



TOWN OF BLANDFORD
SELECT BOARD

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

**FINANCE COMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES
February 23, 2023
9:30 am**

Meeting held in the Select Board Chamber, Town Hall

1. EXAMINATION OF RECORDS OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS

None

2. *AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION / PUBLIC COMMENT

None

3. DEPARTMENT REPORTS

a. Town Administrator

i. Overview of Enterprise Funds

4. ACTION ITEMS

i. Review Fiscal Year 2024 Departmental Budget Requests

a. Cemetery Commission

Theodore Cousineau, Chair of the Cemetery Commission joined the Finance Committee to discuss The Cemetery Commission's FY24 budget. Cousineau reported budget short-falls in their budget, specifically, the cemetery has monuments that need repair which is very expensive, and the costs are rising. Cousineau spoke about the Tiffany Fund that has been supporting the Cemetery for years but is nearly depleted.

b. Building Commissioner / Animal Inspector/Control Officer (in absentia)

i. Jason Forgue, Building Commissioner: Dunne distributed stipend and expense requests from the Building Commission as well as his FY24 budget. Forgue is asking for an increase in his yearly wages. The Finance Committee is referring to the Collins Center Wage report that was done for the Town recently. This report does not appear to cover this particular position.

ii. Teresa Donovan, Animal Control Officer: Donovan requested level funding for her FY24 budget. It should be noted that Donovan has two positions in Town; Animal Control Officer for the Town of Blandford and Animal Inspector.

c. Municipal Light Plant (Broadband)

Peter Langmore, Chair Municipal Light Board joined the Finance Committee to discuss the FY24 Budget. Langmore spoke of the revenue generated from Internet fees from Blandford residents. Revenue for Broadband is around \$297,555 yearly as well as revenue from telephone which is minor; \$2,000 - \$3,000. Langmore is reporting Retained Earnings from the previous fiscal year of \$283,000. Dunne spoke of using MLB's

Retained Earnings to pay down the debt associated with Broadband as well as Capital planning for the future. Langmore would like the Committee to consider stipends for the Board and an increase in salary from \$4,000 to \$5,000. As with all other departments, MLB is experiencing major increases in electricity and propane. Langmore reviewed his budget items line by line.

d. Board of Health

Jennifer Girard, Chair Board of Health met with the Finance Committee with her budget requests. Girard mentioned that the line item that they are requesting an increase in is Cartage & Tipping. Girard discussed the possibility of lowering the price of the Transfer Station decals, however, she doesn't believe lowering this cost would be sustainable going forward. Girard reviewed her budget requests line by line.

e. Water Department

Gordon Avery, Water Department Superintendent met with the Finance Committee with their budget requests. Avery spoke of the revenue the Water Department collects annually which is approximately \$643,027. Avery is asking for a small increase in stipends as well as a minimal increase for hourly-wage employees. Avery is increasing their admin help to 20 hours with benefits and an increase in hourly wage. Water Department laborer, Steve Grondin, is training to be a licenses Water Operator so his hourly wage will increase. Avery reviewed his budget line-by-line for FY24.

Janet Lombardo, Finance Chair

Absent

Kathie Hudson, Finance Member

Deborah Brodie, Finance Member

Kevin Greene, Finance Member