

Minutes of the May 4, 2023 Finance Committee

Members

Shaun Galliher

Jim Chivers

Bonnie Conner

Mary Rice

Heather Brown

Candy Galeucia

Tracey Lussier

Absent

Russ Parks

Sarah Baumann

Other

Bob Graves, Town Administrator

Duane Bruce

The meeting was opened at 6:30 pm.

A motion was made and seconded to accept the minutes of the April 27, 2023 meeting as written. It was noted that there was an error in the minutes, stating that the ATM was May 19th, and it should have read May 10th. A motion was made and seconded to ammend the minutes to read May 10, 2023. The motion passed unanimously. A motion was made to accept the minutes of April 27, as ammended. The motion passed unanimously.

Chairman Galliher reviewed the Expense report and noted the accounts that are over. A question was raised about the Water/Sewer Superintendent salaray that appears to be over expended. Actually, it is not, and the amount should have been taken out of four accounts, Highway, Sewer 1, Sewer 2, and Water. That will be corrected. The committee discussed how to cover some of these overages.

Chairman Galliher reported the Reserve Fund balance is \$24,733.00. After discussion, a motion was made and seconded to transfer 16K out of the Reserve Fund to the Fuel account. The motion passed unanimously.

Several other accounts such as Town Waste, Street lights and Heating are not over yet but most likely will be pending bills not yet received. Winter Roads is over by **\$94,308.00**. Included in that amount are the bills not paid by our former Road Superintendent and an expensive truck repair bill. In order to cover this amount a motion was made and seconded to transfer from the following accounts to the Winter Roads. The motion passed unanimously.

Free Cash \$ 48,010.00

Town Buildings \$ 7,500.00

Legal \$ 5,000.00

Summer Roads \$ 27,500.00

Infrast. & Engineering \$ 6,298.00

\$ 94,308.00

Bob Graves reported that the Select Board has awarded the Schnopp Road Project to the low bidder Western Earth Works. Palmer Paving is doing the Rt. 143 project that is funded and awarded by the State. Maxymillian is finishing the Middlefield Road project, also funded by the State.

Chairman Galliher reported that the Water Sewer Commissioners had met and voted to increase the Water/Sewer rates by 15%. That increase will be reflected in the next billing in June.

The Committee discussed the increase in the School Budget and that our Assessment is 4.1% higher than last year. This is due to a formula by the State to determine the "net minimum contribution" that we all feel is seriously flawed. Although we had asked the School Committee to revisit the budget and make some cuts, they have ignored our request. We stand firm in NOT recommending the School Assessmemt at the ATM.

In Public Comment, resident Duane Bruce questioned the elimination of 15K for private roads as reported in the Finance Minutes of April 20, 2023. Chairman Galliher and Bob Graves explained that this amount has not been used. That amount has been “rolled over” for several years, therefore, it will not be funded this year. They also explained that roads have been added periodically to the list without any documentation of a formal vote to accept them for plowing, sanding, and grading. This issue could be revisited in the future and eliminated by a new Select Board or an ATM. Many surrounding Towns have done the same in recent years. To be “accepted” by the Town, the road must be constructed to State code, prior to the Town taking over responsibility of maintenance. Some of them are too narrow for our larger trucks to navigate, with trees and retaining walls obstructing passage.

Our Finance meetings are open and the public is encouraged to attend and ask questions if you have any concerns.

Chairman Galliher reminded everyone of the ATM, Wednesday May 10, 2023 in the Kittredge School Gym at 7:00 pm.

A motion was made and seconded to adjourn at 8:03 pm, the motion passed unanimously. The next regular meeting of this Committee is Thursday, June 1, 2023 at 6:30 pm in the downstairs Community room at Town Hall.

Respectfully submitted,

Mary A. Rice, Secretary