

**Town of Weston  
Finance Committee Meeting Minutes**

**Thursday Feb 2, 2017**

A meeting of the Finance Committee of the Town of Weston, which was duly called and posted in compliance with the laws of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, was held on February 2, 2017, at the Weston Department of Public Works (DPW). There being a quorum present, the meeting was called to order at 7:00pm.

Present for the meeting were:

Finance Committee: John McDonald – Chair, Gabrielle Clemens, Keith Johnson, Sandy Metraux, James Jarrett, James Philipkosky (phone), Lisa Reitano, and Ellen Richstone.

Also Present: Donna S. VanderClock, Town Manager; Susan Kelley, Finance Director; Videographer James Tremble, Weston Media Center; Peter Forcellese, Treasurer; Tom Cullen, Director of DPW; Rich Sullivan, Deputy Director of DPW; Steve Fogg, Town Engineer.

1. Ellen B. Richstone was appointed to serve as Secretary *pro tempore* and charged with keeping the minutes of the meeting.
2. The meeting began with a tour of the DPW facilities.
3. The FY18 recommended DPW budget was then reviewed. Key aspects of the budget include:
  - a. The overall increase is 4.4% or approximately \$196,217. The main drivers for this increase are: a) a new position of Capital Projects Engineer to address the increasing demand for improvements to the public works infrastructure and b) an additional \$100,000 for Construction/ Reconstruction of Public Ways (Roadway Maintenance) to continue increasing this budget to a more appropriate level. Based upon an outside review, it is estimated that the Town should be funding roadway maintenance at about \$1.5 million per year. At this time (assuming the same level of Chapter 90 funding from the Commonwealth in FY18) with this increase, the Town's overall funding (which includes the Chapter 90 funds) is at about 82% of the \$1.5 million target.
  - b. The Equipment Maintenance Division has included funding for a co-op student from a local high school, which would be similar to the temporary/seasonal program run in other divisions. The department is

challenged to find technically trained people and this may provide a future source of qualified individuals when there are vacancies.

- c. In The Water Division Enterprise Fund review, it was indicated that Weston's water consumption for calendar year 2016 increased by approximately 80 million gallons. And the expected MWRA assessment for FY18 is expected to increase by 15.5%. The Town is looking at developing a Water Conservation Policy.
  - d. Other major ongoing projects were reviewed including:
    - i. Drainage improvement program for the overall town
    - ii. South Side drainage program-a multi-year, multi phased project
    - iii. Roadway Improvement Program
    - iv. Equipment Replacement Program
    - v. Sidewalk Reconstruction Program
    - vi. Guardrail Improvement Plan
    - vii. Water Hydrant Rehab Program
  - e. An extensive discussion was held concerning the water wireless meter reading project. This would implement an automatic meter reading (wireless) technology- that would collect consumption, diagnostic and status data from water meter devices and transfer the information to a central database for billing, troubleshooting and analyzing. The Committee asked for additional information on which other towns have implemented this kind of system and provide some specific feedback.
4. The Committee then reviewed the draft of the Report on the School Budget. The intention of this report is to provide an additional level of information and transparency to the Town. It was agreed that we would initially publish the report in the Town Crier and on the Town website and discuss at the next meeting whether further dissemination was needed to ensure that the information was suitably available to all town residents.
  5. The Committee then discussed other types of information that should be prepared for communication to the town residents. One idea is to look at taxes in relation to property values over time and another is to look at debt levels, its impact on taxes versus property values. Susan is going to collect data and Keith has agreed to take the lead at looking to see if there is enough data to provide useful information to the town's residents.
  6. The Committee then looked at the list of the proposals that are coming before the CPC. It was agreed that to better understand the issues before we look at the warrants, when possible, a member of the Committee should attend CPC meetings, and in addition, the proposals should be reviewed at an upcoming Finance Committee meeting.
  7. Finally, Donna raised the issue that the Selectmen would be evaluating the recommendation from the Finance Committee on Reserves. It was decided that the

two members of the Committee who were the most knowledgeable on this should attend the Selectman's meeting- so that additional background information can be provided. John agreed to attend if possible and he will reach out to Gerard to see if he is available.

8. A motion to adjourn was made, duly seconded, and the meeting adjourned at 9:20pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Ellen B. Richstone