

Finance Committee Meeting

March 6, 2024 7:00 PM EST
Veterans Memorial Building – Room #229
900 Main Street Millis, MA 02054

Committee Members In Attendance:

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

Invited Guest in Attendance:

Michael Guzinski, Town Administrator
Carol Johnston, Finance Director
Robert Mullaney, School Superintendent
Marc Conroy, School Committee Chair

Jon Loer called the meeting to order at 7:01 PM, the meeting is available to view on the Town's Website <https://millismedia.org/>.

Millis Schools FY25 Budget Update:

Marc Conroy made the committee aware there is a Public Hearing scheduled for Tuesday, March 12, 2024 at 7:30 PM to present the Schools FY25 Budget. Bob Mullaney and Marc Conroy provided the committee with the anticipated shortfall in FY25 estimated at \$1.1 million. The shortfall is based on Revenues presented and discussed at the Tri-Board Meeting and CBAs (Collective Bargaining Agreements). The Clyde Brown Elementary School is in need of a RBT (Registered Behavioral Therapist). This need is based on the IEP (Individualized Educational Program) of students. The district received \$200,000.00 in additional Circuit Breaker Funding. The district provides a "Life Skills Program" for 18 – 22 year olds as well as a T.I.E.S. (Transition to Independence Employment and Success) Program. Out of District costs increased 14% in FY24 and are expected to increase 4.6% in FY25. Other Expenses are expected to increase 3%. There is no room to cut Administrative or Janitorial Staff. The SRO's (School Resource Officer) Salary is paid with HCA Marijuana Impact Funds which will expire in FY26. The School Committee has discussed including the salary in their FY26 Operating Budget. The SRO's role is vital to students and parents. The Town Social Worker provides support after hours; the Adjustment Counselors do not. The School and Municipal Departments are working to centralize Human Resources functions in the Town Administrator's office. The Choice In Program generates revenue and has increased by \$5,000.00.

If the override fails, the district may need to reduce staff by 7 Full-time Teachers and 8 Full-time Paraprofessionals. The determination will be made later in the Fiscal Year. Approval of the override would keep level service staff.

The cost per student attending Tri-County is \$19,153.00 per year. Tri-County Enrollment has increased in recent years. Norfolk County Agricultural High School Tuition Rate per student is \$4,507.00.

The School Department will have more detailed information at the April 3, 2024 Finance Committee Meeting.

Current School Enrollment is available on the town's website: https://www.millisma.gov/sites/g/files/vyhliif901/f/uploads/school_enrollment.pdf

Draft Warrant Review:

Mike Guzinski elaborated on some of the Draft Warrant Articles. Jon Loer noted some of the items are placeholders.

Article #1	Unpaid Bills
Article #2	FY24 Additional Wages and Expenses
Article #3	FY25 Operating Budget
Article #4	Proposition 2 ½ Operational Override <ul style="list-style-type: none">• This is needed to support the FY25 School Department Shortfall estimated at \$1.1 million.• Additional Municipal Services will be included in the override specifically for Police, Fire and Rescue and DPW.• The Select Board will determine what articles will be included in the May Town Meeting Warrant.
Article #5	Sewer Enterprise Fund
Article #6	Water Enterprise Fund

Article #7	Stormwater Enterprise Fund
Article #8	Consent Agenda: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Amendments to Personnel Plan • Board of Health Appointing Authority • Revolving Funds • Community Preservation Fund
Article #9	Water Enterprise - Lead Service Line Inventory Compliance Project
Article #10	Oak Grove Farm Trail Improvements (Community Preservation Committee) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The improvements are in their third phase, the request and detail can be viewed at the below link: https://www.millisma.gov/sites/g/files/vyhlf901f/uploads/oak_grove_farm_trail_improvements_project_3_evaluation_guide_1-31-2024.pdf
Article #11	Oak Grove Farmhouse Renovations (Community Preservation Committee) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This article will address the much-needed repairs to the Oak Grove Farmhouse, the cost is estimated at \$875,000.00.
Article #12	Capital Items <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Capital Planning Committee will present their Capital Items Recommendations to the Finance Committee at their April 3, 2024 meeting.
Article #13	Zoning Bylaw Amendment – MBTA Communities Multi-Family Overlay District (MCMOD)
Article #14	Zoning Bylaw Amendment – MCMOD Inclusionary Zoning

The MBTA Advisory Committee will present Article #13 & #14 to the Finance Committee at their March 27, 2024 meeting.

Article #15	Establish Opioid Settlement Special Revenue Account & Transfer Funds Into Account
Article #16	Library Parking Lot Contamination Environmental Study – Funding <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • During the construction of the Library, some contaminants were remediated. However, an Environmental Study mandated by the DEP will need to be funded for further testing. This came as a result of a complaint from an abutting neighbor to the property. A LSP (Licensed Site Professional) has been hired to oversee the testing.
Article #17	Rescind Debt Authorization for Village & Birch Drainage Improvements <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Auditors recommended this article to clean up the accounts.
Article #18	Special Act – Authorize Town Administrator to Sign Warrants <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This article would authorize the Town Administrator to sign Warrants: Accounts Payables and Payroll. Currently, the Select Board is tasked with signing both.
Article #19	Increase Maximum Abatement Amount for Senior Work off Programs <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This article would increase the abatement amount from \$1,500.00 to \$2,000.00.
Article #20	Unemployment Insurance Fund
Article #21	Stabilization Fund

A more detailed Warrant will be available next Wednesday. Carol Johnston noted the Enterprise Funds' Indirect Costs are an agreed upon 2.5% increase for FY25.

Finance Committee Meeting Minutes Approval:

Peter Underhill made a motion to approve the February 28, 2024 Finance Committee Meeting Minutes as written; Joyce Boiardi seconded. Vote: 8/0. Motion carries unanimously.

Board and Committee Liaison Updates:

Jon Loer noted the four important upcoming projects/decisions facing the town:

- FY25 Operational Override
- MS/HS Building Project
- Tri-County Building Project Assessment
- PFAS Facility at Well #3

He thanked the DPW Crew for saving the day on Tuesday, Election Day, they utilized their Vactor Truck to free the sewer lines at Town Hall.

A list of Liaisons to the Town's Boards and Committees is updated by the Town Administrator's Office. A request will be made to review the list and the committee will consider reassigning its members.

Old Business/New Business:

The committee will invite the School Building Committee to a meeting as the project's milestone approaches.

It was suggested the committee invite the Police, Fire & Rescue and DPW to a meeting in the Fall to provide an update on their needs and their Operating Budgets.

Adjourn Meeting:

Mike Krone made a motion to adjourn the Finance Committee Meeting at 8:12 PM; Jon Loer seconded. Vote: 8/0. Motion carries unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,
Deirdre Gilmore