



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, March 10, 2022

Meeting Time: 5:00 pm

Meeting Agenda items to be discussed:

1. Review of FY 2023 Budget- Police, Parks, General
2. Snow Deficit Spending
3. Approval of prior meeting's minutes
4. 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 agenda. 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: March 10, 2022

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

Special Guests: Stuart Beckley, Shawn Crevier, John Piechota, Tom Barnes, John Morrin

The meeting was called to order at 5:05

The committee agreed to discuss Item 2) first; Snow Deficit Spending

Item 2) Snow Deficit Spending

The Town Manager distributed a report prepared by the Town Accountant that showed there is currently \$28,238 remaining in the snow budget and requested the Finance Committee approve allowing deficit spending in order to cover the cost of potential snow storms for the remainder of the year. Stuart explained that deficit spending for snow removal is allowable by state statute with approval of the Town Manager and shortfalls could be covered at the Annual Town Meeting, or closer to the end of the year if there are surpluses in the budget or carried forward and covered in the next fiscal year. The committee expressed their preference to cover any shortfalls from current year budgetary surpluses, if available.

Motion to allow deficit spending in the snow removal budget: Ken Willette

Second: Terry Smith

Unanimously approved

Item 1) Review of FY 2023 Budget- Police, Parks, General

The Manger of the Parks Department, John Piechota, reviewed the Parks department responsibilities and proposed FY 2023 budget with the committee. In addition to maintaining all town-wide parks and hosting parks related events his department also maintains the grounds at Town Hall, the Dog Park, the water tank on Church Street and the Senior Center. John also explained that the Parks Department reported directly to the Parks Commission, rather than the Town Manager. Future goals for the department included improving community utilization of the Town parks system and participation in the new pool and youth center proposal under discussion by the Board of Selectman. The FY 2023 budget request increased by \$340 over the current year to \$179,621 and included a new roof for the parks headquarters in Grenville Park and funding for a summer intern. Funded projects under way at Grenville Park included drainage improvements and upgrading the tennis court to accommodate pickle ball usage. Projects under discussion and not yet funded included a new youth center and pool, installation of a restroom at the Parks Department main office in Grenville Park and a new playground. John stated that the Parks Commission was interested in contributing approximately \$60,000 towards a new playground and that they were seeking a combination of private and town funding to pay for the remaining costs. He estimated a new playground would cost approximately \$300,000. The cost and funding sources of the

remaining projects has not yet been determined. The unspent balances in the Parks and Pool trust accounts are \$113,670 and \$27,788 respectively.

The Police Chief, Shawn Crevier, reviewed the FY 2023 Police Department budget request. He stated the Chief's responsibilities included the operation and delegation of duties for the department. There are currently 20 authorized officer positions, 19 filled, as well as 10 part time officer positions. The Chief expressed concern that many of the part time officers may leave if they were unable to fulfill the new certification requirements mandated under the police reform bill. The part time positions have been valuable in providing coverage for unwanted overtime and absences due to vacation or illness. The budget request for FY 2023 is \$1,882,441, an increase of \$16,133 or less than 1%. The budget included requests to create a new sergeant position and related training for 3 officers, and a police cruiser. The new sergeant position will function as a supervisory role to aid in meeting new requirements mandated in the police reform bill. The Chief also said that the department had received a \$26,000 grant to pay for the start-up costs of manning every officer with a body camera beginning in FY 2023, and that the cost of leasing the camera's will be \$18,000 annually thereafter. The committee requested the Chief provide year over year comparisons of the type and number of calls answered by the police as well as staffing statistics in comparative towns.

The committee briefly discussed the multi-year projection the Town Accountant had prepared and asked Stuart to have the schedule updated with his FY 2023 budget request.

Item 3) Approval of prior meeting's minutes

Ken Willette: Motion to approve minutes of the March 2nd meeting.

Second: Devin Peterson

Unanimously approved

Respectfully Submitted

Lynn Nenni

Finance Committee Chair

