



TOWN OF BLANDFORD
Finance Committee

Blandford Town Hall
1 Russell Stage Road, Suite 1
Blandford, MA 01008

**BLANDFORD
FINANCE COMMITTEE BUDGET
MEETING MINUTES**

April 06, 2022

1:00 pm

1. OPEN SESSION 1:00 pm
Town Hall

Meeting held in the Select Board Chamber,

In Attendance: J. Lombardo, Chair; C. Smelcer, Member; D. Brodie, Finance; C. Dunne, Town Administrator

2. EXAMINATION OF RECORDS OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS:

3. ACTION ITEMS

a. FY23 Municipal Light Plant Budget Review

Peter Langmore, Chair, spoke to the proposed FY23 budget for broadband. He reviewed with the Committee how the Municipal Light Plant (MLP) operates via revenues collected from ISP and phone charges to customers after Whip City Fiber (WCF) takes a portion. He discussed other funding sources including state reimbursement for “drop costs,” a grant from the Executive Office of Housing and Economic Development (EOHED), and funding through a reverse auction by the Federal Communications Commission (FFC) for which Westfield Gas & Electric was the winning bid for the region (Connect America Fund Phase II). He then provided an overview of costs including indirect costs such as insurance, pole licensing and attachment fees, costs associated with the Broadband Hub at 4 North Blandford Road and other variable expenses such as a retainer for disaster recovery crews and semi-annual check-ups by WFC on the system.

b. FY23 Water Department Budget Review

Gordon Avery, Water Superintendent, discussed the Water Department’s FY23 budget needs with the Finance Committee. Due to the soaring costs of electricity, he was requesting an increase to the Department’s utilities line. Similar for waste removal, the Department was discussing going out to bid in an effort to mitigate increases to the cost of services through Casella. With respect to salaries, he was looking to stick to an overall 2.25% increase for the Department but give greater pay increases to some of the younger and lower paid staff. On the revenue side, he stressed that a full rate study would be needed before the Department could start billing by usage.

Janet Lombardo, Chair Finance

Cathy Smelcer, Finance

Deborah Brodie, Finance