

Minutes of the March 9, 2024 Finance Committee and Select Board

Members	Absent	Other
Shaun Galliher	Tracey Lussier	Bob Graves, Town Administrator
Heather Brown	Sarah Baumann	Bart Collins, Select Board Chair
Jim Chivers	Earl Peck, Select Board	Ray Huntoon, Select Board
Bonnie Conner		
Mary Rice		
Russ Parks		
Candy Galeucia		

The meeting was opened at 8:44 am.

This year Bob Graves, Town Administrator, has posted the Budget requests, by department, and the expected increases in General Government, on the Town website at hinsdalemass.com, located on the Finance Committee page.

The following is an overview of the requests presented;

Dan Kaufman, the volunteer Chairman of the Cemetery Committee, presented the upgrades done at the Maple Street Cemetery to date, and the needed funds for future work. He presented a comprehensive plan for needed work and improvements including painting at the mausoleum, road improvements, lots available, replacement of veteran flag holders and repair and cleaning of existing stones. He also reported that there are 109 grave stones that are broken, tipped, or lying on the ground, 47 of them dangerous to the public.

Jamie Callahan, Road Superintendent, presented his DPW budget request that included salary increases, and new equipment. He is also in charge of the Water and Sewer Departments and as of this date, has not gotten any information from Pittsfield on the possible Sewer increases. He also reported increases in other costs to maintain the systems. He is working with Dave Prickett, DPC, on the issues at the Belmont that include replacement of the gate house, and cleaning the Tank. He also discussed with the Committee the need for a "Flushing Trailor".

Ralph Cormier, Fire Chief, presented his request that included the new State Mandate to upgrade all the radios, slight salary increase, Tanker payment and Ambulance Service.

Lynne Baumgartner, Treasurer/Collector presented her budget request that included salary increase, Tax Title, and liens on Chapter 61A properties. Insurance increases for Town

Employees are expected, but she has no final figures yet. The Police Detail account, and it's actual cost to the Town was discussed and the possible need to revisit this issue at a Town Meeting.

Mae Afram, Library Director, presented her budget requests that included increases in salaries and General Expenses. They are planning a fund raiser, and renovations. Ms Afram and the Committee discussed the increase in heating costs.

Dawn Frissell, Town Clerk, presented her budget request that includes costs related to the November Presidential Election, and postage increases due to the State sending out mail in Ballot cards. The State pays to send them out, but the Town is responsible to mail Ballots to the voter, at a substantial increase in postage that is a cost to the Town.

Ray Bolduc, Emergency Management, presented his budget request including radio upgrades, and a Chest Compression Unit, that may qualify for a Grant. He is also working on a Brick Grant for the Generator needed at the Highway Department and the need to have all electric service centralized on that property.

The Assessors, Bob Cimini, Laura Galliher, and Viv Mason presented their request that included staffing, salary increases, and office costs. They also discussed the recent increase in Valuations that had many tax payers upset, especially around the Lakes. It was explained that the increase in valuation is driven by the sales in those areas, and they have processed Abatement requests that include site visits and inspections. In some cases, the property cards were not correct or updated. They have actually added many work hours to address all the above.

Bob Graves went over all other departments in Town Government and their anticipated increases. Some figures have not yet been received and will be discussed during future meetings of this Committee. Other meetings will be scheduled with the Police Department, CBRSD, and to go over the Capital Requests.

A motion was made and seconded to adjourn at 3:52 pm, the motion passed unanimously. The next meeting of this Committee is Thursday, March 14, 2024 at 6:30 pm in the downstairs Community room at Town Hall.

Respectfully submitted,

Mary A. Rice, Secretary