

**Finance Committee Minutes**  
**DRAFT**

Date: 7 November 2022

Start Time: 6:00 PM

Location:  
Ashland Town Hall  
101 Main Street, Ashland, Massachusetts  
Conference Room B/C

**Members Present**

X	Scott Warnetski, Chair	X	Ryan Turncliff
X	Jonathan Moore, Vice Chair	X	Ed Hart
X	Jenn Cooney, Clerk		Ashwini Chitnavis
X	Chantal Kokaram		

**Guests Present**

X	Michael Herbert, Town Manager	X	Brittany Iacaponi, Town Finance Director
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**Minutes:****1. Call to Order – Open Session**

- The Chair called the meeting of the Finance Committee (the “Committee”) to order at 6:01 PM.

**2. Approve Draft Minutes from November 1, 2022 Meeting**

- The Committee discussed and approved the draft minutes.
  - Motion: Scott Warnetski
  - Second: Jonathan Moore
  - Vote: 6-0

**3. Public Comment**

- None.

**4. Discuss Fall Town Meeting Warrant Article 7: Temporary Multi-Dwelling Building Moratorium and Make a Recommendation**

- The Chair and Mr. Herbert provided a brief summary of the Committee’s deliberation at its previous meeting.
- The Committee asked questions about new growth forecasts keeping in mind projects currently in the pipeline and discussed the impact of the moratorium in future years. Mr. Herbert also provided historical new growth amounts (noting the high of \$1.3M in 2019 and down to \$412,000 in 2023), together with a timeline of significant multi-family dwelling construction.
- Then, the Committee discussed school enrollment in relation to building projects. It was noted that there had been an enrollment increase of 122 students from 2020 to 2023. The impact of the Town’s expanding population on other services was also considered.

- The Committee inquired about the current state of buildable space/lots and Mr. Herbert reminded the Committee that the Town had purchased property in recent years, knowingly reducing new growth opportunities. The Committee also asked about current projects in front of the Planning Board, Chapter 40B housing and the Town's qualification for the safe harbor, as well as possible rent increases resulting from supply and demand fluctuations.
- The Committee contemplated the economy, interest rates trends, and related likely impacts on new projects.
- Mr. Herbert and the Committee also discussed the purpose of the proposed Comprehensive Plan, emphasizing that the Town was interested in looking at development patterns, services, and costs of services - while at the same time creating a vision for the Town going forward. The Committee considered that the moratorium provided time to develop the Comprehensive Plan, calculate the fiscal impact, and consider funding options.
- Next, the Committee discussed its recommendation and agreed to add supplementary language for Town Meeting to consider, with such recommendation to be included in the Warrant:
  - **FINANCE COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION:** The Finance Committee recommends that the Town will amend the Town of Ashland Zoning Bylaw, Chapter 282, as set forth in the Warrant in Article 7. The Finance Committee believes that a pause in multi-family development would enable the Town to complete the long-range Comprehensive Plan (the development of which is funded in Article 1) to more clearly calculate the fiscal impact of future multi-family development on Town Finances. The Finance Committee also notes the Town has relied on new growth to sustain its annual budgets and a lack of new growth from this moratorium in future years may require the Town to raise revenue through other methods.
    - Motion: Jonathan Moore
    - Second: Ryan Turncliff
    - Vote: 6-0

## 5. Fiscal Year 2023 Officer Elections

- Mr. Warnetski, Mr. Moore and Ms. Cooney indicated that they were willing to continue to serve as Chair, Vice Chair, and Clerk, respectively.
- Election of Chair
  - Motion to elect Scott Warnetski: Ryan Turncliff
  - Second: Ed Hart
  - Vote: 6-0
- Election of Vice Chair
  - Motion to elect Jonathan Moore: Scott Warnetski
  - Second: Jenn Cooney
  - Vote: 6-0
- Election of Clerk
  - Motion to elect Jenn Cooney: Jonathan Moore
  - Second: Ed Hart
  - Vote: 6-0

**6. Other business not reasonably anticipated by the Chair.**

- Mr. Herbert briefly discussed Bill H.5374 and potential economic growth funds directed to the town.

**7. Schedule Future Meetings**

- The Chair asked Ms. Iacaponi about upcoming meetings related to the budget process.
- Ms. Iacaponi distributed the Budget Calendar (attached) and the Committee discussed key dates. Mr. Herbert and Ms. Iacaponi explained that they intended to hold budget workshops with department leaders this year, with invitations for the Committee to participate. The Committee discussed its annual televised meeting and noted that it would meet in late January or February.
- The Committee agreed to approve the Budget Calendar, acknowledging certain dates may move slightly.
  - Motion: Scott Warnetski
  - Second: Jonathan Moore
  - Vote: 6-0

**8. Adjourn**

- There being no further business:
  - Motion to adjourn: Ryan Turncliff
  - Seconded: Scott Warnetski
  - Vote 6-0
- Meeting adjourned at 7:36PM

**List of Documents Presented at Meeting:**

Budget Calendar

This calendar describes the steps leading to the adoption of the budget for those accounts overseen by the Town Manager and requiring appropriation by Town Meeting. The School Superintendent and School Committees carry out similar steps leading to their budget submissions and preparation for Town Meeting. Town and School budget dates have been incorporated into this calendar.

DATE	DESCRIPTION
10/1/22	Town Manager to consult with finance committee on budget schedule per Chapter C. Part VII. Section 7-1 (a) no later than October 1st.
11/1/22	No later than Nov. 1st, the finance committee, after consultation with the Select Board, School Committee, and Town Manager, shall issue a policy statement that shall establish the general guidelines for developing the next town budget per Chapter C. Part VII. Section 7-1 (b).
11/8/22	School Finance Director issues Capital Guidelines to School Departments
11/8/22	School Finance Director issues budget instructions to school principals/directors
11/9/22	Per Chapter 63-2, 'Attested copies of the warrant for the Annual Town Meeting shall be posted at least 7 days before the date of hold the same. Attested copies of any special Town Meeting Warrant shall be posted at least 14 days before the time of holding the same.
11/16/22	Fall Special Town Meeting
11/22/22	All School capital requests due to School Finance Director
11/22/22	All budgets due to School Finance Director
11/23/22 - 12/06/22	School Finance Director and Director of Facilities review capital requests
11/23/22 - 12/06/22	Principals/Directors work on FY24 budget
11/28/22	Town Manager issues FY2024 - FY2028 capital guidelines to all departments
12/1/22	Capital Plan to School Committee for review and vote on prioritization
12/2/22	Town Manager and Finance Director issue operating budget instructions to Department Heads.
12/7/22 - 2/1/23	Administrative meetings to review FY24 budget
12/22/22	Capital request forms from all Departments due
12/30/22	Town Departmental Budgets Due
1/3/23	Begin review and ranking of capital project submissions
January 2023	Budget workshops for departmental budgets
1/19/23	Finance Committee to receive budget which shall be at least 105 days in advance of the annual town meeting per Chapter C. Part VII. Section 7-1 (a)i.

DATE	DESCRIPTION
1/27/23	Governor's Budget - Governor files recommendations as a bill with the House of Representatives. Under the state Constitution, the Governor must submit a proposal by the 4th Wednesday in January or, in the event of a new term, within five weeks later. This bill is called 'House 1' or 'House 2' depending on the year.
2/11/23	School Committee Saturday budget workshop with administrators
February 2023	Finance Committee Budget hearings and present capital plan to committee members for feedback
February 2023	Incorporate feedback from Finance Committee into capital plan.
February 2023	Finalize capital plan
3/2/23	Public Hearing on School budget
3/10/23	Board of Selectmen deadline to adopt a budget for capital and a balanced budget for operations, which shall be, as far as practicable, 55 days in advance of the annual town meeting per Chapter C. Part VII. Section 7-1 (a)ii.
3/16/23	School Committee votes on bottom line budget
April 2023	Town meeting forum on warrant, which will include the capital plan
4/11/23	The House Committee on Ways and Means examines the Governor's proposal and releases its own recommendations for the annual budget for deliberation by the House of Representatives. Prior to release of the House Ways and Means Budget, Joint Ways and Means Committee budget hearings are held across the state.
4/20/23	FinCom issues recommendation. Per Chapter C. Part VII. Section 7-2, the finance committee shall file a proposed budget and report of its recommendations for action 14 days prior to the scheduled date of the annual town meeting.
4/27/23	Per Chapter 63-2, 'Attested copies of the warrant for the Annual Town Meeting shall be posted at least 7 days before the date of hold the same. Attested copies of any special Town Meeting Warrant shall be posted at least 14 days before the time of holding the same.
4/27/23	Budget Report posted on website. To summarize, the Town Manager shall issue a budget report which shall include all items in per Chapter C. Part VII. Section 7-1 (e). The Select Board shall cause the report and recommendations of the Fin. Committee to be made available to the voters at least 7 days prior to the annual town meeting.
5/4/23	Annual Town Meeting and adoption of FY23 operating, capital plan, and enterprise fund budgets
5/15/23	The full House of Representatives considers amendments to the House Ways and Means recommendations and debates their inclusion in the bill. The House of Representatives then approves a final, amended version of the bill which is then sent to the Senate for consideration.
5/25/23	The Senate Committee on Ways and Means examines both the Governor's proposal and the House proposal and releases its own recommendations for the annual budget for deliberation by the Senate.
5/25/23	The full Senate considers amendments to the Senate Ways and Means recommendations and debates their inclusion in the bill. The Senate then approves a final, amended version of the bill.
7/1/23	FY2024 budget takes effect. First day of new fiscal year.

DATE	DESCRIPTION
7/15/23	The House and Senate appoint three members each to a "conference committee" to reconcile the differences between the House and Senate proposals. One member of the minority party must be appointed by each branch. The conference committee reports a final compromise bill to the House and Senate for a final vote of acceptance in each branch.