



Town of Medway

FINANCE COMMITTEE

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Monday, February 12, 2024 – 7:00 PM
Town Hall, Sanford Hall
155 Village Street

Members Present: Brian Cowan, Chair; Sue Segarra, Vice Chair; Ellen Hillery, Clerk; Bruce Carbone; Chris Lagan; Michael Schrader; Jim Sullivan.

Absent: Nick Fair; Will Lane.

Staff Present: Michael Boynton, Town Manager; Carol Pratt, Finance Director; Margaret Perkins, Director, Medway Public Library.

Others Present: Martin Dietrich, Chair, Energy and Sustainability Committee; Greg Peverill-Conti, Chair, Library Board of Trustees; Karen Nowicki, Chair, Capital Improvement Planning Committee.

At 7:03 PM Chairman Cowan called the meeting of the Finance Committee to order with seven members present. Members Nick Fair and Will Lane were absent.

Public Comment

Mr. Charles Myers spoke briefly about the proposed MBTA zones that were being discussed at a meeting of the Planning and Economic Development Board. He indicated that Medway falls into the second level of MBTA services, and in order to meet financial benefit criteria for the associated housing, 750 housing units need to be within a small geographic area, two of which are under consideration. Mr. Myers emphasized that this represents a huge financial impact to the Town. He suggested the Finance Committee research what grant monies are available. Lastly, can Medway schools absorb potentially 750-1,000 new students?

Invited Discussions – “What We Do”

This is an initiative by the Finance Committee to learn more about what various departments, boards and committees are charged with, their duties and responsibilities, and “what they do”.

Energy and Sustainability Committee – Martin Dietrich, Chair

The following information was received: PowerPoint presentation entitled “2024 Priorities”.

Present: Martin Dietrich, Chair, Energy and Sustainability Committee

Utilizing a PowerPoint presentation, Mr. Dietrich began by identifying the members of the committee, then proceeding to 2023 Activities and 2024 Priorities, highlighting sustainable recycling events, the

introduction of a newsletter, and continuing to investigate viability and recommendation of solar facilities in Medway.

There are currently four locations utilizing solar arrays; Mr. Dietrich spoke briefly about these and solar arrays and canopies in general. He emphasized that the state is encouraging solar facilities, noting that there will likely come a day when solar facilities will be required.

Continuing, Mr. Dietrich reviewed a number of ways the committee is planning to engage with the community to not only educate and inform, but to also get people involved in initiatives. The newsletter and increased social media coverage will help with this. Education on Stormwater regulations will be ongoing as communities are being required to limit the amount of stormwater entering water system via car washing, use of rain gardens, minimizing lawn runoff and so forth. The presentation listed a variety of ways that residents can help with respect to their properties.

Addressing his question to the Finance Director, Mr. Sullivan asked where would we find money in the budget to fund solar panels on municipal properties. Ms. Pratt responded that the Eversource bill sometimes contains a credit. Per Mr. Sullivan's request, she stated she can put together a report on those expenses/revenues for the past couple of years. This will help the committee understand how it works and what the impact to the community could be. Brief discussion followed.

Responding to a question from Mr. Lagan, Mr. Dietrich stated that it has taken several years for the EPA regulations to be finalized for the new permits, and it was left up to the individual communities to figure out how to fund these efforts. He noted that Medway is doing more to meet the requirements than some of the surrounding communities. Mr. Schrader asked about phosphorous amounts in fertilizers; Mr. Dietrich responded that there is a negligible amount in fertilizers now as most fertilizers do not have phosphorous. He added that rain gardens, if properly installed, will filter out any phosphorous naturally.

At 7:21 PM Mr. Dietrich exited the meeting room.

Agricultural Committee – Alison Dempsey, Chair

Due to illness within the Agricultural Committee members, this discussion will be rescheduled.

Library Board of Trustees – Greg Peverill-Conti, Chair

The following information was reviewed: PowerPoint presentation highlighting initiatives.

Present: Greg Peverill-Conti, Chair, Library Trustees; Margaret Perkins, Library Director.

Mr. Peverill-Conti and Ms. Perkins introduced themselves; Mr. Peverill-Conti identified other members of the Library Board. Ms. Perkins noted that there have been numerous issues with the library's HVAC systems necessitating replacement of rooftop units and other equipment to mitigate moisture in the building. Things seem to be ok right now.

Ms. Perkins spoke briefly on numerous initiatives at the library, most of which have already been funded. These included:

- Replacement of the outside doors
- An uneven threshold makes access with a walker or wheelchair difficult; DPW will work to rectify evening out the threshold.
- Removal of trees opened up two additional parking spaces, but the pavement is in disrepair

- Highway Department will mill old asphalt in front parking lot and either repair or repave the whole lot.
- New concrete at lower end of stairs, off to the side.
- The floor in the Story Hour Room is sinking, creating a gap in tiles
- A quote for Story Hour Room ventilation did not include equipment to automatically measure the room conditions; the estimated cost for both rooms is over \$30,000 so it was not done. She expressed concern that room occupants could potentially not have enough fresh air in there.

At this time, Ms. Perkins announced there would be a Legislative Breakfast at the library on Friday, March 8; Senator Spilka and Representative Michael Soter are expected to be in attendance. Responding to a question from Mr. Sullivan, she stated that there would be no discussion of a new library at the breakfast; however, gatherings like this provide an opportunity to share residents' desires and concerns with legislators. It was noted that anyone can attend the breakfast; Ms. Perkins stated she has invited library directors from surrounding communities. There are a number of other legislative breakfasts like this around the area. Information gathered here will be taken to Boston for Library Day for Legislators where there is opportunity to learn about grant funding as well as other funding sources. Discussion followed on downloadable materials vs. hard copy materials being used by patrons. It was noted that each mobile app has a different format, and some have wait times, others do not.

Ms. Perkins reported that the library's FY25 budget request has been submitted, adding that the library received everything requested in the FY24 budget for which they are very grateful.

Chairman Cowan thanked them for coming in, noting that this kind of discussion helps the Finance Committee when it has the opportunity to review the municipal budget.

At 7:40 PM Ms. Perkins and Mr. Mr. Peverill-Conti exited the meeting room.

Discussion – FY25 Capital Budget Review

The following information was received: Annotated SIPC Recommendations, voted by CIPC 01/24/2024.

Present: Karen Nowicki, Chair, Capital Improvement Planning Committee; Keith Goddard, Member; Emre Guzelzu, Member and Liaison to Finance Committee.

Ms. Nowicki pointed out that the committee's recommendations ended at line 30 on the spreadsheet. Items listed after that may come under consideration if submitted for a subsequent year.

Responding to a question from Mr. Schrader about the process, Ms. Nowicki explained that each department submits a list to the committee representative after which the department is asked to prioritize those items. After that, the department meets with the whole committee. Each member does their own individual ranking, and then the ranks are merged. Criteria is based on highest impact on community, and an assessment of which investments can be made sooner rather than later. For example, does it represent a public safety issue? Each member has their own system for ranking; there are five members on the committee. She clarified that there are some items that will not be ranked nor receive a recommendation.

Continuing, Ms. Nowicki pointed out that the committee serves in an advisory capacity and makes its recommendations. The Select Board makes the final decision on what items are included in the Warrant

article for Town Meeting action. The available free cash is around \$2.5 million. Some things that were not ranked this year may be considered next year, and things that did get funding may appear on the list again.

Town Manager Boynton briefly joined the meeting at 7:55 PM during a break in the meeting in the conference room. Responding to Mr. Schrader's question about the Roads & Sidewalks recommendation, he stated that this is an annual initiative, noting that approximately 60% of the affected roadways and sidewalks have been dealt with. There is a list of eligible roadways, and an annual cap on available funding. He exited the meeting at 7:58 PM.

Brief discussion followed. It was noted that the recommendation is not always for the full requested amount, i.e., Item 9 (infrastructure equipment) – the request was for \$100,00 and the recommendation was for \$50,000. Laptops for the schools appears on the list every year as they are "retired" on a staggered basis (every five years). Ms. Nowicki noted that the committee uses the previous year's list as a baseline when discussing departmental requests every year.

Ms. Segarra acknowledged how much work the committee does to finalize this list for submission to the Select Board. She noted that she previously served as liaison to the committee, and learned a lot about the process and how residents would come in to request things. Discussion followed during which it was noted that the busy time for the committee is weekly meetings from October through December.

Ms. Nowicki asked that committee members contact her if there are additional questions.

At 8:07 PM Ms. Nowicki, Mr. Goddard and Mr. Guzelzu exited the meeting room.

Miscellaneous

Chairman's Report – Chairman Cowan, a member of the School Budget Advisory Committee, spoke briefly about the challenges of setting up a Tri-Board meeting on a date when the Finance Committee could be represented with a quorum of members. Instead, the Finance Committee will host the meeting on its regular meeting date of March 13, and the meeting will be in the presentation room at the middle school as a larger meeting space.

Chairman Cowan asked that members begin their reports for inclusion in the Annual Town Meeting Booklet. This will be discussed in greater detail soon.

Clerk's Report – Account balances remain unchanged.

Liaison Reports – None.

Other Business

The following information was reviewed: (1) Draft meeting minutes from January 10, 2024; and (2) Fiscal Year 2025 Budget and 2024 Town Meeting Calendars.

Review/Approval of meeting minutes

Ms. Segarra made a motion to approve the minutes of January 10, 2024, as drafted; Mr. Sullivan seconded. No discussion. VOTE: 6-0-1 (Schrader abstain).

Discussion Relative to Pledge of Allegiance

Chairman Cowan reported that a member of the committee approached him about doing the Pledge of Allegiance at the beginning of each meeting; it is already Town Meeting protocol as well as for the Select

Board. He asked for member feedback. After brief discussion, it was decided to add it to future agendas as there was no reason not to do so.

Finalize Date for Finance Committee Public Hearing

The committee reviewed the FY25 and 2024 Annual Town Meeting Calendar.

Present: Carol Pratt, Finance Director.

The calendar recommends April 3 for the public hearing; however, the regular Finance Committee meeting would be April 10. After brief discussion, it was decided to hold the public hearing on April 10 to avoid an additional meeting. This leaves several days before the warrant is due at the publisher. It was also noted that the FY25 budget will be distributed in early March. The committee requested that the electronic version be in Excel format.

Upcoming Meetings

The next regular meeting will be Wednesday, March 13, with an additional meeting for budget and warrant review on Monday, March 25. The public hearing will be held on Wednesday, April 10, followed by a regular meeting during which the Finance Committee will vote its recommendations on warrant articles. Special Town Meeting and Annual Town Meeting will be held on Monday, May 13.

Adjourn

At 8:21 PM Mr. Schrader made a motion to adjourn; Mr. Carbone seconded. No discussion. VOTE: 7-0-0.

*Respectfully submitted,
Jeanette Galliardt
Night Board Secretary*