

Finance Committee Meeting

March 1, 2023, 7:00 PM EST
Veterans Memorial Building – Room #229
900 Main Street Millis, MA 02054
Participation Via Zoom Remote Platform

Committee Members In Attendance:

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

Invited Guest:

Kris Fogarty, Recreation Director
Kim Tolson, Library Director
Lisa Hardin, Town Clerk
Patricia Burke, Article Petitioner

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

Recreation Department FY24 Budget Presentation:

The Department was awarded "Agency of the Year for Program Outreach" for their Project Smile initiative. Throughout town, inspiring artwork was painted to promote positivity amongst young people. The Pickle Ball Courts were soundproofed thanks to the efforts of the DPW and funding at Town Meeting. The Department established Millis Recreation Serves, a community service program for Middle/High School Students, there are currently 72 students that participate. Project Smile II is planned for May 2023, Mental Awareness Month. Expansion of the Adaptive/Inclusive Programming is another of the department's goals.

The Recreation Department Budget consists of the following:

• Director Salary:	\$ 66,558.00
• Clerical Wages:	\$ 23,432.00
• Teen Coordinator:	\$ 24,440.00
• Longevity:	\$ 1,050.00
• Supplies and Expenses	<u>\$ 58,798.00</u>
Total:	<u>\$174,278.00</u>

Marijuana Impact Fees cover:

• Clerical Wages:	\$ 12,980.00
• Teen Coordinator:	\$ 24,440.00
• Supplies and Expenses:	<u>\$ 2,000.00</u>
Total:	<u>\$ 39,420.00</u>

The Above Level Service Requests includes (2.5) additional hours for the Director, \$4,754.10, and \$40,000.00 for Supplies and Expenses. The average annual cost for Supplies and Expenses is \$131,414.00. The FY23 Supplies and Expenses budget was based on 2020 data and is not sufficient in 2023. As of March 1st, the Supplies and Expenses have totaled \$71,000.00. Spring Programming will require an estimated \$15,000.00 for Supplies and Expenses.

In FY23, the town changed the Recreation Department's Receipts by eliminating the Special Revolving Fund which had previously paid for Operating Expenses, a portion of the Department's Salaries and Healthcare Costs. By doing so, all receipts are now deposited into the General Fund, approximately \$120,000.00 to date; anticipated receipts are expected to exceed previous years by approximately \$30,000.00.

A 53D Fund would require the town to cover the cost for Salaries and Healthcare while allowing a Revolving Fund to absorb the costs for programs. Most small communities operate their Recreation Department in this manner. At the end of the Fiscal Year, \$10,000.00 is allotted to remain in the fund; all other revenues are turned over to the General Fund. Ideally, this would be the

best scenario. Self-Funded Recreation Departments, which cover all costs, are in larger communities. The programs provided generate revenues for the town and are deposited to the General Fund. Salaries and Healthcare costs are now funded by the General Fund similar to the Library, Town Clerk and other departments. Raising program fees will not fix the lack of funds in the Supplies and Expenses Budget; it was underfunded in FY23. The committee requested an overall breakdown of revenue and expenses for FY23 in order to budget properly for FY24. It was noted that the Recreation Department provides great programs.

Additional Marijuana Impact Fee Requests include expanding staff for the Inclusive Camp Program, continuation of the Teen Coordinator plus 2/3 of benefit costs. The Teen Coordinator, Erin LeBlanc, has recruited volunteers from the Middle/High School to participate/volunteer in numerous programs. The Department is seeking grants to continue this endeavor when Marijuana Impact Fee Revenue expire.

Library FY24 Budget Presentation:

The Library provides numerous programs, 462, in 2022, and has seen an 87% increase in attendance. Marijuana Impact Fees has allowed the Library to be open for extended hours on Thursday and Friday evenings as well as Saturdays during the Summer months. The total cost is \$16,139.50. Additional programming has resulted in an increase of participants.

Salaries total \$325,200.00 of which \$16,140.00 is funded by Marijuana Impact Fees. Expenses total \$172,613.00 for a total budget of \$497,813.00. The cost of Library Materials is \$94,500.00; 19% of the overall budget is needed to maintain certification.

The Library was built ten years ago and recently underwent a Facility Assessment. As a result, Capital Requests include improvements to the facility overall, \$30,500.00, which includes roof repairs, improvements to handicap accessibility and repairs to exterior gutters. In addition, \$110,000.00 is requested for Phase II of the Lighting System.

Town Clerk, Elections and Registrar FY24 Budget Presentation:

The FY24 Elections Budget Request includes increases to the following line items:

• Wages	\$13,357.00
• Printing	\$ 2,400.00
• Supplies and Expenses	\$ 300.00
• Postage	\$ 2,000.00
• Food	\$ 1,500.00
• Advertising	\$ 300.00
• Equipment	\$ 500.00
Total:	<u>\$20,357.00</u>

In FY24, there will be (3) Elections:

- Tri-County School Renovation Project Special Election in October 2023
- Federal Primary Election in March of 2024, which requires Early Voting Staff Hours
- Town Election in May 2024

The FY23 Elections Budget is in a \$8,800.00 deficit. However, there is \$8,000.00 available in the Town Clerk Overtime Budget. Reimbursement from the Commonwealth is available to cover costs for Early Voting; the Assistant Town Clerk filed the documents needed and reimbursement should be received within the Fiscal Year. The increases to the Elections FY24 Budget are based on projections. The Town Clerk Budget includes Clerical Overtime of \$10,000.00 which is used for the Annual Census and Dog Licensing which should be everyday tasks; overtime costs should not be necessary. The committee questioned the overall Overtime Budgets for the Elections and Town Clerk Budgets.

The Registrar Budget totals \$7,328.00 which includes \$1,428.00 in Salaries and \$5,900.00 in expenses. An increase in postage and printing are expected. The Registrar budget is needed for the Annual Census and publishing the Annual Street Listing.

The Town Clerk FY24 Budget Request includes increases to:

- Salaries \$887.00
 - An increase in Longevity and Step Increases
- Expenses \$1,200.00
 - Supplies and Expenses \$500.00
 - Postage \$500.00
 - Equipment Repairs \$200.00

The Town Clerk Above Level Service Request includes an increase to the Town Clerk's Annual Stipend from \$12,723.00 to \$30,000.00. No additional Healthcare costs will be needed; Elected Officials are offered Healthcare Benefits and the Town Clerk is enrolled. The increase would allow for additional hours (16) per week for the Town Clerk to be available during Town Hall

operating hours, primarily in the afternoons. The proposal for additional funding of the Elected Town Clerk has been presented for several years. A Study was conducted several years ago to evaluate the structure of the Town Clerk's Office: Elected versus an Appointed Town Clerk, Staffing Needs, etc. The findings were that the current structure is sufficient for the size of the town. However, if there is 50% increase to the Town Clerk's Stipend justification needs to be made in order to present the request to Town Meeting.

Petitioned Article Presentation:

Patricia Burke gave an overview of her background. The article proposed would address radio frequencies in the town in terms of cell tower placements and wireless exposures. Five other communities are putting forth a Warrant Article at their Spring 2023 Town Meeting to address the radio frequency concerns. The FCC (Federal Communication Commission) is reviewing their policy of Radio Frequency Placement.

Concerns include:

- Long term exposure
- Impacts to children, wildlife and the environment

Wireless providers are installing 5G networking without the town's knowledge. A proposal to have wireless providers certified annually would keep the Town Administration aware of the wireless infrastructure occurring throughout town.

The intent of the Petitioned Article is to make the issues made public at a local level. The committee requested Ms. Burke to summarize the concerns in layman's terms to be presented at the Spring Town Meeting. Historically, the Finance Committee has supported Citizen Petitions allowing Town Meeting Voters to make the ultimate decision.

Oak Grove Farm Playground and Fields Funding Update:

Carol Johnston, Finance Director, emailed the committee information on Oak Grove Farm Funding. John McAvoy provided the committee, via email, with a background of playground and field maintenance funding.

Spring 2023 Town Meeting Draft Warrant Article Review:

- Article #1 Unpaid Bills
- Article #2 FY23 Additional Wages and Expenses
- Article #3 FY24 Operating Budget
- Article #4 Sewer Enterprise Fund
- Article #5 Water Enterprise Fund
- Article #6 Stormwater Enterprise Fund
- Article #7 Consent Items:
 - Amendments to the Personnel Plan
 - Board of Health Appointing Authority
 - Revolving Funds
 - Community Preservation Fund
- Article #8 Capital Items
- Article #9 Design and Construction of Sidewalks
- Article #10 Tree Maintenance/Removal
- Article #11 General ByLaw – Powers and Duties of the Town Administrator
- Article #12 Establish Millis Net Zero Goal
- Article #13 Amend Plastic Bag Reduction ByLaw
- Article #14 Unemployment Insurance
- Article #15 OPEB (Other Post-Employment Benefits) Fund
- Article #16 Special Education Stabilization Fund
- Article #17 Stabilization Fund
- Article #18 Petitioned Article

Board and Committee Liaison Updates:

Jon Loer, member of the Capital Planning Committee, made the committee aware there are (13) Capital Item Requests. The committee is working to prioritize the needs of the town. The requests include:

- DPW Equipment
- Library Lighting Upgrade
- Town Building HVAC Upgrades
- School Department Wireless Upgrades and an increase in Transportation Costs

- Council on Aging Replacement Vehicle
- Veterans Memorial Building Improvements

At their last meeting, the Capital Planning Committee discussed their role in making recommendations to the Select Board and Finance Committee. The committee is focused on prioritizing the town's ten-year needs.

Joyce Boiardi and Sara Reyes attended the School Committee Meeting, the School Department's SPED Funding Deficit has risen to \$1.8 million. As a result, 22-28 Full-Time Employees would be laid off; this will impact all grades in the School Department K-12. Classes sizes would be increased and Course Curriculum could be decreased at the Middle/High School. SPED costs are astronomical; relief is needed. Circuit Breaker funds are approximately \$500,000.00.

The School Committee has posted a Public Hearing on Tuesday, March 14, 2023, at 7:00 PM to discuss their FY24 Budget. The meeting will be held at the Middle/High School Library.

Finance Committee Meeting Minutes Approval:

Jodie Garzon made a motion to approve the February 15, 2023 Tri-Board Meeting Minutes; Jon Loer seconded. Vote: 6/0 2 abstained. Motion carries.

Adjourn Meeting:

Jodie Garzon made a motion to adjourn the Finance Committee Meeting at 9:08 PM; Pete Berube seconded. Vote: 9/0 motion carries unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,
Deirdre Gilmore