

Auburn Finance Committee
Minutes of the Meeting -March 15, 2023

Members Participating: Anne Cavanaugh, Kevin Kennedy, Ed Coleman, Patrick Jones, Michael Marshall and Diane Byrne (remote)
Not Participating: Trevor Sansoucy
Also Present: Town Manager Ed Kazanovicz and Chief Financial Officer/Town Accountant Karen Harnois

The meeting was called to order at 6:30 P.M. by the Chair Anne Cavanaugh.

The Chair announced that this open meeting of the Finance Committee is being conducted both in-person and remotely, consistent with Chapter 107 of the Acts of 2022, which suspends the requirement of the Open Meeting Law to have all meetings in a publicly accessible physical location. Further, all members of public bodies are allowed to participate remotely as long as reasonable public access is afforded so that the public can follow along with the deliberations of the meeting.

For the public to join the meeting remotely, by telephone call 1-786-535-3211 access code 991-599-357, join by computer: <https://global.gotomeeting.com/join/991599357>.

All supporting materials that have been provided to members of this body are available on the Town's website. The public is encouraged to follow along using the posted agenda.

The Chair noted that the meeting was being recorded by Auburn Cable Television.

Chair Cavanaugh confirmed that all members that were participating remotely were present and could hear her:

- Kevin Kennedy - Here
- Ed Coleman - Here
- Trevor Sansoucy - Not Participating
- Patrick Jones - Here
- Michael Marshall - Here
- Diane Byrne - Yes (remote)

Town Officials:

- Town Manager Ed Kazanovicz - Here
- CFO/Town Accountant Karen Harnois - Here
- Adm. Assistant Sharon Kwiatkowski - Here

The Chair noted that each vote to be taken in the meeting would be conducted by roll call vote.

Chair Anne Cavanaugh gave an overview of the meeting agenda.

The Finance Committee reviewed the following budget requests for FY2024:

Department of Public Services Senior Center/Elder Affairs

Executive Director Jean Boulette was present. She gave an overview of her budget requests for the Senior Center/Elder Affairs for FY2024.

The increase in the Van Drivers Account was requested to fund an additional Van Driver to support more customers at the Mary D. Stone and Julia Bancroft buildings and the mobile home park on Washington Street.

Mr. Kennedy asked about the Program Expense Account, that was a decrease from FY23. Ms. Boulette explained the activities that are being funded through the account and that there are also grant monies that help to pay the expenses.

Chair Cavanaugh asked about grants. Ms. Boulette said that the grants were: the State Formula Grant, Mass Council On Aging Grant and some mini grants. There are also the Friends of the Senior Center and Auburn Cultural Council groups that support the senior center.

The Executive Director explained the rationale for the requested decrease in Minibus/Gas Account.

Mr. Kennedy asked about rental fees for the space to relocate services and programs while the senior center was being cleaned and refurbished because of the water damage this winter. Mr. Kazanovicz said that the rental cost would be covered through the Town's insurance policy.

The Finance Committee voted to recommend approval of a total budget appropriation of \$187,607.00, as presented in the recommendation of the Town Manager (Motion made by Mr. Kennedy; motion seconded by Mr. Coleman) roll call vote: Mr. Kennedy, Yes; Mr. Coleman, Yes; Mr. Marshall, Yes; Mr. Jones, Yes; Ms. Byrne, Yes; Ms. Cavanaugh, Yes - passed 6 to 0.

The Committee reviewed the CIP requests for the Senior Center/Elder Affairs Division. Mr. Kazanovicz advised the committee that the CIP items have been placed on hold pending the insurance company's decision on the Town's claim.

Department of Public Services Library

Library Director Jean Collins gave an overview of the budget requests for FY2024.

The Director explained the reduction in the Town Manager's recommendation to the department's request. Ms. Collins said that since COVID there hasn't been the need for as many Library Associate positions and so the appropriation has been decreased.

Ms. Collins explained that the Programs Account request has increased due to the growth in the number of programs.

Mr. Kennedy asked about the status of the sunroom project and the Children's Room expansion.

The Director replied that the expansion can't happen until the sunroom is finished.

Mr. Kazanovicz spoke to the many sources of revenue for the Library bridge project. He explained the delay because some grants needed to be extended and the Administration is trying to live within those funds, but construction costs have increased.

Mr. Coleman asked if there were any open positions. Ms. Collins said that not as many people are needed because the number of participants and visitors to the library is still depleted. She said that there was an open Systems Assistant Director job. She said that in addition there were 1 Senior Library Associate job open and 4 Library Associates open and 2 of them were not funded.

The Finance Committee voted to recommend approval of a total budget appropriation of \$694,180.00, as presented in the recommendation of the Town Manager (Motion made by Mr. Kennedy; motion seconded by Mr. Coleman) roll call vote: Mr. Kennedy, Yes; Mr. Coleman, Yes; Mr. Marshall, Yes; Mr. Jones, Yes; Ms. Byrne, Yes; Ms. Cavanaugh, Yes - passed 6 to 0.

The Finance Committee reviewed the Library CIP. The only item in FY24 was \$15,000.00 for Computer Update, which was recommended by the Town Manager. There were no questions.

Department of Public Services Cable and Community Television

Supervisor Chris Hugo was present. Mr. Hugo gave an overview of the budget requests for FY2024.

He noted that the Legal Account was reduced this year because the cable contract renewal negotiations have been completed and those costs won't recur for 7 years.

Cable Retained Earnings was about \$300,000.00. Chair Cavanaugh asked if this was for the Camp Gleason project. Mr. Kazanovicz responded that it was not; \$97,000.00 from Retained Earnings was for the project and there had been articles on the 2022 town meeting warrant for the additional funds.

The Finance Committee voted to recommend approval of a total budget appropriation of \$187,381.00, as presented in the Town Manager's recommendation for FY2024 (Motion made by Mr. Kennedy; motion seconded by Mr. Coleman) roll call vote: Mr. Kennedy, Yes; Mr. Coleman, Yes; Mr. Marshall, Yes; Mr. Jones, Yes; Ms. Byrne, Yes; Ms. Cavanaugh, Yes - passed 6 to 0.

The Finance Committee reviewed the CIP for the Cable and Community Television Division. The only FY2024 request was \$36,000.00 for Replace Broadcast Equipment to be funded by ACTV Retained Earnings. Mr. Hugo explained the work needed to replace the broadcast equipment.

Town Clerk/Elections

Town Clerk Debra Gremo was in attendance for the FY2024 Town Clerk and Elections budgets.

Mr. Kazanovicz addressed the budget and his recommendations and Ms. Gremo's request for an additional clerk. He said that he wasn't able to recommend the position because he didn't have the Governor's numbers yet. Mr. Kazanovicz advised that he can't address it until the fall town meeting following a staffing study. The Town Manager said that he didn't want to re-open the budgets now due to time constraints.

The Town Clerk spoke about the additional work in her department especially for busy election years and because of the changes in election laws, especially for mail-in ballots and early voting.

In the Elections budget, Ms. Gremo said that she had requested an increase in the Precinct Officers Account for elections workers. Mr. Kazanovicz said that he may consider this for the fall town meeting.

Mr. Kennedy offered that maybe the additional salary funds should be in the Elections budget.

Ms. Gremo spoke to needing help across the board in the Town Clerk's Office.

The Finance Committee voted to recommend approval of a total budget appropriation of \$213,187.00 for #01161 Town Clerk, as presented in the recommendation of the Town Manager (Motion made by Mr. Kennedy; motion seconded by Mr. Coleman) roll call vote: Mr. Kennedy, Yes; Mr. Coleman, Yes; Mr. Marshall, Yes; Mr. Jones, Yes; Ms. Byrne, Yes; Ms. Cavanaugh, Yes - passed 6 to 0.

The Finance Committee voted to recommend approval of a total budget appropriation of \$50,244.00 for #01162 Elections, as presented in the recommendation of the Town Manager (Motion made by Mr. Kennedy; motion seconded by Mr. Coleman) roll call vote: Mr. Kennedy, Yes; Mr. Coleman, Yes; Mr. Marshall, Yes; Mr. Jones, Yes; Ms. Byrne, Yes; Ms. Cavanaugh, Yes - passed 6 to 0.

The Finance Committee reviewed the CIP requests from the Town Clerk. The FY2024 request and recommended by the Town Manager was \$10,000.00 for Book/Map Repairs.

Information Technology Department

Director of Information Technology Michael Marino was present and gave an overview of the FY2024 budget for the IT Department. He discussed going to a new platform, OpenGov, from PeopleGIS.

Mr. Kennedy noted that the size of budget was not substantial for a very important and large operation.

Mr. Kazanovicz advised that the department is also funded with some grants, outside warrant articles and the capital improvements program. He also pointed out that IT costs for the Police Department are in that departmental budget and the School Department IT costs are in the School Budget.

There was general discussion about security measures.

Mr. Kazanovicz discussed his recommendation for the Hardware/Software Maintenance Account, which was higher than the departmental request.

The Finance Committee voted to recommend approval of a total budget appropriation of \$334,209.00, as presented in the recommendation of the Town Manager (Motion made by Mr. Kennedy; motion seconded by Mr. Coleman) roll call vote: Mr. Kennedy, Yes; Mr. Coleman, Yes; Mr. Marshall, Yes; Mr. Jones, Yes; Ms. Byrne, Yes; Ms. Cavanaugh, Yes - passed 6 to 0.

The Finance Committee reviewed the CIP for Information Technology. The sole request for FY2024 was \$60,000.00 for New Virtual Machine Serv/Software. Mr. Marino advised that the servers were on a five-year replacement schedule. There is a replacement plan, which can be accelerated if there is a need to do so.

Department of Development and Inspectional Services (DDIS)

DDIS Director Darlene Coyle was present and gave an overview of the budget requests for FY2024.

	Town Manager's Recommendation
• Public Health Division -	\$319,256.00
• Planning Division -	103,736.00
• Economic Development & Energy Management -	52,546.00
• Building, Code Enforcement -	\$210,306.00
• Conservation Commission -	15,972.00
• Animal Control -	81,036.00
TOTAL DDIS	<u>\$782,855.00</u>

Chair Anne Cavanaugh asked about open positions. Darlene Coyle replied that there is one vacant Health Inspector job.

Mr. Jones suggested to change hours when there are evening committee meetings so as not to trigger overtime. Ms. Coyle thanked Mr. Jones for his suggestion.

Mr. Kazanovicz explained the Town Manager's recommendation for the Town Planner's salary. The administration has been looking at the salary for this position for a while and the adjustment was made following a survey of comparable communities.

Mr. Kazanovicz then advised that he was changing his recommendation for the Legal Notices Account to recommend \$2,500.00 instead of \$500.00. The Town Manager said that publications of legal notices for public hearings are paid from this account, and then the applicants reimburse the Town.

Mr. Kazanovicz explained the funds that come to the town from Municipal Aggregation and offset some of the departmental salaries.

Mr. Kennedy asked if the Town has a grant writer. The Town Manager advised that grants are designated to the department level.

The Finance Committee voted to recommend approval of a total budget appropriation of \$784,855.00 for the Department of Development and Inspectional Services, as presented in the recommendation of the Town Manager (Motion made by Mr. Kennedy; motion seconded by Mr. Coleman) roll call vote: Mr. Kennedy, Yes; Mr. Coleman, Yes; Mr. Marshall, Yes; Mr. Jones, Yes; Ms. Byrne, Yes; Ms. Cavanaugh, Yes - passed 6 to 0.

The Finance Committee reviewed the CIP for the Department of Development & Inspectional Services. The requests for FY2024 are for vehicles - 1 Inspector Hybrid - Electric Vehicle and a 2021 Explorer Inspectional Vehicle. The Town Manager explained the sources of funding for the items.

#01176 Zoning Board of Appeals - The Finance Committee voted to recommend approval of a total budget appropriation of \$14,472.00, as presented in the recommendation of the Town Manager (Motion made by Mr. Kennedy; motion seconded by Mr. Coleman) roll call vote: Mr. Kennedy, Yes; Mr. Coleman, Yes; Mr. Marshall, Yes; Mr. Jones, Yes; Ms. Byrne, Yes; Ms. Cavanaugh, Yes - passed 6 to 0.

Department of Public Services Veteran's Service

The Town Manager discussed the vacancy for the Veteran's Services Officer position and he described the agreement in which Auburn participates with the Towns of Oxford and Southbridge.

The appropriation recommended for the Relief and Medical Account was \$120,000.00, which is a reduction of \$5,000.00 from FY23. Mr. Kazanovicz said that payments from this account are based on active claims, with 75% reimbursement to the Town of all qualifying expenses.

The Finance Committee voted to recommend approval of a total budget appropriation of \$147,812.00, as presented in the recommendation of the Town Manager (Motion made by Mr. Kennedy; motion seconded by Mr. Coleman) roll call vote: Mr. Kennedy, Yes; Mr. Coleman, Yes; Mr. Marshall, Yes; Mr. Jones, Yes; Ms. Byrne, Yes; Ms. Cavanaugh, Yes - passed 6 to 0.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:24 P.M. (Motion made by Mr. Kennedy; motion seconded by Mr. Coleman) roll call vote: Mr. Kennedy, Yes; Mr. Coleman, Yes; Mr. Marshall, Yes; Mr. Jones, Yes; Ms. Byrne, Yes; Ms. Cavanaugh, Yes - passed 6 to 0.

Submitted: Sharon A. Kwiatkowski
Adm. Assistant to the Town Manager

The following documents were part of the Finance Committee's Meeting of March 15, 2023 and are retained in the Executive Office of the Town Manager:

- March 15, 2023 Agenda.
- FY2024 Budget Requests (Operating and Capital) - Department of Public Services - Library, Senior Center/Elder Affairs, Cable and Community Television, Veteran's Services; Town Clerk and Elections; Information Technology Department; Department of Development and Inspectional Services and Zoning Board of Appeals