

**Town of West Stockbridge
Finance Committee**

Meeting Notes: 02/16/24 9:00 AM

In Attendance:

Fin Com Members - Bob Salerno, Steve Sautman, Ed Sporn, Dan Buehler, Frank Landsberger (via Zoom)

Other: Marie Ryan – Town Administrator, Kathleen Keresey (Select Board), Andy Krouss (Select Board), Curt Wilson (Director Dept of Public Works), Jamie Boyer (DPW – Supervisor) Marc Portier (Police Chief), Austin White (Richmond EMT), Steve Traver (Richmond Fire Chief), Elaine Markham (Accountant)

1. Accepted Minutes from the Finance Committee Meeting for the Initial FY25 Budget review. Frank-Approved, Ed-Seconded, All-Ayed.
2. Town Treasurer requested to update the town policy for short-term investments to be able to move cash into other banks with higher interest rates. All banks will be FDIC. Cash is usually between \$1.0M - \$1.5M. Frank-Approved, Ed-Seconded, All-Ayed in agreement.
3. FY25 Budget review of version V3 dated 2/16/24
 - a. Austin White reviewed the shared Richmond Ambulance budget.
 - i. The main increase is for salary increases and volunteer stipends to be in parallel with the surrounding areas.
 - ii. Although he proposed an Ambulance Stabilization Fund to share the buying of a new ambulance, W. S. already has a separate Capital Stabilization fund that would be used for this purchase.
 - iii. They did not receive grant for established services. Cannot go back for grant unless increase staffing levels.
 - iv. 2023 had 311 calls. So far in 2024, had 100 calls.
 - b. Steve Traver reviewed Fire Department with main increase for Repairs to meet past expenditures.
 - c. Marc Portier reviewed updated Police budget.
 - i. Corrected Full-Time Officer salary amount on revision to 3%.
 - ii. Traffic Officer line item is for traffic calming with extra patrols over weekends and for school bus schedules. This was reduced by \$2K to \$8K.
 - iii. Overtime budget is up to cover arrests, investigations, court time and vacations. It can also cover extra requests.

- d. Jamie Boyer reviewed the Department of Public Works.
 - i. Salary increases are to stay competitive with other towns. Turnover in the DPW has been low.
 - ii. Overtime increase is to match past expenditures for snow, ice and emergency tree removal from roads.
 - iii. Gas and Diesel increase was to bring budget to actual spend.
 - iv. Snow & Ice Removal budget was reduced by \$5K to lower it to \$85K compared to \$80K in FY24 budget.
- e. Curt Wilson reviewed Building & Grounds.
 - i. Signage line item cannot be rolled over since you can't carry to a 3rd year. It would need to be added back in. The proposed \$7K was removed from the budget until there is a design and proposal to move forward. Can handle separately.
 - ii. Street Lights budget was reduced by \$2.5K to \$12.5K to be closer to actual past spends.
 - iii. Although Tree Warden proposed to increase budget to \$19.6K, it was still listed on the version with no increase at \$17.6K where it will remain.
 - iv. Plant & Garden received \$400 in donations for supplies.
- f. Elaine Markham reviewed the Accountant budget.
 - i. The W.S. position time has increased from 12/wk to 15/wk partly due to the Community Preservation work. A salary increase is needed to be comparable to other towns. A first step increase was proposed to \$27K/yr, which is a reduction of \$1K from the initial proposal.
- g. The BHRSD budget was added at \$3,654K (6.7% increase).
- h. Total FY25 budget was 6,953K (6.4% increase)
 - i. Reduction of \$17.5K for \$6,935K (6.2% increase).

The meeting adjourned at 11:15 AM.