be determined. If Certified Free Cash will not cover the cost to fund a new Ambulance, it will be added as a separate article; borrowing requires a separate article. The Select Board will finalize and sign the November Town Meeting Warrant at their October 12, 2021 meeting. John Steadman requested information on the Fire and Rescue Department's Equipment Purchases/Debt Payments be provided for the last three years and what is projected for the next five years.

Pete Berube is disappointed there was not a request to consider funding sidewalks throughout town. There is approximately \$50,000.00 in the town's Sidewalk Fund. The DPW will make a proposal for installing sidewalks.

Craig Schultze made a motion to adjourn the Select Board Meeting at 8:19 PM; Erin Underhill seconded. Vote: 2/0 motion carries unanimously.

#### Discussion of Finance Committee Liaisons to Boards and Committees - Postponed Old Business/New Business:

Carol Johnston made the committee aware that Free Cash has been submitted for certification and the amount will be made available next week.

The committee's next meeting will be Wednesday, October 6, 2021 at 7:00 PM and is expected to be a lengthy meeting; Pete Berube would like the committee's discussions and recommendations to take place prior to the Select Board's Final recommendations expected at the Select Board's October 12, 2021 Meeting. The Capital Planning Committee will present their recommendation at the October 13, 2021 Finance Committee Meeting.

#### Finance Committee Meeting Minutes Approval:

Joyce Boiardi made a motion to accept the September 22, 2021 Finance Committee Meeting Minutes as written; John Steadman seconded. Roll Call Vote: , Jodie Garzon – aye, Joyce Boiardi – aye, Jim Borgman – aye, Cathy MacInnes – aye, Sara Reyes – aye, John Steadman – aye, Peter Underhill – aye, Pete Berube – aye. Vote: 8/0 motion carries unanimously.

#### Discussion and Vote on Article #9 – Request Special Act – Town Charter Changes:

Pete Berube felt the committee needed to further discuss and consider the variables in this article. The article could be amended and suggested the committee consider amendments. Overall, the committee supports amendments to the Town Charter but has reservations on how the article is written. Specifically, the detailed description of the Town Administrator's role; in the event the Select Board feels the need to task the position with additional/changed responsibilities, the Town Charter would then need to be amended again. There was extensive discussion regarding changing the Finance Committee to the Warrant Committee – Section II-8. Consideration was given to change the name to Finance and Warrant Committee. Separating each section of the article could get complicated if the Select Board decides to do so; Town Meeting Vote, Legislature Approval and Town Ballot questions.

#### Article #9 Request Special Act – Town Charter Changes:

Section II-7: Presiding Officer – *The Moderator may appoint a Deputy Moderator at their discretion, if they are not able to attend a Town Meeting.*

John Steadman made a motion to recommend approval of Article #9 Section II-7; Joyce Boiardi seconded. Vote: Those present 5 – aye, Roll Call Vote: Peter Underhill – aye, Jim Borgman – aye, Jodie Garzon – aye. Vote: 8/0 motion carries unanimously.

#### Section II-8: Finance Committee – *By changing the title of the Finance Committee to Warrant Committee*

Cathy MacInnes made a motion to dismiss Article #9 Section II-8; John Steadman seconded. In further discussion, Pete Berube suggested amending the section to Warrant and Budget Committee. John Steadman and Joyce Boiardi suggested Finance and Warrant Committee.

Roll Call Vote: Sara Reyes – aye, Pete Berube – nay, Joyce Boiardi – nay, Cathy MacInnes – aye, John Steadman – nay, Jim Borgman – nay, Pete Berube – nay, Jodie Garzon – nay. Vote: 2/6 motion does not carry.

John Steadman made a motion to amend the language of Article #9 Section II-8 to Finance and Warrant Committee; Joyce Boiardi seconded. Roll Call Vote: Sara Reyes – aye, Joyce Boiardi – aye, Pete Berube – aye, Jim Borgman – nay, Cathy MacInnes – aye, John Steadman – aye, Peter Underhill – aye, Jodie Garzon – aye. Vote: 7/1 motion carries.

Section III-1 Executive Branch – Select Board Composition – *By changing the number of members of the Select Board as follows: The Executive powers of the town shall be vested in the Select Board consisting of five members; each elected by vote of the registered voters of the town for a three-year term.*

Joyce Boiardi made a motion to recommend approval of Article #9 Section III-1; John Steadman seconded. Further discussion: Peter Underhill feels this a major change to the town's government as well as changing the Town Clerk's position to appointed as opposed to elected and both should be considered as stand-alone Warrant Articles. Pete Berube respectfully disagreed, while both sections of the change to the Charter are necessary the town would be better served having a five member Select Board. The structure of the Town Clerk's Office needs to be addressed however, that responsibility is the Town Administrator's. Roll Call Vote: Sara Reyes – aye, Joyce Boiardi – aye, Pete Berube – aye, Cathy MacInnes – aye John Steadman – aye, Jim Borgman – aye, Peter Underhill – aye, Jodie Garzon – aye. Vote: 8/0 motion carries unanimously.

#### Section III-3 Powers of Appointment

The changes were accepted in the Town's ByLaw and now need to be approved in the Town Charter. Joyce Boiardi made a motion to approve Article #9 Section III-3 as written; John Steadman seconded. Roll Call Vote: Sara Reyes – aye, Joyce Boiardi – aye, Pete Berube – aye, Cathy MacInnes – aye John Steadman – aye, Jim Borgman – aye, Peter Underhill – aye, Jodie Garzon – aye. Vote: 8/0 motion carries unanimously.

Section III-4 Town Administrator – *Amend Heading of Town Administrator to Chief Administrative Officer*

- Subsection I: Powers and Duties
- Subsection II: Acting Town Administrator – it's understood that when an individual takes on further responsibilities on a temporary basis, they are compensated accordingly.

John Steadman made a motion to recommend Article #9 Section III-4 and Subsections I and II as written; Joyce Boiardi seconded. Further discussion: Cathy MacInnes voiced her concern with including a Town Officials Job Description in the Town's Charter. Pete Berube agrees, the article could reference the Job Description as defined by the Select Board. Jodie Garzon agreed, the Town Charter needs amendments, however this change is overly specific in terms of its detail.

Vote: Sara Reyes – nah, Joyce Boiardi – nah, Pete Berube – nah, Cathy MacInnes – nah – John Steadman – nah, Jodie Garzon – nah – Peter Underhill – nah, Jim Borgman – aye. Vote: 1/7 motion does not carry.

Pete Berube will send an email to the Select Board with the committee's concerns with the language and detail in the article. Jodie Garzon suggested once the Finance Committee's recommended amendments to the article are reviewed by the Select Board, the Charter Review Committee would have the opportunity to review the amendments.

Cathy MacInnes made a motion to recommend the amendment to Section III-4 changing the title of the section from Town Administrator to Chief Administrative Officer, striking the rest of the amendment to the article; Peter Underhill seconded. Vote: Sara Reyes – nay, Joyce Boiardi – nay, Pete Berube – nay, Cathy MacInnes – nah, John Steadman – nay, Jodie Garzon – nah, Peter Underhill – nay, Jim Borgman – nah. Vote: 0/8 motion does not carry.

Section IV-2: Other Elected Officials – *(A) There shall be a Town Moderator elected for a term of one year; (B) The Town Clerk shall be appointed, with said appointment to be made following the end of the term of the Town Clerk who was elected as of the date of this amendment.*

Joyce Boiardi made a motion to recommend approval of Article #9 Section IV-2; John Steadman seconded. Further discussion: Jodie Garzon voiced her concerns with the structure of the Town Clerk's Office currently; the Town Clerk receives an annual stipend and is dependent on the office staff to fulfill the daily operations of the department. Vote: Sara Reyes – aye, Joyce Boiardi – aye, Pete Berube – aye, Cathy MacInnes – aye, John Steadman – aye, Jodie Garzon – aye, Peter Underhill – aye, Jim Borgman – aye. Vote: 8/0 motion carries unanimously.

Adjourn Meeting:

Joyce Boiardi made a motion to adjourn the Finance Committee Meeting at 9:27 PM; John Steadman seconded. Vote: 8/0 motion carries unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,  
Deirdre Gilmore