

## Finance Committee Meeting

October 19, 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  
Karen Bouret DeMarzo, Assistant Town Administrator/Human Resources Manager  
Ellen Rosenfeld, Select Board Clerk  
James McKay, DPW Director  
Michael Rand, Millis Girls Softball League President  
Steven Catalano, School Committee Chair  
Denise Gibbons, School Committee Secretary  
Patty Kayo, Council on Aging Director  
Elizabeth Derwin, Council on Aging Board Member

Pete Berube called the Finance Committee Meeting to order at 7:00 PM.

### November 2022 Town Meeting Warrant Article Update:

Mike Guzinski and Karen Bouret DeMarzo provided an update and outlined changes to the November Town Meeting Warrant:

#### Article #3 Personnel Plan Changes

The Salary Schedule was updated to include:

- Addition of the Finance Committee Assistant Stipend
- Correction to Part Time Dispatcher Hourly Rates
- Elimination of Hourly Rates for School Traffic Supervisors; the Town no longer employs them
- An increase to Reserve Police Detail Rate; to match Police CBA (Collective Bargaining Agreement) Rates
  - Reserve Police Details are Retired Police Officers who work Police Details

The Personnel Plan changes include:

- An increase in Longevity, an annual bonus to employees after a certain number of years of service, to match CBAs as well as a change to the payment schedule
- Language change from Maternity Leave to Paternity Leave
- Language changes for Sick Leave, Bereavement Leave and Jury Duty
- An increase in Sick Leave Buy Back from \$1,800.00 to \$2,500.00 upon retirement
- Additional Paid Holiday; Juneteenth
- Update to Vacation Leave to match CBAs

The Personnel Plan changes affect three Full-Time Employees: DPW Director, Council on Aging Director and the Assistant Town Administrator/Human Resources Manager. Amendments are available at the link below:

[https://www.millisma.gov/sites/g/files/vyhlf901/f/uploads/personnel\\_plan\\_salary\\_schedule\\_and\\_amendments\\_-\\_november\\_2022.pdf](https://www.millisma.gov/sites/g/files/vyhlf901/f/uploads/personnel_plan_salary_schedule_and_amendments_-_november_2022.pdf)

Jodie Garzon made a motion to recommend approval of Article #3; Cathy MacInnes seconded. Vote: 9/0 motion carries unanimously.

Article #5 Road and Sidewalk Construction, Design and Repair, in the amount of \$500,000.00, from Free Cash was added to the Warrant at the Select Board Meeting held on October 17, 2022. The benefit to appropriating funds at the November Town Meeting is bids will be received during the Winter and the work can take place in the Spring. With the unprecedented amount of Free Cash, the Select Board felt it was an appropriate use of funds. Pete Berube as well as many residents have advocated for Sidewalk Improvements throughout town. It is at the discretion of the Select Board and the DPW Director to determine how the appropriations are spent. Jim McKay's plan for the additional funding include:

- Extending the sidewalk on Pleasant Street to Village Street, essentially making a walkway from the Charles River to Oak Grove Farm.
- Replace the sidewalks and pave Plain Street
- Design and install sidewalks on Spring Street for better access to the Schools

The town has been approved for a "Clean Streets" Grant and is contemplating the best way to utilize those funds. Several years ago, the TIP (Transportation Improvement Program), which would fully fund the Sidewalk Improvements on Village Street, required the town to appropriate funding for the design which would cost \$800 - \$900 thousand dollars. The hope is to repair the existing sidewalks on Village Street which is a gateway for traffic as opposed to traveling Route 109. It was noted, there are funds in the Sidewalk Fund that the Select Board could authorize the use of. Replacement of existing sidewalks would require ADA compliance.

#### Article #6 Repairs to Baseball and Softball Fields

This article was amended by the Select Board to include funding for improvements to the Girls Softball Fields as well as Majors Field. Due to the severe drought and Water Ban Regulations, the fields are in deplorable condition. This article will fund the restoration. Majors Field has always been maintained by Millis Youth Baseball; there is not adequate funding in the DPW Operating Budget to do so. Although the field is on town property, an unwritten agreement was established giving ownership of maintenance to the Millis Youth Baseball League. Once town funds are used on Majors Field, any fees collected for the use of the field will require they be deposited into the General Fund. In the past, some maintenance has been funded through the Community Preservation Commission. The Town Administrator is the town's Procurement Officer, which limits the approval of projects over \$10,000.00; projects above that threshold require the approval of the Select Board. It was noted that once a project exceeds the threshold, Prevailing Wage is required which could require more funding. Water Ban Restrictions, which impact the maintenance of this investment are dictated by the Town's Water Permit; Article #15.

Peter Underhill made a motion to recommend approval of Article #6; Sara Reyes seconded. Vote: 7/1 1 abstained motion carries.

#### Article #17 – Sewer and Stormwater Asset Management System

Clarification on this article was made after consultation with Bond Counsel as reflected in the Town Meeting Motions.

Jodie Garzon made a motion to recommend approval of Article 17; Peter Underhill seconded. Vote 9/0 motion carries unanimously.

The committee requested clarification on "Must Fund Articles" and the anticipated SPED deficit that will need to be funded at the Spring 2023 Town Meeting. Their concern is not to deplete Free Cash completely. Steve Catalano confirmed the School Department does not have an exact dollar amount to cover the deficit for SPED for FY24. Circuit Breaker Funding, Chapter 70, has not been confirmed.

Many of the previously "Must Fund Articles" have been included in FY23 Department Operating Budgets alleviating the need for Free Cash Appropriations at the Spring Town Meeting. The School Committee will keep the Finance Committee up to date; it's a very uncertain process depending on enrollment for SPED needs. Three CBA (Collective Bargaining Agreements) are still in negotiation and may require additional funding. The Finance Director noted funding the Stabilization Fund, Article #24, in the amount of \$300,000.00 will most likely cover the Town's Stabilization Fund Policy through FY24. Appropriating Free Cash Funds at the November 2022 Town Meeting will leave a balance of \$1,163,680.71 for appropriation at the Spring 2023 Town Meeting. Clarification was made on funding Salaries/Programs from Marijuana Impact Fees at both Town Meetings. The town will have \$887,000.00 of discretionary funds, Free Cash, to appropriate at the Spring 2023 Town Meeting.

#### November 2022 Town Meeting Warrant Article Discussion and Vote:

##### Article #4 – Capital Items

Jodie Garzon made a motion to recommend approval of Article #4 in the amount of \$158,907.00 to fund:

- |   |              |
|---|--------------|
| • Veterans Memorial Building (VMB) Air Conditioning Equipment | \$ 45,000.00 |
| • VMB and Library Keyless Entry System                        | \$ 25,000.00 |
| • DPW Compressor  | \$ 26,967.00 |

- DPW Chevy Silverado with Plow

\$ 61,940.00

Peter Underhill seconded. It was clarified, the DPW request for a Pickup Truck with plow would replace a 2007 Explorer that is used by the DPW Facilities Manager. Vote: 9/0 motion carries unanimously.

#### Article #7 Feasibility Study – Middle/High School Renovation

Peter Underhill made a motion to recommend approval of Article #7 in the amount of \$1.3 million; Cathy MacInnes seconded.

The committee discussed the benefits to the town in upgrading the facility with more space, which could potentially alleviate SPED costs, and the addition of better technology and services to students. The current facility needs \$8 million in repairs. Partnering with the MSBA (Massachusetts School Building Authority) will be in the best interest of the town. The cost to construct the Clyde Brown Elementary School was offset by MSBA Funding. The Feasibility Study will facilitate an overall evaluation of the facility in terms of necessary upgrades to bring it up to par. Vote: 9/0 motion carries unanimously.

#### Article #8 New Senior/Community Center

Jon Loer made a motion to recommend approve of Article #8, in the amount of \$16 million; Joyce Boiardi seconded.

The Council on Aging and PBC (Permanent Building Committee) presented their request for support of this article to both the Select Board and Finance Committee. A Feasibility Study, approved at a prior Town Meeting, resulted in three options. The Council on Aging Board and PBC chose the option to build a new facility at Cassidy Farm, located at the intersection of Exchange Street and Island Road. The growing Senior Population in town was acknowledged as well as the need to provide services; the current facility, located in the lower level of the VMB, is not adequate. However, the cost to taxpayers is significant.

There are concerns with the necessary upgrades to the Timberline Sewer Station, approximately \$1 million, to accommodate the facility. The cost for the upgrade is not factored into the project; the increase in the upgrade would be a burden on the Sewer System Rate Payers. Additional costs to the Town's Operating Budget upwards of \$300,000.00 to maintain the facility needs to be considered. The cost could potentially be absorbed with New Growth; additional funds from new development. A breakdown of the overall cost and contingency to construct a new facility was requested. Concerns were raised on the impact to Real Estate Taxes; funding the Clyde Brown School Project was offset by MSBA Funding but substantially increased taxes. It was recognized that a solution to providing a Senior Center is necessary, the option presented is not provide an affordable option. It was noted that the School Department can provide a commercial kitchen and area to accommodate Senior Events. The Select Board has not taken a formal vote on Article #8 but will do so at their meeting on November 7, 2022. Ultimately, the decision will be made at the November 2022 Town Meeting.

Pete Berube outlined other community's solutions for Senior Center upgrades, expansion and renovation. The cost per square foot is significantly lower than what is proposed by the PBC. Most Municipal Buildings are constructed with \$500 – \$600 per square foot including contingency. Questions were raised if the contingency, 30%, of the overall cost to construct the facility hampered its support as well as the Petitioned Articles which address the situation but with no clear pathway forward.

Roll Call Vote: Patrick Gatto – nay, Peter Underhill – aye, Jon Loer – aye, Pete Berube – nay, Jodie Garzon – nay, Cathy MacInnes – nay, Sara Reyes – nay, Joyce Boiardi – aye, John Steadman – nay. Vote: 3/6 motion does not carry.

#### Article #21 – OPEB Funding

Jodie Garzon made a motion to recommend approve Article #21; Joyce Boiardi seconded. Vote: 9/0 motion carries unanimously.

#### Article #22 – MGL Chapter 41 Section 111F Injury Leave Indemnity Fund

Jodie Garzon made a motion to recommend approve Article #22; Joyce Boiardi seconded. Vote: 9/0 motion carries unanimously.

#### Article #24 – Stabilization Fund

Patrick Gatto made a motion to recommend approval of Article #24; Peter Underhill seconded. Vote: 9/0 motion carries unanimously.

#### Article #25 – Petitioned Article – Sports Facility

Jodie Garzon made a motion to recommend dismissal of Article # 25; Peter Underhill seconded. Vote: 9/0 motion carries unanimously.

#### Article #26 – Petitioned Article – Upgrades to the Senior Center at the Veterans Memorial Building

Peter Underhill made a motion to recommend dismissal of Article #26; Jodie Garzon seconded. Vote: 9/0 motion carries unanimously.

#### Article #27 – Lansing Millis Building Restoration

Peter Underhill made a motion to recommend dismissal of Article #27; Jodie Garzon seconded. Vote: 9/0 motion carries unanimously.

Jodie Garzon noted the town owned property should be renovated; it is unfortunate there isn't a clear plan to do so. Pete Berube noted the town has acquired a number of properties that could potentially be utilized to benefit the town. The Community Preservation Commission considered partially funding restoration of the property and is awaiting the Select Board's recommendation to fund a restoration project.

The committee fully recognizes the importance of Citizen Petitioned Articles but felt the articles, as presented, did not demonstrate a clear path for the future. Petitioned Articles open up discussion surrounding the needs of the town but the articles did not consider the impact to the tax payors.

#### Article #5 – Road and Sidewalk Construction, Design and Repair

Jodie Garzon made a motion to recommend approval of Article #5, in the amount of \$500,000.00, from Free Cash; Joyce Boiardi seconded. Patrick Gatto hopes a Sidewalk Committee can be re-established to advocate the need for sidewalks throughout town. Vote: 9/0 motion carries unanimously.

The committee requested a link to Town Meeting Materials be available on the Town's Website: [www.millisma.gov](http://www.millisma.gov)  
Mike Guzinski assured the committee there would be.

The Finance Committee's Policy and Procedures:

[https://www.millisma.gov/sites/g/files/vyhlif901/f/uploads/finance\\_committee\\_operating\\_policies\\_and\\_procedures\\_2021.pdf](https://www.millisma.gov/sites/g/files/vyhlif901/f/uploads/finance_committee_operating_policies_and_procedures_2021.pdf)  
allows for a Minority Report to be presented at Town Meeting when three or more members are in opposition of their vote.

#### Finance Committee Meeting Minutes Approval:

Jodie Garzon made a motion to approve the October 12, 2022 Finance Committee Meeting Minutes; Joyce Boiardi seconded. Vote: 9/0 motion carries unanimously.

#### Adjourn Meeting:

Jodie Garzon made a motion to adjourn the Finance Committee Meeting at 9:24 PM; Jon Loer seconded. Vote: 9/0 motion carries unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,  
Deirdre Gilmore