

Finance Committee Meeting

October 12, 2022 7:00 PM EST
Veterans Memorial Building – Room #229
Millis, MA 02054
Participation Via Zoom Remote Platform

Committee Members In Attendance:

Pete Berube, Chair
Jodie Garzon, Vice Chair
Peter Underhill, Clerk
Joyce Boiardi
Patrick Gatto
Jonathan Loer
Cathy MacInnes
Sara Reyes
John Steadman

Invited Guest:

Michael Guzinski, Town Administrator
Carol Johnston, Finance Director
Jon Barry, Capital Planning Committee Chair
Lisa Hardin, Town Clerk
Patty Kayo, Council on Aging Director
Christine McCaffrey, Council on Aging Board Vice Chair
Wayne Klocko, Permanent Building Committee Chair
Denise Gibbons, School Committee Secretary

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

Rocklawn Petitioned Article Presentation and Discussion:

Lisa Hardin:

This Petitioned Article has been withdrawn at the owner's request to pursue a private buyer of the property. It will remain on the November Town Meeting Warrant but will be asked to be dismissed at Town Meeting.

Capital Planning Committee Presentation:

Jon Barry presented the Capital Planning Committee's Draft Memo and Summary of Capital Needs of the town, totaling nearly \$92 million. The committee was formed several years ago and consists of representatives from the Select Board, School and Finance Committee as well as residents "at large". The committee works with the Town Administrator, Schools and Town Department Heads to prioritize various projects taking into consideration Public Safety, Integration with Broader Projects, Federal and State Mandates and overall benefit to the town. Their highest priority items include:

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| • DPW Chevy Silverado with Plow | \$ 61,940.00 |
| • DPW Compressor | \$ 26,967.00 |
| • DPW PFAS Engineering Study | \$ 165,000.00 |
| • Middle/High School Feasibility Study | \$1,300,000.00 |
| • Veterans Memorial Building (VMB) Air Conditioning Equipment | \$ 45,000.00 |

Medium priority item is:

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| • VMB and Library Keyless Entry System | \$ 25,000.00 |
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The committee reviewed the proposal for a New Senior Center and concluded it should be included in the highest priority list due to the inadequacy of the current facility, the need for improved services and the increase in the Senior Population in town. DPW Infrastructure includes road improvements, culvert repairs, PFAS Treatment and drainage improvements. Similar to Police Cruiser replacements, the DPW Vehicles are on a Scheduled Replacement Program. Jodie Garzon thanked Mr. Barry for the great strides the committee has made in developing a Capital Items List.

Petitioned Articles – Sports Facility, Senior Center and Lansing Millis Building Restoration:

Pete Jurmain, petitioner, of three articles gave an overview of the intent of each article and noted they provide alternatives to building a new Senior Center. Consideration needs to be given to the impact on residents to fund renovations to the Middle/High School, an additional PFAS Treatment Facility at Well #3 and the impact on the Debt Schedule. The Tri-County School will undergo renovations as well. The proposals would utilize existing town owned buildings and town owned land.

The first article provides for renovations to the VMB, in the amount of \$3,500,000.00. The renovations would upgrade the current Senior Center. The current Senior Center provides 8,000 square feet of space but the layout does not reflect that. Renovations could significantly make the center more inviting. The renovation would utilize rooms on the first floor of the VMB. Upgrades to the VMB are inevitable whether or not this article passes. The second article, in the amount of \$2,900,000.00 would upgrade the Lansing Millis building, located at 64 Exchange Street, which would house the DPW and Building Departments; freeing up space at the VMB. Lansing Millis is not considered a historic building. The third article, in the amount of \$3,500,000.00, would design and construct an enclosed Sports Facility at either Cassidy Farm or the newly acquired Braun Property. The facility would provide pickleball and tennis courts. It would be a metal or dome facility as opposed to brick and mortar. The three articles are cost effective and will meet the needs of the Senior Population.

The implications of a \$16 million Senior Center would cost the average tax payor \$303.00 per year over 30 years; \$437.00 the first year and \$105.00 in the last year. The upcoming projects could cost anywhere between \$80 - \$120 million and will have a significant impact on taxpayers, including the Senior Population. The cost to the average taxpayer for every \$10 million project is \$192.00 per year. Article #7, New Senior Center, requires a 2.5% Proposition Override; the petitioned articles would not. However, moving forward with the projects would add to the Town's Debt Schedule.

The proposed new Senior Center would provide 15,000 square feet; renovations to VMB and Lansing Millis would provide approximately 12 – 14 thousand square feet.

Christine McCaffrey, 21 Jameson Drive, expressed the petitioned articles do not provide a longtime solution to the Senior Populations' needs; the new Senior Center will. Renovations to VMB will not add square footage unless Lansing Millis is renovated too. If the new facility fails at the November Town Meeting, the Council on Aging Board will work with the Permanent Building Committee and Select Board to establish an alternative. Three options were presented to the community, each providing 15,000 square feet, the focus groups chose the option which provided a new facility at Cassidy Farm. The facility would provide programming space for the growing Senior Population in addition to the current Senior Population (3,000) and provide a better work environment for staff.

Wayne Klocko noted the Permanent Building Committee would be tasked with making the 3 petitioned articles work. The current 8,000 square feet at the Senior Center is not suitable to meet the needs of the Senior Population and pales in comparison to a new 15,000 square foot facility. The timeline for the Petitioned Articles would require renovation of Lansing Millis first; putting the renovation of the Senior Center further down the line. Lansing Millis would require architectural restoration to meet building codes: ADA compliance, fire safety, etc. The petitioned articles do not offer additional green space or a commercial kitchen. The Permanent Building Committee did not view the renovation of the VMB and Lansing Millis as a viable option. The Council on Aging Board formally voted and rejected the three petitioned articles. He suggested the Finance Committee reject the three petitioned articles. It was noted by Mrs. McCaffrey, the Town of Medfield built a new Senior Center and has already outgrown it. Limiting the space to 8,000 square feet is not adequate for the future.

Mike Guzinski confirmed, if any of the petitioned articles pass at Town Meeting, it simply authorizes the Select Board to move forward if they choose; it is not a directive to do so.

Feasibility Study – Middle/High School Renovation:

Denise Gibbons provided materials which are available on the Town's Website:

https://www.millisma.gov/sites/g/files/vyhlf901/f/uploads/middle_high_school_project_faqs_0.pdf

https://www.millisma.gov/sites/g/files/vyhlf901/f/uploads/middle_high_school_feasibility_study.pdf

An overview of the Middle/High School facility assessment and partnership with the MSBA (Massachusetts School Building Authority) was provided. Annually, the Millis School Buildings are assessed to determine the needs of the School Department. In the Spring of 2021, it was determined there was significant overcrowding and outdated systems to provide adequate education for the students. The town submitted a Statement of Interest to the MSBA and are requesting Town Meeting to approve a \$1.3 million Feasibility Study to address the necessary renovations. The MSBA funded a portion of the costs to renovate/build the Clyde Brown Elementary School, the process took five years. The MSBA reimburses between 45 – 50% of eligible costs of the study. MSBA requirements will provide an educationally appropriate facility to support 21st Century Learning. The MSBA has strict guidelines in terms of class size, cafeteria space, STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Art and Architecture Mathematics) and therapy spaces.

The Study would include:

• Project Management Fees	\$260,000.00
• Design and Engineering Fees	\$845,000.00
• Environmental Studies	\$130,000.00
• Contingency Fees	\$ 65,000.00

The current Middle/High School requires approximately \$8.5 million in repairs including \$5.6 million in HVAC Systems, \$2.9 million for a full roof replacement and \$200,000.00 for Electrical Upgrades. Security issues will also need to be addressed. Securing MSBA funding will defray the cost for much needed improvements.

The MSBA, Permanent Building Committee, School Committee, School Administration and Town Administrator would work together in establishing what renovations would qualify for State Funding. It was noted, once the MSBA invites a community to participate in its program, it requires a Feasibility Study and if the study is not funded, the community would then be back to square one. Millis was chosen by the MSBA due to the urgent need for improvements. The Feasibility Study will take between 8 – 24 months; the impact to taxpayers will take effect in six years.

The community is encouraged to reach out to the School Committee at: schoolcommittee@millisschools.org with any questions. To learn more about the MSBA, please visit: www.massschoolbuildings.org

The Feasibility Study would analyze any additional space requirements; additional classrooms, parking spaces, etc. as well as necessary renovations to the facility. A request was made to provide the committee with the School's Enrollment over the past several years and the anticipated enrollment in the next ten years. Conditions of the outdoor fields at the Middle/High School could be funded by the MSBA but it cannot be determined until the Feasibility Study is conducted. The study will also put into perspective the overall cost to renovate and/or expansion of the Middle/High School.

November 2022 Town Meeting Warrant Article Update:

Mike Guzinski provided the committee with Draft Warrant Article Motions which provide the funding sources of each article.

November 2022 Town Meeting Warrant Article Discussion and Vote:

Article #1 – Unpaid Bills

Jodie Garzon made a motion to recommend approval of Article #1 in the amount of \$14,119.65. Funding sources include:

- Free Cash: \$7,317.42
- Transfer of Funds from Sewer Enterprise Reserves: \$2,419.11
- Transfer of Funds from Water Enterprise Reserves: \$4,383.12

; Joyce Boiardi seconded. Vote: 9/0 motion carries unanimously.

Article #2 – FY23 Operational Budget Adjustments

Jodie Garzon made a motion to recommend approval of Article #2 in the amount of \$204,285.42 from Marijuana Impact Fees, included in Free Cash; Peter Underhill seconded. Vote: 9/0 motion carries unanimously.

Article #3 – Personnel Plan Changes

Mike Guzinski will provide detailed information on this article at next week's meeting.

Article #4 – Capital Items was deferred.

Article #5 – Repairs to Major Field

This article, in the amount of \$20,000.00, was brought forth to the Select Board by the Millis Baseball Association to repair the baseball field which was damaged by the severe drought and Water Ban Restrictions. There has since been a request by the Millis Softball League to consider an additional article in the amount of \$40,000.00 for similar repairs. The Select Board will consider the request at their upcoming meeting on Monday. Typically, a funding request is considered through the Capital Planning Committee or Community Preservation Committee, however, this request was considered by the Select Board due to its urgent need for repairs. Sufficient funding to accommodate both requests is available from Free Cash. The Select Board will consider combining both requests in an effort to expediate Town Meeting. Replacement of the grass can be made in November and the DPW Director confirmed there is leeway in the DEP's restrictions on watering in order to ensure the investment is successful. The Finance Committee's recommendation of this article is deferred to next week.

Article #6 Feasibility Study – Middle/High School Renovation was deferred.

Article #7 New Senior/Community Center was deferred.

Article #8 – Adoption of MGL C 59, 5, Clause 22H Gold Star Families

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

It was noted that the State will reimburse 50% of the cost to the town in Real Estate Tax Payments for Gold Star Families.

Article #9 – Reduce Veterans Residency Requirement for Local Tax Exemptions/Abatements

Jodie Garzon made a motion to recommend approval of Article #9, which will reduce the residency requirement from two years to one for Veterans to qualify for Local Real Estate Tax Exemptions; Joyce Boiardi seconded. Vote: 9/0 motion carries unanimously.

Article #10 - 12-14 Exchange Street Environmental Settlement and Phase 2 Report

This article would fund a proposed settlement between the Town and Property Owner to meet remediation costs required by the DEP as well as Phase II, monitoring of contamination from Town Owned property.

Jodie Garzon made a motion to recommend approval of Article #10, in the amount of \$85,000.00 from Free Cash; Joyce Boiardi seconded. Vote: 9/0 motion carries unanimously.

Article #11 – Repayment of Advesa for Cannabis HCA Deposit

Jodie Garzon made a motion to recommend approval of Article #11, in the amount of \$25,000.00, from Marijuana Impact Fees/Free Cash; Joyce Boiardi seconded. Vote: 9/0 motion carries unanimously.

Article #12 – Funding for FY22 Snow and Ice Deficit

Jodie Garzon made a motion to recommend approval of Article #12 in the amount of \$128,721.70 to fully fund the FY22 Snow and Ice Deficit; Joyce Boiardi seconded. It was noted, the Snow and Ice Operating Budget is the only Line Item that can be in deficit at the close of any Fiscal Year. The Snow and Ice Budget has been increased in recent years, however, once the budget is increased, it cannot be reduced. Vote: 9/0 motion carries unanimously.

Article #13 – Lead Line Service Inventory and Replacement Plan

Jodie Garzon made a motion to recommend approval of Article #13, in the amount of \$139,000.00. Funding for this article will be provided by a State Grant. However, in order to qualify for the grant, borrowing through the Water Enterprise Fund is needed; John Steadman seconded. Vote: 9/0 motion carries unanimously.

Article #14 – Water Management Act – Permit Renewal Support

Jodie Garzon made a motion to recommend approval of Article #14 in the amount of \$56,864.00 from Water Enterprise Reserves; John Steadman seconded. The DEP issues a Water Permit to the town every ten years which authorizes the distribution of water to residents. The DEP has the authority to impose restrictions. The Town has worked with Kleinfelder over several years and they are well versed in the Town's Water System Infrastructure and are fully equipped to negotiate with the DEP on further restrictions on behalf of the town. Vote: 9/0 motion carries unanimously.

Article #15 – Preliminary Design of a PFAS Treatment Plant at Well #3

Jodie Garzon made a motion to recommend approval of Article #15 in the amount of \$165,000.00 from Water Enterprise Reserves; Joyce Boiardi seconded. Vote: 9/0 motion carries unanimously.

Article #16 – Sewer and Stormwater Asset Management System

Jodie Garzon made a motion to recommend approval of Article #16 in the amount of \$250,000.00 funded by a Transfer of Funds from the Stormwater Enterprise Reserves of \$100,000.00 and a borrowing of \$150,000.00 from Sewer Enterprise Reserves to fund Phase III of the plan. Carol Johnston clarified, funding of 60% of the initiative can be obtained through the Massachusetts Clean Water Trust. However, further clarification is needed by Bond Counsel prior to the committee's vote.

Article #17 – Engineering Services for Infiltration and Inflow (I/I) Investigation

Jodie Garzon made a motion to recommend approval of Article #17 in the amount of \$130,333.61. Funding is available from completed prior Town Meeting Sewer Projects in which borrowing is no longer needed; rescinded borrowing. John Steadman seconded. The I/I Investigation is required by the DEP and CRPCD (Charles River Pollution Control District) in an effort to minimize the flow that is not necessarily sewage but likely Stormwater into the CRPCD. The town performs this investigation on a regular basis to not task the Sewer Rate Payors with erroneous costs. Vote: 9/0 motion carries unanimously.

Article #18 – Unemployment Account

Jodie Garzon made a motion to recommend approval of Article #18 in the amount of \$25,000.00 from Free Cash to meet the town's obligation for Unemployment Claims; Peter Underhill seconded. Vote: 9/0 motion carries unanimously.

Article #19 – Acceptance of Pearl Street, Debrah Lane and Teresa Drive

The Select Board plan to review the street layout and intend to vote in favor of this article

Jodie Garzon made a motion to recommend approval of Article #19, making Pearl Street, Debrah Lane and Teresa Drive as public ways; Cathy MacInnes seconded. It was noted that in doing so, the town is required to maintain the roadways including plowing, drainage, etc. It will however, increase the town's qualifying roadways for Chapter 90 Funding; State Funding for road improvements. Vote: 9/0 motion carries unanimously.

Article #20 – OPEB Funding was deferred.

The Article would appropriate \$50,000.00 from Free Cash to the OPEB (Other Post-Employment Benefits) Fund.

Article #21 – MGL Chapter 41 Section 111F Injury Leave Indemnity Fund was deferred.

This Article would appropriate \$300,000.00 from Free Cash. The Fund was established at the May 2022 Town Meeting. Carol Johnston clarified on average the cost is \$95,000.00 per year for Public Safety Officers and Firefighters out on injury which results in overtime costs for shift coverage.

Article #22 – Establish Stabilization Account under MGL Chapter 40, Section 5B for the Purchase and Operation of Town Ambulances

Jodie Garzon made a motion to recommend approval of Article #22; Peter Underhill seconded. Ambulance Receipts are restricted to the Ambulance Revolving Fund; in FY23 \$412,000.00 was appropriated at the May Town Meeting in order to fund salaries for EMTs. This article simple establishes a Stabilization Fund for the purchase of ambulances in the future. The SAFER (Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response) Grant, funded by the Federal Government, will expire in FY24. The grant was instrumental in providing Millis Residents with qualified staff to respond to urgent situations. It is uncertain how much funding will be needed. Vote: 8/1 motion carries.

Article #23 – Stabilization Fund was deferred.

Article #24 – Petitioned Article – Sports Facility was deferred.

Article #25 – Petitioned Article – Upgrades to the Senior Center at the Veterans Memorial Building was deferred.

Article #26 – Lansing Millis Building Restoration was deferred.

Article #27 – Petitioned Article to purchase Rocklawn Property located at 270 Exchange Street

Jodie Garzon made a motion to recommend dismissal of Article #27 based on the recommendation of the petitioner; Cathy MacInnes seconded. Vote: 9/0 motion carries unanimously.

Finance Committee Meeting Minutes Approval:

Jodie Garzon made a motion to approve the October 5, 2022 Finance Committee Meeting Minutes; Cathy MacInnes seconded. Vote: 9/0 motion carries unanimously.

Review of Warrant Article Assignments:

Corrections were made to the Warrant Article Assignments presented in the spreadsheet; it is anticipated that Warrant Article Assignments will change pending the committee's Final Recommendations next week.

Adjourn Meeting:

Jodie Garzon made a motion to adjourn the Finance Committee Meeting at 10:03 PM; Jon Loer seconded. Vote: 9/0 motion carries unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,
Deirdre Gilmore