

**Present:** Daniel Lewenberg, Patricia-Lee Achorn, Anja Bernier, William Brack, Brian Collins, Gordon Gladstone, Charles Goodman, Ann Keitner, Ira Miller.

**Not Present:** Jada Wang.

**Also Present:** Krishan Gupta - Finance Director.

**1. Dan Lewenberg, Chair, gave opening remarks:**

This meeting is being held via remote means through the Zoom online platform pursuant to Chapter 20 of the Acts of 2021.

**2. General Government sector budgets for FY23:**

1. Police Department – Chief Stephen Coffey:

- a. Salary: \$3,477,057, an increase of \$117,057 or 3.48%
- b. Longevity: \$54,500, a decrease of \$4,000 or -23.53%. This is for employees with service over 10 years
- c. Earned time: \$50,000, an increase of \$6,500 or 14.94%
- d. Training: \$140,000, an increase of \$5,000 or 3.70%. Training is needed for both new and existing staff

Salary total for Police: \$3,734,557, an increase of \$124,557 or 3.45%

- e. Dues: \$35,000, an increase of \$29,000 or 483.33%. These include background check subscription services for detectives, information services sharing costs, dues to the South Suburban Police Institute, etc., primarily reclassification from contract services.
- f. Contract Services: \$6,000, a decrease of \$29,000 or -82.86%
- g. Replacement equipment: \$5,000, an increase of \$1,000 or 25%
- h. Gasoline: \$50,000, an increase of \$2,500 or 5.26%

Expense total for Police: \$223,700, an increase of \$10,500 or 4.92%

Department total for Police: \$3,958,257, an increase of \$135,057 or 3.53%

- i. Discussed that they are currently looking at where overtime has been used. With low staffing levels still need to fill shifts. Storm coverage, hurricanes, court time, etc. all require extra shifts
- j. Have recently promoted a female officer and hired two women in the Academy.

2. Fire Department – Chief Jim Wright:

- a. Large number of step increases, as there is a step increase for new employees for their first 4 years
- b. Equipment and supplies are basically level-funded for this fiscal year
- c. Salary: \$3,323,746, an increase of \$154,457 or 4.87%
- d. Salary – ambulance: \$175,000, level-funded
- e. Earned time: \$88,329, level-funded
- f. Ambulance stipend: \$13,602, level-funded

Salary total for Fire: \$3,604,402, an increase of \$145,507 or 4.21%

- g. Radio maintenance: \$199,630, an increase of \$5,528 or 2.85%
- h. Dues: \$13,405, an increase of \$10,000 or 293.69%
- i. Other, including training and education, professional development, telephone, gas, advertising, building supplies, alarm supplies, safety supplies, etc.: level-funded

Expense total for Fire: \$415,735, an increase of \$15,528 or 3.88%

Department total for Fire: \$4,020,137, an increase of \$161,035 or 4.17%

- j. Overtime is higher due to having 7 firefighters, when previously had 6. Staffing at minimum levels. Currently there are two staff out on long-term outages, and are covering those shifts. Overall find this to be less expensive than paying to hire additional staff. Currently have 32 firefighters including the Chief and Deputy Chief. All are full time, with one full time administrative assistant
- k. Are exempt from paying state tax on gas. Will deal with higher gas prices as needed.

3. Department of Public Works (DPW) – Superintendent Eric Hooper:

- a. Salaries and wages: \$2,588,118, a decrease of \$70,227 or -2.64%. Reduction due to replacing retired employees with Step 1 new hires, as well as a custodian leaving. Will now be sharing a custodian with another department and have shifted those expenses to Materials and Services for that
- b. Materials and services: \$1,531,437, an increase of \$15,923 or 11.09%. Commodity prices such as for bituminous asphalt, steel and salt have all increased
- c. Streetlights: \$233,048, an increase of \$40,000 or 20.72%

DPW total: \$4,352,603 or 2.98% (not including streetlights)

- d. MV parts: \$70,000, an increase of \$5,000 or 7%
- e. Materials and supplies: \$65,000, an increase of \$15,000 or 30%
- f. Salt: \$165,000, an increase of \$10,000 or 6%

DPW Snow and Ice expense / department total: \$305,000, an increase of \$30,000 or 10.91%

- g. Town Hall electricity: \$225,000, level-funded
- h. Town Hall fuel: \$45,000, level-funded
- i. Town Hall building and maintenance: \$350,000, an increase of \$100,000 or 40%

Town Hall (DPW) expense / department total: \$620,000, an increase of \$100,000 or 19.23%

- j. DPW is working on replacing their fleet with more gas-efficient vehicles, but have many larger trucks that can't be replaced with hybrid vehicles
- k. Approaching the end of debt service for the change to LED lights and will see those savings after next year. Are already seeing savings for lights
- l. Railroad parking is still down approximately 70% due to the pandemic, which also means there are savings for the Town in keeping up that lot. Will monitor this as more people head back to work
- m. Water is a separate budget
- n. Contract plowing for 3 months of the year, as this is less expensive than paying for employees year-round. A capital request this year was made for an additional sidewalk unit for the Town.

4. Water – Superintendent Eric Hooper:
  - a. System improvements: \$1,102,363, an increase of \$484,970 or 86.60%
  - b. Interest: \$845,000, an increase of \$170,000 or 30.85%
  - c. Lab fees, related to PFAS: \$87,040, an increase of \$10,800 or 41.92%. Have applied for interest-free funds from the State for PFAS treatment, and are looking to offset costs by making use of retained income and the article funding
  - d. Transfer to capital projects: \$150,000, a decrease of \$50,000 or 33.33%

Water expenses total: \$3,337,715, an increase of \$430,131 or 19.67%

Total including water reserve fund: \$5,687,369, an increase of \$420,000 or 9.51%

- e. Long-term projects are going according to the Town's master plan, with the planned approach of coordinating water line replacements with gas main projects and sidewalks. Are finishing the area around the railroad station and will be working on the Cottage School neighborhood for the next 4 years. Are doing a cast iron replacement at the pump house and still replacing some lead pipes
  - f. Presenting to the Select Board this week regarding a proposed increase in water rates to cover the debt service related to PFAS. Majority of raised revenue will be from the capital recovery fee, which will be applied equally to each account. PFAS is a safety issue and is required to be addressed.
5. Personnel Board – Paul Pietal:
  - a. Majority of the Personnel Board's budget is contracts. Added an increased number of summer employees at minimum wage, animal control office assistant, etc.
  - b. 2.5% - 3.5% increase including cost of living change and union steps
  - c. Committee will vote on this at the next meeting.
6. Revisit Library Budget/Legal – Cheryl Weinstein, Library Trustees Chair:
  - a. Legal line in budget is being reduced to \$5,000, as the Finance Committee suggested at the last meeting
  - b. Requesting that programming remain at original amount for contracted services. This will help cover the IT work the Library needs – currently there are 2 employees in IT.
    - 1) Mr. Turkington supports this and will monitor, until the Friends of the Library can resume their normal fundraising activities
  - c. Committee will vote on this budget at the next meeting as part of the omnibus budget.
7. Elections and registration to vote:
  - a. Expense total for elections and registration FY23 proposed: \$55,558, an increase of \$14,176 or 34%
  - b. Still grappling with costs for early voting and mail-in voting
  - c. Should consider this a cyclical expense, not an annual expense. Consider setting aside funds in next year's budget and in non-election years to help cover the cost of election years. Will receive more clarity from the State in the summer about whether early voting will be required.

### **3. Discuss / vote Annual Town Meeting (ATM) Warrant article recommendations:**

1. Long Term Lease Authorization for High School Solar Project:
  - a. Select Board will have the ability to sign the contract for this
  - b. Committee will vote at the next meeting after reviewing the text of the article.

2. Outdoor Water Use Bylaw:
  - a. Mr. Miller discussed that he attended the Water Management meeting last week and sent a draft of this article to the Committee. Select Board will vote on this at their next meeting
  - b. Committee will vote at the next meeting on this article.
3. Codification of Zoning Bylaws
  - a. Town has engaged outside attorney who submitted a final draft of this bylaw today. No substantive changes - new draft mostly deletes redundant language. Planning Board is on track to post a notice for their meeting regarding this, on April 14
  - b. The Finance Committee may want to set aside a portion of time at the Open Warrant meeting to discuss this, including the new zoning map, uses, etc.

**4. Minutes to be Voted:**

None.

**5. Topics not reasonably anticipated by the Chair in 48 hours:**

1. Sharon Gallery - there is work being done on the summary judgement. Also working to get DOT to release the permit
2. The outdoor water use bylaw is meant to codify the rules around water use and clarify what is and isn't allowed, as the Town has been doing water restrictions on an annual basis
3. The Committee will most likely hold an additional meeting in April to hear presentations and vote articles.

**6. Adjournment:**

**Motioned:** by Ann Keitner, **Seconded:** Anja Bernier to adjourn. **Voted:** 9-0-0.  
Meeting adjourned at 9:40 pm.