

March 13, 2024

Meeting of Finance Committee held on Wednesday, March 13, 2024, beginning at 6:00 p.m. in the Selectmen's Conference Room, Town Hall.

Members present: Tony Sanches, Aneta Lombardi, Michael Kelley, Susanne Boyea and Dolly Cincone

Members excused: Matais Goncalves

Mr. Marc Strange was also present.

First Order of Business: The Pledge of Allegiance

Visitations: Mr. Santos - Precinct Member. At the School Committee meeting on March 12<sup>th</sup>, Mr. Santos stated that the School Committee has not been following the town bylaws which require advocating for funds to fill the mission of the Ludlow Public Schools including public meetings with the Finance Committee. He also noted that the Board of Selectmen pressed the School Committee to vote and approve the school budget that was presented on February 27<sup>th</sup>, 2024, during a joint meeting with the Board of Selectmen (BOS) and the Finance Committee. Mr. Santos would like the School Committee to approve a level funded budget. Tonight Mr. Santos remarked that the Finance Committee is required by the town bylaws to have hearings on any financial article and meet with each department. Mr. Strange then read the town bylaws regarding these matters, as well as presented a legal opinion from 2020 from the town attorney Doherty, Wallace, Pillsbury & Murphy, which stated that the Town Administrator by and for the Board of Selectmen prepares and submits the budget to the Town Meeting. It is the responsibility of the Finance Committee to review, analyze and make recommendations to the Town Meeting regarding budget that is submitted. There are regular meetings held with the heads of the School Committee, Finance Committee, BOS, Superintendent, School Business Manager and the Town Administrator to keep the budget process on track and keep lines of communications open.

Afterwards, Mr. Strange reviewed the most recent version of Level 2 2025 Budget, noting that not much has changed, but another \$10,000 was added to the deficit in the building inspectors' budget for sealer of weights and measures. The deficit went up from \$447,882 to \$457,882. There are still a few pending items:

- Trash/Recycle – reaching out to Waste Management to see if some money can be saved if contract was increased from 3 to 5 years.
- Health insurance – looking at offering buyback options to employees on family plans if they choose to remove themselves from the Town's insurance plan for 2025. Also, looking at different insurance plans.

The Committee decided to postpone the vote to recommend budget until Mr. Strange gets the final numbers from pending items listed above, which is expected to be at the end of March. The committee is also considering reducing the amount of overtime for the 2025 budget. The Board of Selectmen is having a Public budget Hearing on April 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2024. The warrant needs to be sent out by April 18<sup>th</sup>, 2024. The next Finance Committee meeting will be on April 10<sup>th</sup>, 2024, to continue working on final recommendation of the budget.

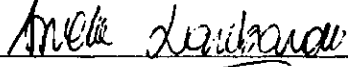
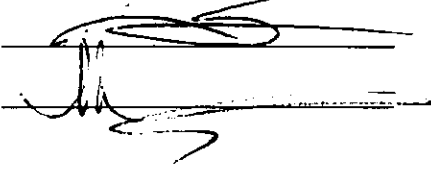
Correspondence included a memo from the Department of Public Works noting that the Department of Public Works' Snow and Ice Budget has been over expended of February 8<sup>th</sup>, 2024.


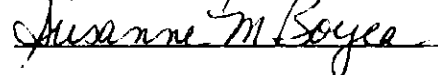
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Moved by Ms. Cincone, seconded by Ms. Boyea to approve and sign the Finance Committee Minutes of February 7, 2024, as indicated.

Vote: 5-0-0 in favor

Moved by Ms. Boyea, seconded by Ms. Cincone to adjourn the Finance Committee Meeting at 7:04 p.m. Vote: 5-0-0 in favor.

  
  
Ludlow Finance Committee