

Finance Committee Minutes

DRAFT

Date: November 19, 2025

Start Time: 6:34pm

Location: Ashland High School Library

Members Present:

X	Jonathan Moore	X	Rohit Arora
X	Ken Earley	X	Jack Walsh
X	Edward P. Hart	X	Chantal Kokaram
X	Anton Tikhomirov		

Guests Present: Michael Herbert; Stephanie Pemberton

Call to Order - Open Session:

1. J. Moore called meeting to order at 6:34 pm.

Public Comment: None.

Town Meeting Warrant Articles: The Finance Committee proceeded to discuss and vote on the outstanding warrant articles for the November 19, 2025 Special Town Meetings as follows. Finance committee noted that motions are to be conformed with customary form included in final town meeting warrant articles.

- Article 1 - Free Cash Transfer: The Town Manager reported that Free Cash had been certified at slightly over \$3.0 million and that the certified amount included ARPA funds. He explained that the proposed distribution followed the Town’s Free Cash policy, with approximately \$1.8 million allocated to the Stabilization Fund, approximately ten percent, or \$302,000, allocated to the OPEB Trust, \$210,000 allocated to the Special Education Stabilization Fund, and the remaining balance allocated to the Capital Budget. The Town Manager further noted that this would be the first year in which the amount added to the Stabilization Fund would be less than the amount withdrawn, resulting in a net reduction to Stabilization of approximately \$400,000.
 - **Motion to recommend that the Town vote to approve the Free Cash transfer as presented in Article 1 of the warrant.**

- Motion: J. Walsh
- Second: R. Arora
- Vote: 7-0
- Motion Approved
- Article 16 - Endorsement of Comprehensive Plan: The Committee discussed the Comprehensive Plan and expressed broad support for the plan, noting strong participation by residents and stakeholders. Members discussed that while the plan is ambitious and forward-looking, it will be difficult to implement under current revenue levels. The Committee emphasized that endorsement of the plan represents approval of the planning framework and vision, not a commitment to specific funding. Members discussed that implementation would require identifying new revenue sources and may be considered in connection with a future override. The Town Manager stated that the plan is ambitious and cannot be implemented at current revenue levels, particularly while maintaining existing services.
 - **Motion to recommend that the Town vote to endorse the Comprehensive Plan as presented in Article 16 of the warrant.**
 - Motion: J. Walsh
 - Second: A. Tikhomirov
 - Vote: 7-0
 - Motion Approved

Other Business Not Reasonably Anticipated by Chair: The Committee discussed public perception of a potential override petition and methods to increase public engagement and understanding of the Town's financial condition, including strategies to encourage public involvement and support.

Motion to Adjourn:

- **Motion to adjourn meeting 7:56 pm.**
- Motion: J. Moore
- Second: C. Kokaram
- Vote: 7-0