



Ware

MASSACHUSETTS

Finance Committee
126 Main Street
Ware, MA 01082

Finance Committee Meeting

Meeting Location: Selectmen's Conference Room
Ware Town Hall – 126 Main Street

Meeting Dates: Thursday, November 4, 2021

Meeting Time: 7:00 pm

Meeting Agenda items to be discussed:

1. Discussion and Approval of ARPA Recommendations to BOS
2. Discussion of Water and Sewer Rate Recommendations for Public Hearing
3. Discussion of FY 2021 Free Cash and Reserve Balances
4. Consideration of Request For Transfer From Reserves
5. Approval of prior meeting's minutes
6. Review of any emails or correspondence since last meeting

At the time of posting of this meeting notice and agenda the above items were the only items known. Should an additional item be brought forward, unless of an emergency nature, it will be placed on a future docket. The general public is invited to this and all meetings of the Ware Finance Committee. ***THERE'S AN OPENING FOR ONE (1) NEW MEMBER; APPLY ON TOWN WEBSITE (WWW.TOWNOFWARE.COM) OR WITH TOWN MANAGER.***

Submitted by

Lynn Nenni
Chairman Finance Committee

Meeting Minutes: November 4, 2021

Members Present: Lynn Nenni, Devin Peterson, Ken Willette, Terry Smith

Special Guests: Stuart Beckley, Town Manager

The meeting was called to order at 7:00pm

Item 4) Consideration of Request For Transfer From Reserves

This item was addressed first because representatives from the Library and Historical Commission were present to speak on behalf of their requests.

Heidi Reed and Peter Thamel spoke on behalf of the Library to request a transfer from reserves to cover the cost of repairing a corner of one of the outer walls of the library that had recently crumbled. They believed that damage was caused as a result of the recent heavy construction work on Main Street and said they had contacted a few masonry contractors and received only one quote from a contractor who would not be available until the spring.

Ken Willette made a motion to recommend the Library Board contact their insurance company to file a claim and obtain additional quotes and to bring the results back to the committee for further evaluation.

Second: Terry Smith

Unanimously approved

Members of The Historical Commission requested a transfer from the reserve account to cover the cost of additional work on the Town Hall repointing project that is currently under way. The additional work requires the use of a large lift, which is currently on site at Town Hall and could be utilized at no additional charge if the additional cost were approved while the contractor was still on site. The total quote was for \$9,544. The Town Manager stated that \$2,544 was available in the current budget, therefore the amount of the transfer requested is \$7,500.

Devin Peterson made a motion to approve a \$7,500 transfer request from reserves.

Second: Ken Willette

Unanimously approved

Item 3) Discussion of FY 2021 Free Cash and Reserve Balances

The Committee reviewed the certified free cash and reserve balances at June 30, 2021, as follows:

	<u>FY 2020</u>	<u>FY 2021</u>	<u>Change</u>
Free Cash	1,844,771	2,780,118	935,347
Water	1,335,780	1,603,950	268,170
Sewer	-12,583	12,876	25,459

The Committee noted the improvement in the sewer fund, but was still concerned that the rates currently in effect were not sufficient to cover on going major maintenance and repair costs. The Town Manager noted that since the FY 2022 was passed, costs had increased in almost every area of town operations, especially fuel and energy costs, and expressed concern that additional funds may needed to cover shortfalls in the current year budget. It was noted that shortfalls could most likely be managed and if necessary covered in a Special Meeting in May, immediately preceding the next Annual Town Meeting. The Committee also expressed interest in establishing a “contingency” account in the next budget to cover similar types of shortfalls.

Item 1) Discussion and Approval of ARPA Recommendations to BOS

The Committee finalized their recommendation for spending the \$2.9 million ARPA grant after reviewing the allowable uses of the fund, recommendations from the Town Manager, Town Department Heads and the Water Resource Committee. The Committee noted that in general they believed, the grant should not be used to fund one-time expenses and could best be used for capital purchases, thereby reducing the cost of borrowing, and that sewer and water repairs currently appeared to be the highest priority.

Motion by Ken Willette: The Committee recommends funding the installation of a screening device on the influent line at the Robbins Road Wastewater Treatment plant at a cost of \$1.5 million and preparation of the bid package, related engineering, design and permitting costs to paint the water storage tanks on Anderson Road and Church Street in the amount of \$300,000 as outlined in the memo dated July 20, 2021 from the DPW Director, “Gibby” St. George-Sorel.

Second: Devin Peterson

Unanimously Approved

Item 2) Discussion of Water and Sewer Rate Recommendations for Public Hearing

The Committee reviewed the recommendations for capital projects and water and sewer rates outline in Tighe and Bond’s reports and Terry reviewed the discussions of the Water Resource Committee. Everyone concurred that the Tighe and Bond reports were well vetted over the last several months. The Town Manager said that the final report would be ready prior to the public hearing on Nov 16th. The Committee agreed that the water and sewer rates needed to be set at a level that will build reserves sufficient to cover necessary capital projects and to reduce the amount of borrowing.

Motion by Ken Willette: The Finance Committee endorses aggressively increasing the water and sewer rates to the level that will provide funds sufficient to cover the cost of capital projects as outlined in the consultant’s reports and build reserves in order to reduce future borrowing costs.

Item 5) Approval of prior meeting’s minutes

Ken Willette- Motion to approve minutes of October 16, 2021 meeting

Second: Devin Peterson

Unanimously approved

The next meeting was set for November 16th at 6pm.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:20pm.

Respectfully Submitted

Lynn Nenni
Finance Committee Chair