

Finance Committee Meeting

April 5, 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:

Michael Guzinski, Town Administrator
Carol Johnston, Finance Director
David Werner, Oak Grove Farm Commission
James McKay, DPW Director
Jon Barry, Capital Planning Committee
Craig Gibbons, Energy Committee Chair
Cecelia Doucette, Technology Safety Educator
Craig Schultze, Select Board Vice-Chair
Steven Catalano, School Committee Chair
Marc Conroy, School Committee Member
James Duffy, Millis Resident

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

Community Preservation Open Space/Recreation Fund – Oak Grove Farm Trail Improvements Review and Discussion:

This Warrant Article would appropriate funds from the Community Preservation Committee's (CPC) Open Space/Recreation Fund for trail improvements at Oak Grove Farm. Phase II of improvements will include catch basin repairs, inline with Stormwater Regulations, boardwalk replacements, gravel throughout the farm which was approved by the Conservation Commission as well as the DEP. The improvements will allow the Millis Cross-country Team to once again utilize this town-owned property. The cost is \$34,237.68. The CPC voted unanimously to approve the improvements. It was noted, the property is maintained primarily by volunteers. The DPW Staff will assist with the repairs including catch basin replacement which will address some of the drainage issues.

Capital Planning Committee Memo and Detail Summary Review and Discussion:

The committee was established in 2017 in an effort to prioritize the town's overall Capital Needs. The committee ranks needs based on public safety and overall benefit to the town. The Select Board presents Capital Needs in their Warrant which will be voted on at Town Meeting.

The committee's highest priorities include:

- PFAS Design at Well #3: \$272,900.00
 - Funded from Water Enterprise Reserves
- Chlorine/PH Analyzer: \$ 31,200.00
 - Funded from Water Enterprise Reserves
- Library Roof Repairs: \$ 30,500.00
- Library Lighting Management System: \$110,000.00
 - A Capital Needs Study was conducted for the two items above demonstrating both are a critical need.
- DPW Truck: \$ 95,527.00

Medium priorities include:

- School Department Data Center Upgrade: \$ 45,000.00
- Town Building HVAC Upgrades: \$ 75,000.00
- School Department Wireless Upgrade: \$ 68,000.00
- Aerial Boom lift: \$ 45,558.00

Lower priorities include:

- DPW Heavy duty trailer: \$ 23,000.00

Net Zero Goal Warrant Article Review and Discussion:

In 2015, Millis became a Green Community and has received \$1.2 million in assistance. The intent of this article is to set a goal to reduce greenhouse gases and fossil fuels starting with the Town's Municipal Buildings and educate homeowners on energy efficiency by 2050. This endeavor is not mandated and does not commit the town to any regulations. It was noted the town has made great strides with LED Lighting to reduce affects to the environment.

Petitioned Article Discussion:

An abundance of information on this article has been distributed to the committee for their review. Cecelia Doucette, Technology Safety Educator, weighed in on the merits of the article. The Millis Board of Health has not provided an opinion.

Jon Loer made a motion to recommend dismissal of Article #19, Petitioned Article; Joyce Boiardi seconded. Vote: 9/0 motion carries unanimously.

Stabilization Fund Policy Review and Discussion:

The town has made a concerted effort to maintain a Stabilization Fund Policy which includes maintaining a balance of 5% of the General Operating Budget. In doing so, the town has maintained a positive Bond Rating Aa3; very low credit risk. The town's Operating Budget has grown significantly over the past few years which will require the Stabilization Fund to increase in order to adhere to the policy. Although funds from the Stabilization Fund have been used to offset Snow and Ice Deficits in the past, that practice has not been used in over six years; Snow and Ice Deficits have been included in the Tax Recap. The town is facing a number of borrowing needs; renovations to the Middle/High School, PFAS Water Treatment Facility, new Senior Center as well as possible improvements to town-owned properties. The town's Stabilization Fund Policy is available for review:

https://www.millisma.gov/sites/g/files/vyhlf901f/uploads/millis_stabilization_fund_policy.pdf

Spring 2023 Town Meeting Warrant Article Review:

Town Meeting Warrant Article Motions will be available next week; the motions outline funding sources for each article.

Article #1 Unpaid Bills

This article would authorize payment of bills from prior Fiscal Years.

Jodie Garzon made a motion to recommend approval of Article #1, Unpaid Bills, in the amount of \$8,235.59; Sara Reyes seconded. Vote: 9/0 motion carries unanimously.

Article #2 FY23 Additional Wages and Expenses

This article transfers funds to balance the current Fiscal Year's Budget. The exact dollar amount has not been determined. Therefore, the Select Board and Finance Committee will make their recommendations at their upcoming meetings.

Article #3 FY24 Operating Budget

The Select Board did vote to approve the FY24 Operating Budget provided which includes a 6% increase in Operating Budgets for both the School and Municipal Departments. The proposed FY24 Operating Budget is available on the town's website: https://www.millisma.gov/sites/g/files/vyhlf901f/uploads/fy24_operating_budget_approved_by_the_select_board.pdf

The Select Board will make their final recommendations at their upcoming meeting, Monday, April 10, 2023. The Finance Committee will make a recommendation on Article #3 at their meeting on April 12, 2023.

Article #4 Supplemental FY24 Budget

This article would supplement the FY24 School Budget:

- Free Cash: \$538,697.00
- Stabilization Fund: \$400,000.00
- Total: \$938,697.00

The ever-growing cost of Special Education has impacted the Millis School System; \$1.3 million shortfall. The Select Board has reached out to State Representatives for financial assistance. If this article does not receive approval at the Spring Town Meeting, at least 27 School Staff could be let go; partial funding of the article would decrease that number to approximately 14. Fully funding the article would require 7 School Department Staff to be laid off.

The above does not include HCA Marijuana Impact Fees, information of positions funded is available on the town's website: https://www.millisma.gov/sites/g/files/vyhlf901/f/uploads/fy24_marijuana_impact_funds_requests.pdf

Article #5 Ratification of Collective Bargaining Agreements (CBA):

The agreements have been ratified by all parties. The ratification requires a Town Meeting Vote.

Jodie Garzon made a motion to recommend approval of Article #5; Cathy MacInnes seconded. Vote: 9/0 motion carries unanimously.

Article #6 Sewer Enterprise Fund, Article #7 Water Enterprise Fund and Article #8 Stormwater Enterprise Fund:

The FY24 Budgets will be finalized and presented to the Select Board for their approval. The Finance Committee will make their recommendation at next week's meeting.

Article #9 Consent Items

This article includes (3) items:

- Amendments to the Personnel Plan including:
 - An increase in Longevity payments by \$150.00
 - An increase to Accrued Sick Time, from 150 days to 180
 - An increase to Sick Leave Buy Back, from \$2,500.00 to \$2,800.00, upon retirement
 - An amendment to Vacation Accruals upon hire; eligibility for use of vacation after six months
 - An increase to Vacation Carryover, from two weeks to three
 - Addition of Zoning Board of Appeals Administrative Support Stipend \$4,215.00
 - DPW Director Snow Management Stipend, \$3,783.00 and Class B Operator License \$1,164.00
 - Elimination of various unfilled or no longer needed positions
- Authorization of Revolving Funds Limits for:
 - Oak Grove Farm Maintenance: \$ 35,000.00
 - Animal Control Shelter Fund: \$ 3,000.00
 - Fire Alarm Fund: \$ 10,000.00
 - Historical Commission Fund: \$ 12,000.00
 - Ambulance Department Fund: \$ 20,000.00
 - Council on Aging Transportation Fund: \$ 5,000.00
 - VMB Custodial/Maintenance Fund: \$ 6,000.00
 - School Food Service Fund: \$360,000.00
 - School Transportation Fund: \$500,000.00
 - Stormwater Management Fund: \$ 10,000.00
 - Board of Health Services Fund: \$ 20,000.00
 - Board of Health Rabies Clinic Fund: \$ 2,500.00
 - School Athletic Field Fund: \$ 35,000.00
 - School Extracurricular Fund: \$ 8,000.00
 - Library Special Use Fund: \$ 10,000.00
 - Tobacco Control Program: \$ 1,000.00

Revolving Funds allow departments to use revenues received for specific programs and expenses.

- Community Preservation Fund Allocations:

o Administrative Support:	\$ 8,377.50
o Expenses:	\$ 8,377.50
o Long Term Debt Principal:	\$ 20,000.00
o Long Term Debt Interest:	\$ 7,950.00
o Historic Resources Reserve:	\$ 33,509.00
o Community Housing Reserve:	\$ 33,509.00
o Open Space Reserve:	\$ 33,509.00
o Budgeted Reserve:	\$ 80,000.00

The Community Preservation Fund was established in the mid 2000's and is partially matched by the Commonwealth.

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

Article #10 Community Preservation Open Space/Recreation Fund – Oak Grove Farm Trail Improvements Phase II

Jodie Garzon made a motion to recommend approval of Article #10; Peter Underhill seconded. Vote: 8/0 1 abstention. Motion carries.

Article #11 Capital Items

This article would fund the following as presented by the Select Board:

• Replacement of a 3500 Dump Truck with Plow and Sander:	\$ 95,527.00
• Purchase of a Heavy Duty Trailer:	\$ 23,000.00
• Library Roof Repairs:	\$ 30,500.00
• School Department Wireless Upgrade:	\$ 68,000.00
• Inflow/Infiltration Investigation of the Sewer System:	\$137,630.00
• Well #3 PFAS Treatment Plant Final Design:	\$272,900.00
• Chlorine/PH Analyzer Replacement:	\$ 31,200.00
Total:	<u>\$658,757.00</u>

This article will be funded by Free Cash, Water, Sewer and Stormwater Enterprise Funds as well as previously approved Capital Project unused balances. The exact appropriations are available:

https://www.millisma.gov/sites/g/files/vyhlif901f/uploads/fy24_capital_item_requests_0.pdf

Jon Loer made a motion to recommend approval of Article #11; Jodie Garzon seconded. Vote: 9/0. Motion carries unanimously.

Article #12 School Computer Lease and Article #13 (1) Police Cruiser Lease

Both articles require a 2/3rd Vote at Town Meeting. The articles authorize a borrowing not necessarily funding. The Finance Committee will make their recommendation at next week's meeting.

Article #14 Establish Millis Net Zero Goal

Jon Loer made a motion to recommend approval of Article #14, Establish Millis Net Zero Goal; Sara Reyes seconded. Vote: 9/0 motion carries unanimously.

Article #15 Amend Plastic Bag Reduction ByLaw

Jodie Garzon made a motion to recommend approval of Article #15, Amend Plastic Bag Reduction ByLaw; John Steadman seconded. Vote: 9/0 motion carries unanimously.

Article #16 Unemployment Insurance

This article will fund the Town's Unemployment Fund in the amount of \$25,000.00 from Free Cash. The Unemployment Fund's current balance is approximately \$100,000.00.

Jodie Garzon made a motion to recommend approval of Article #16; Peter Underhill seconded. Vote: 9/0 motion carries unanimously.

Article #17 Special Education Stabilization Fund

This article would simply establish the fund, no funding is available at this time. Funding could be allocated at the November 2023 Town Meeting.

Jodie Garzon made a motion to recommend approval of Article #17, Special Education Stabilization Fund; Joyce Boiardi seconded. Vote 9/0 motion carries unanimously.

Article #18 Stabilization Fund

Jodie Garzon made a motion to recommend dismissal of Article #18 due to lack of funding; Peter Underhill seconded.

After further discussion, Free Cash Appropriations could be changed at Town Meeting, allowing available funds to be voted on for the Stabilization Fund.

Roll Call Vote on recommendations to dismiss Article #18: Sara Reyes – nay, John Steadman – nay, Peter Underhill – aye, Jodie Garzon – aye, Joyce Boiardi – nay, Jon Loer – nay, Cathy MacInnes – nay, Mike Krone – nay, Pete Berube – nay. Vote: 2/7 motion fails.

Mike Krone made a motion to recommend approval of Article #18, Stabilization Fund; John Steadman seconded. Vote: 7/2 motion carries.

Committee Members can provide a Minority Report to present to Town Meeting if a vote for recommendation or dismissal of an article is 6/3.

The committee members were assigned Warrant Articles, a synopsis of each article will be included in the Finance Committee's Report.

Finance Committee Meeting Minutes Approval:

Jodie Garzon made a motion to approve the March 22, 2023 Finance Committee Meeting Minutes as written; Peter Underhill seconded. Vote: 9/0. Motion carries.

Adjourn Meeting:

Jodie Garzon made a motion to adjourn the Finance Committee Meeting at 9:58 PM; Peter Underhill seconded. Vote: 9/0 motion carries unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,
Deirdre Gilmore