

Finance Committee Meeting

September 20, 2023 7:00 PM EST
Veterans Memorial Building – Room #229
900 Main Street Millis, MA 02054

Committee Members In Attendance:

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

Invited Guest:

Michael Guzinski, Town Administrator
Carol Johnston, Finance Director
Lisa Hardin, Town Clerk

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

Tri-County Vocational High School Construction Project (TCVHSCP) Discussion:

This topic is being discussed to determine whether or not the Finance Committee will take a position to support or oppose the TCVHSCP. The project will have an impact on Millis residents' taxes and could potentially impact Town Services. Initially, it was thought the October 24th Ballot would consist of two questions:

- Support/Opposition of the TCVHSCP
- Debt Exclusion; bonding the Town's obligation for 30 years
 - Requiring approval of a Warrant Article at Town Meeting

Since then, Bond Counsel has verified the project's bonding will be solely done by Tri-County and therefore will not require a Warrant Article at the November 2023 Town Meeting. The construction costs will eventually be a Town Meeting Warrant Article; Fiscal Year Operating Budget appropriation. The Town of Millis Charter requires the Finance Committee to make their recommendations on Town Meeting Warrant Articles.

The Select Board has voted to include a separate Ballot Question on October 24th for a limited 30-year Debt Exclusion which will vary year to year dependent on Millis Student's enrollment at Tri-County which ranges from 30 – 60 students per year.

Mike Guzinski clarified an Operational Override is permanent and is included in the annual Prop 2 ½ increase to taxpayers. A Debt Exclusion expires at the end of its term, in this case thirty years.

Mike Krone expressed his concern with the Finance Committee taking a stance on this topic and questioned whether or not the Finance Committee has enough information to have an opinion/recommendation on a \$290 million project. Jon Loer has a different point of view; the residents are looking for direction and information from the Town regarding the project and its impact on residents should the project pass at the October 24th Election. It was agreed, the Select Board have an obligation to inform the residents of the project and its impact on the Town's Financial Position.

Mike Guzinski clarified, if the TCVHSCP and one-time Debt Exclusion pass, an Annual Vote at subsequent Spring Town Meetings will be needed to appropriate funds for each year's assessment. The Town's Operating Budget includes a Debt Line Item which will vary year to year depending on the project's assessment.

Mike Guzinski informed the committee the Town Administration and Select Board are working on an informational packet for residents regarding the project. Jane Hardin, Millis Tri-County School Committee Representative and Brian Mushnick, Norfolk Tri-County School Committee Representative and Building Committee Chair will be in attendance at the Select Board Meeting on September 25, 2023. In addition, a Public Community Forum will take place within the next few weeks which will offer residents the opportunity to voice their opinions and concerns. A mailing is in the works which will include the Election Date and both Ballot Questions. The Finance Committee's FY24 Budget does not have adequate funds to support a separate mailing on their position on the TCVHSCP or Debt Exclusion. However, if they wish to do so, the committee could authorize a Reserve Fund Transfer.

Sara Reyes agreed the Finance Committee should take a position on the project given the significant impact it will have on Town Finances. Cathy MacInnes suggested the Finance Director, Town Administrator and Select Board make residents aware of any anticipated obligations/projects that will affect residents' taxes. Joyce Boiardi stated the Finance Committee is a separate entity to the Select Board and are not obligated to support the Select Board's decision/recommendation on certain matters. Lisa Hardin reminded the committee that if Millis residents do not support the project but the other communities do, Millis is obligated to pay the project's assessment which will require an avenue for funding.

Jon Loer made a motion to recommend the Finance Committee take a position on the TCVHSCP for approximately \$290 million; Joyce Boiardi seconded. Roll Call Vote: Pete Berube – aye, Jodie Garzon – nay, Peter Underhill – aye, Joyce Boiardi – aye, Michael Krone – nay, Jon Loer – aye, Cathy MacInnes – nay, Sara Reyes – aye, Jen Zarutskie – aye. Vote: 6/3 motion passes.

Michael Krone made a motion to allow for a Minority Opinion/Report regarding the above vote; Cathy MacInness seconded.

The Finance Committee will take a formal vote on the TCVHSCP and Debt Exclusion at their next meeting scheduled for Wednesday, September 27, 2023.

Pete Berube amended the motion to allow for a Minority Opinion/Report consistent with the Finance Committee's Operating Procedures/Guidelines. Vote: 9/0 motion carries unanimously.

Vote Finance Committee Position on TCVHSCP – Postponed

November 6, 2023 Town Meeting Warrant Article Discussion:

The Select Board opened the November Town Meeting Warrant on September 14, 2023, it will remain open for two weeks.

Mike Guzinski outlined the Warrant Articles the Select Board are considering:

- FY24 Operating Budget Adjustments; Marijuana Impact Fee Program and Positions Funding as well as OPIOD Funds
 - OPIOD Settlements have provided a new funding source for the town.
- OPEB (Other Post Employment Benefits) Audit
 - The Audit is conducted every two years and is expected to be less than \$8,000.00.
- Capital Items
- PFAS Treatment Facility Borrowing – Well #3
- Increase School Bus Lease Authorization
 - Simply an authorization, no additional funding is required.
- SPED Fund Transfer
 - The Fund was established and will require appropriations to cover mid-year unexpected costs.
- Chapter 111F Fund Transfer
 - Includes Police and Fire & Rescue Personnels' out on injury additional costs.
- Transfer to OPEB
- Transfer to Stabilization Fund

Carol Johnston confirmed Free Cash has been submitted and is pending certification.

Old Business/New Business:

- Restructure Finance Committee Officers
 - Typically, the Officers are nominated annually at the beginning of the calendar year and remain for 1 year according to the Finance Committee's Policy and Procedures adopted in April 2021 https://www.millisma.gov/sites/g/files/vyhlf901/f/uploads/finance_committee_operating_policies_and_procedures_2021.pdf
 - Restructuring has not occurred in the past few years and will be revisited at the beginning of 2024.

Jodie Garzon made a motion to defer nominations of Finance Committee Officers until after January 1, 2024; Joyce Boiardi seconded. Vote: 9/0 motion carries unanimously. Peter Berube, Jodie Garzon and Peter Underhill will remain Chair, Vice Chair and Clerk until 2024.

Jon Loer, Liaison to the Capital Planning Committee (CPC), noted the CPC will meet on September 26th to further discuss some potential Capital Item Requests:

- Library Lighting Phase II ~ \$110,000.00
- Veterans Memorial Building HVAC ~ \$75,000.00
- Fire & Rescue Antenna Equipment
 - The Rental Revenues from the contractor are expected to supplement the Water Enterprise Fund; the Select Board has not taken a formal vote on the contract.
- DPW Van Replacement – Funded by Water and Sewer Enterprise Funds

- PFAS Treatment Plant – Well #3

Finance Committee Meeting Minutes Approval:

Peter Underhill made a motion to approve the August 30, 2023 Finance Committee Meeting Minutes; Joyce Boiardi seconded. Vote: 8/0 1 abstained. Motion carries.

Adjourn Meeting:

Joyce Boiardi made a motion to adjourn the Finance Committee Meeting at 7:54 PM; Cathy MacInnes seconded. Vote: 9/0 motion carries unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,
Deirdre Gilmore