

Finance Committee Meeting

May 2, 2022 7:00 PM EST
Middle/High School
Millis, MA 02054

Committee Members In Attendance:

Pete Berube, Chair
Jodie Garzon, Vice Chair
Peter Underhill, Clerk
Jim Borgman
Jonathan Loer
Cathy MacInnes
Sara Reyes
John Steadman

Pete Berube called the Finance Committee Meeting to order at 7:02 PM.

Discuss and Vote Warrant Article #10 Community Preservation Open Space/Recreation Reserve Fund – Town Owned Properties Inventory and Management Plan

The cost of the article is \$161,700.00. The Community Preservation Committee voted to approve \$70,000.00. This article will be part of the November 2022 Town Meeting Warrant when additional funding could be available.

John Steadman made a motion to dismiss Article #10; Peter Underhill seconded. Vote: 8/0 motion carries unanimously.

Approve Bills Payable - Postponed

The invoice to advertise Pre-Town Meeting/Public Hearing has not been received and will be approved at the next Finance Committee Meeting.

Review Town Meeting Procedures

Pete Berube reviewed Town Meeting Procedures with the committee; voting, addressing the Moderator and audience.

Finance Committee Meeting Minutes Approval

Jodie Garzon made a motion to approve the April 27, 2022 Finance Committee's Meeting Minutes; Peter Underhill seconded. Vote: 8/0 motion carries unanimously.

The committee recessed until the start of Town Meeting.

Finance Committee Minority Report

Jodie Garzon presented a Finance Committee Minority Report for Articles #27 and #28:

As has been explained, Article 27 is a Petition Article to Amend the Town of Millis Home Rule Charter to authorize an elected Board of Water and Sewer Commissioners. Article 28 will propose an amendment to the General ByLaws to define the composition and powers and duties of an Elected Board of Water and Sewer Commissioners. For each of these articles, the Finance Committee voted 5-4 to recommend dismissal of the articles.

Pursuant to our Town of Millis Finance Committee Operating Policies and Procedures, those of us in the minority—myself, Joyce Boiardi, Cathy MacInnes and Jim Borgman—offer this Minority Report to explain our dissent from the majority and present our recommendation at Town Meeting for Warrant Articles 27 and 28.

Our recommendation of the articles for approval would be one of many steps toward exploring the desirability of a separately elected Board of Sewer and Water Commissioners. Our charge as Finance Committee Members is to carefully consider all sides of each warrant article that is presented to us for recommendation. The issues of fairness and reasonableness in setting the water and sewer rates for the town have become a hotly debated issue. It is our opinion that the question of whether the town would be better served by having an elected water and sewer commission is best answered by Town Meeting members. Such a board would have the sole responsibility to work for the benefit of rate payers without the need to add paid staff to our town government.

Several residents put their time and efforts into crafting these two citizens petitions, and several more signed the petitions to

allow them to appear on the warrant at Town Meeting. Those of us dissenting on the majority vote on these two articles generally support streamlined government systems, but we also have concerns that our Millis water and sewer ratepayers feel like their voices have not been sufficiently heard in the way our water and sewer enterprise funds have been managed. Rather than vote to recommend dismissal, we would rather have the voters here at Town Meeting decide how they want to proceed.

Town Meeting voted to dismiss both articles.

Adjourn Meeting:

Pete Berube made a motion to adjourn the Finance Committee Meeting at 10:45 PM; Cathy MacInnes seconded. Vote: 8/0 motion carries unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,
Deirdre Gilmore