

Finance Committee Meeting

April 10, 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
Joyce Boiardi
Jodie Garzon
Cathy MacInnes
Sara Reyes
Jen Zarutskie

Invited Guest in Attendance:

Michael Guzinski, Town Administrator
Carol Johnston, Finance Director
Craig Schultze, Select Board Chair
Ellen Rosenfeld, Select Board Vice Chair
Jonathan Barry, Capital Planning Committee Chair
Lisa Hardin, Town Clerk
Loring Barnes, Millis Resident

Jon Loer called the meeting to order at 7:01 PM, the meeting is being broadcast live on Comcast Channel 6, Verizon Channel 38 and is available to view on YouTube and the Town's Website <https://millismedia.org/>. Meeting Materials are available on the Town's Website <https://www.millisma.gov/meeting-materials/pages/fy24-meeting-materials>. He reminded the committee and attendees to speak into the microphone.

Capital Planning Committee Presentation:

Jon Barry provided the CPC's (Capital Planning Committee) Memo and Summary. The CPC was established in 2017 and is tasked with prioritizing and ranking the Capital Needs of the Town. For FY25, Department Heads requested (8) items totaling \$444,795.00 and the CPC prioritized them as follows:

Highest Priority:

- Fire & Rescue Car II Replacement \$85,000.00
- DPW Safety Equipment \$40,000.00
- Fire & Rescue Portable Radios \$26,232.00
 - Town's share after Grant Funding
- School Server Replacement \$67,786.00
- School Replace Switches \$70,000.00

Medium Priority:

- Library Exterior Building Repairs \$35,000.00

Lower Priority:

- Town Buildings Aerial Boom Lift \$52,923.00
- School Skid Steer \$67,854.00

The CPC's Summary is a 10-Year List of the Town's Long-Term Capital Needs and is available at the link below:
https://www.millisma.gov/sites/g/files/vyhlf901f/uploads/capital_planning_committee_summary_-_may_2024_0.pdf

There are three categories in the Summary:

- Maintenance and Repair of Existing Capital \$ 19.2 Million
- Enterprise System Related Capital Needs \$ 19.1 Million
- Other Potential Capital Needs \$115.5 Million

Included in the Other Potential Capital Needs is the Middle/High School Renovation Project. The project will not be presented to the Town until 2025. It is estimated the project will cost \$140 Million but will be offset with funds from the MSBA (Massachusetts School Building Authority) by 35%; \$50 Million. A new Senior Center is included as well and is estimated to cost \$16 Million. It was noted that a

new Senior Center was presented at a previous Town Meeting and failed to pass. Millis' assessment for the Tri-County School Project is expected to be funded by the Marijuana Sales Tax Revenues which has averaged between \$300,000.00 - \$350,000.00 annually. The Library Exterior Building Repairs include:

- Clean and reseal cedar siding/soffits around the 3 entrances \$15,000.00
- Install rain diverters in the courtyard and downspout repairs \$ 5,000.00
- Repair/replace exterior bollard lighting \$15,000.00

Similar to the Police Department, the Fire & Rescue Chief has implemented a Vehicle Replacement Program which includes a 5-year replacement plan. IT Staff at the schools are concerned with security and requested Server and Switch Replacements, the cost is mostly for multi-year software licenses.

May 2024 Town Meeting Warrant Article Review, Discussion and Vote:

Jon Loer made a motion to recommend approval of Article 13, Capital Items in the amount of \$321,232.00 to fund:

- DPW Safety Equipment \$ 40,000.00
- Fire & Rescue Chevy Tahoe \$ 85,000.00
- Fire & Rescue Portable Radios \$ 26,232.00
- Library Exterior Building Repairs \$ 35,000.00
- School Server Project \$ 65,000.00
- School Switch Project \$ 70,000.00
- \$321,232.00

; Mike Krone seconded. The Select Board voted to defer (2) items, Town Buildings Aerial Boom Lift, and the School Skid Steer at their meeting on Monday night. The Board voted to appropriate the funds to Article 22, Stabilization Fund, instead. It was noted if the Chevy Tahoe for the Fire & Rescue Department were a Hybrid Model, the cost would be an additional \$16,000.00. At a recent Town Meeting, a Warrant Article for Charging Stations was defeated. The Portable Radios are part of a Joint Grant with the Town of Bellingham. Vote: 8/0 motion carries unanimously.

Jodie Garzon made a motion to recommend Article 22, Stabilization Fund, in the amount of \$195,305.36; Peter Underhill seconded. It was noted this will bring the fund to 6% of the General Operating Budget and the funds will be more readily available than waiting for Certified Free Cash in the Fall. Vote: 8/0 motion carries unanimously.

Jon Loer made a motion to recommend Article 3, FY25 Operating Budget, in the amount of \$43,827,557.00:

- Taxation \$41,914,320.00
- Ambulance Fund \$ 822,519.00
- Perpetual Care Interest \$ 332.00
- Sale of Cemetery Lots \$ 7,358.00
- Cell Tower Revenue \$ 56,334.00
- Bond Premium Release \$ 90,198.00
- Marijuana Impact Fees (Free Cash) \$ 189,780.00
- Transfer from Sewer Fund to General Fund \$ 259,775.00
- Transfer from Water Fund to General Fund \$ 317,503.00
- Transfer from Stormwater Fund to General Fund \$ 169,438.00

Peter Underhill seconded. Cathy MacInnes voiced her concern with the Transfer of funds from the Sewer, Water and Stormwater Enterprises. Vote: 7/1 motion carries.

Jon Loer made a motion to recommend approval of Article 4, Supplemental FY25 Budget – Proposition 2 ½ Operational Override for:

- School Department \$1,070,767.00
- Police Department Wages \$ 180,000.00
- Fire & Rescue Department Wages \$ 95,118.00
- DPW Wages \$ 54,115.00
- \$1,400,000.00

; Peter Underhill seconded. The committee and Town Officials discussed the importance of Article 4 passing at Town Meeting on Tuesday, May 7th and the Town Election on Monday, May 13th:

- Preservation of Millis Public Schools
 - The State has not offered additional funding for SPED Costs.
 - There would be devastating cuts to School Staff if Article 4 fails; 15.8 positions.
 - Class sizes will increase, and student services will be reduced.

- The population in Millis has grown tremendously in the last five years which requires an increase to basic services; Schools and Public Safety.
- The Town has not had an Operational Override in over ten years and another Operational Override is not anticipated for at least five years.
- Several years ago, an independent study of DPW Operations suggested the addition of (4) positions. Since the study, one position has been filled. If passed, the override would provide another General Fund position to assist with road and sidewalk maintenance and repairs.
- In their FY25 Budget Presentations, the Police and Fire & Rescue Chiefs exhibited the increase in call volume over the last several years.
- The Tax Rate has been reduced over the last four years, currently \$16.42. The override would increase taxes for an average single-family home by approximately \$400.00 annually.
- Article 19 would increase the Maximum Abatement Amount for the Senior Work Off Program from \$1,500.00 to \$2,000.00 which will offset some of the override impact to the Senior Population.

It was noted the town is facing challenges with building another PFAS Treatment Facility, funding Millis' Tri-County School Project Assessment and Millis' MS/HS Project.

The request for Absentee Ballots for the May Town Election is approximately 1,500 to date. In person Early Voting will not take place. Polls will be open on May 13, 2024 from 7:00 AM – 8:00 PM.

Vote: 7/1 motion carries.

Finance Committee Meeting Minutes Approval – Postponed

Old Business/New Business:

Jon Loer noted Jim McKay, DPW Director, sent an email to the committee members regarding PFAS which is now at a National Level and asked them to read the information when they have time. He asked the committee members to be mindful when posting on Social Media and clarify if they are posting as a resident or a Finance Committee Member.

Board and Committee Liaison Updates:

Jodie Garzon made the committee aware the MBTA Advisory Committee is refining the ByLaw and Maps and will present them to the Planning Board on June 11, 2024.

Adjourn Meeting:

Jodie Garzon made a motion to adjourn the Finance Committee Meeting at 8:30 PM; Peter Underhill seconded. Vote: 8/0 motion carries unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,
Deirdre Gilmore