



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 24, 2022

Meeting Time: 5:00 pm

Meeting Agenda items to be discussed:

1. Review of FY 2023 Budget- Fire Department, Schools
2. Approval of prior meeting's minutes
3. 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 24, 2022

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

Special Guests: Stuart Beckley, Town Manager; Justine Caggianno, Human Resources Director; Dr. Dileo, Superintendent of Schools, Chris Desjardin, School Committee Chair, Brian Winslow, Vice Chair, Andy Paquette, Business Manager; John Morrin, Selectman, Tom Barnes, Selectman

The meeting was called to order at 5:05 pm

Item 1.) Review of FY 2023 Budget- Fire Department, Schools

The Town Manager stated the Fire Chief was unable to attend the meeting and therefore substituted the Fire Department review with a review of the Human Resources Department.

Dr. Dileo and the School Committee members presented (all via Zoom) their Fiscal Year 2023 budget request. The total budget request was \$13,748,944 an increase of 3.57% over the prior year or \$473,944. The transportation request was \$1,869,083 an increase of 3.84% or \$69,090 over the current year. The Town Manager's budget recommendation was \$13,944 less than the School's request.

Dr. Dileo showed student enrollment comparisons for the past few years which showed that projected enrollment had dropped from prior years due to changes in the town demographics and also as a result in the increase in home schooling. Projected enrollment for FY 2023 was 1,140. Students enrolled in the Choice Program, which allows students to attend schools outside of their home district was fairly consistent at 179 students.

The request included four new positions- 2 para's, a custodian and a math interventionist along with \$105,000 for chair and desk replacements.

The School Committee also outlined the planned use of \$3,385,000 in ESSER grant funds that had been awarded district. They stated they were using the money to support new programs and curriculum including summer school, intervention programs to support students negatively impacted by the pandemic and software to prevent bullying. They had also purchased new chrome books, made major improvements to the ventilation and HVAC systems and were in the process of seeking approval to replace a boiler and resurface the track.

The School Committee also noted that over the past several years they had been able to make several improvements to the education system with the help of grant money which included facilities improvements, new programming -STEM and Fire Science, and that every student now had a chrome book. They believed that one of the biggest challenges they face is maintaining and keeping current with technology.

Justine Caggianno, Human Resources Director, reviewed the goals for her department and the FY 2023 budget request. The list of goals included training- active shooter, open meeting law and management, reviewing and updating job descriptions and employee

retention. The budget request was \$89,010, an increase of \$21,300 or 31.5% over the prior year. The increase was the result of the Human Resource Director transitioning from a part-time to full time position.

Justine also requested a new full-time position be created to oversee town-wide building maintenance and custodial services. The committee considered the position, noting that the position was not part of the Town Manger's budget request. The committee also raised their concern that there was no professional person on staff to evaluate the condition of town buildings and make recommendations for capital planning purposes, and that the proposed position would not likely be suitable to address their concerns and evaluating the condition of town buildings.

Item 3) Review of any emails or correspondence since last meeting

The committee briefly discussed an e-mail Devin had sent during the week that showed the calculation to compute the impact of changes in the tax levy on the mill rate. The example used was a \$1,000,000 reduction would reduce the mill rate 1.18. Therefore, a \$400,000 reduction in the tax levy would result in a \$141.60 reduction in the tax bill for a home assessed at \$300,000.

Item 2) Approval of prior meeting's minutes

Ken Willette- Motion to approve the minutes of the March 17, 2022 meeting

Second: Devin Peterson

Unanimously Approved

The meeting was adjourned at 7:25 pm.

Respectfully Submitted

Lynn Nenni

Finance Committee Chair