

**TOWN OF LEBANON  
SPECIAL TOWN MEETING  
October 18, 2023**

**MINUTES**

The Special Town meeting of the electors and those qualified to vote at the Town Meetings of the Town of Lebanon was held on Wednesday, October 18, 2023, at the community room of the Jonathan Trumbull Library, 580 Exeter Road, Lebanon. Audience: 25

First Selectman Kevin Cwikla called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM.

First Selectman Kevin Cwikla asked the audience to stand to recite the Pledge of Allegiance.

First Selectman Kevin Cwikla called for the nomination of a Moderator.

Moved by Fran Malozzi, seconded by Liz Charron to appoint Diane Malozzi as Moderator.  
Vote called – Motion passed.

Moderator Malozzi reviewed Town Meeting rules and protocol.

Moved by Kathleen Smith, seconded by Liz Charron to wave the reading of the call of the Special Town meeting dated October 18, 2023. Vote called – Motion passed.

Moderator Malozzi asked for a motion to bring item 2 to the floor as presented.

Moved by Fran Malozzi, seconded by Kevin Cwikla to bring item 2 to the floor.  
Vote called – Motion passed.

Board of Finance Chair Elizabeth Charron spoke to the question as follows: Last fiscal year surplus was about \$1.3 million which is more than is typically seen. The town had about \$900,000.00 more in revenue than budgeted. Major areas resulting in the large surplus were:

- \$159,000.00 from local conveyance tax. This is the tax received when properties change.
- \$148,000.00 more from the State for the municipal revenue sharing. At the time the budget was set, the town was advised to budget \$30,000.00 and the town received \$178,000.00.
- \$142,000.000 from Police services. The Police received revenue from traffic service overtime work from the Frontier fiber optic project, and from the Renaissance Fair. The town received the overtime when the Constables were on duty. This amount is more than typically budgeted for. The town should not expect this to happen each year.
- \$118,000.00 for Building Official fees resulting from increased activity.
- \$13,000.00 from Solid Waste.
- \$123,000.00 from school tuition from out-of-town children enrolling in our schools.
- \$252,000.00 from investment income because of interest rates.

On the expense side, there was about a \$400,000.00 surplus. Areas to note are:

- \$20,000.00 for insurance. Cyber security policy that was budgeted did not get implemented right away.
- \$90,000.00 in Public Works due to staff shortages.
- \$22,000.00 in building and grounds.
- \$71,000.00 in snow removal.
- \$43,000.00 in fringe benefits (medical). When the budget is set, it is based on the average of current staff. Staff turnover may result in different coverage for new employees.
- Contingency funds can be used by the Board of Finance for unforeseen and emergency expenses. \$165,000.00 was budgeted and \$25,000.00 was used. If approved tonight, about \$27,000.000 will be used and is part of the second motion. We will have about \$140,000.00 remaining.

These total about \$441,000.00 or about \$1.3 million surplus.

Fund Balance is kept at a certain level. The Board of Finance likes to have enough in Fund Balance for emergencies or to start projects. A certain amount is needed in Fund Balance for bonding projects, so we have a good rating and get a good interest rate. Board of Finance policy is the Fund Balance should be in a range of 14-17 percent of the current years total budget. A committee consisting of Board of Finance and Board of Selectmen members consider all the requests from departments/boards/commissions. The committee reviews the requests, prioritizes, and gives recommendations to the Board. The Board of Finance makes the final decision on any items to be brought to a Special Town meeting.

The projects this evening total approximately \$1.2 million.

- \$300,000.00 in tree removal. Safety issue resulting from the Emerald Ash Borer. Continue to cut the diseased trees.
- \$45,000.00 for completion of the cemetery wall at North Lebanon Cemetery.
- \$100,000.000 to replace fire truck ET106. The truck is old and needs to be replaced. It takes about three years for delivery. We need enough for a down payment, and the truck is roughly \$1 million. This item will be brought back to Town Meeting to purchase.
- \$145,000.00 for phase two of asbestos removal at elementary and middle schools. This will eliminate all asbestos at both schools.
- \$30,000.00 for district-wide alarms at the schools.
- \$100,000.00 for gymnasium floor at the Elementary School. The existing floor is buckling and presents a safety issue.
- \$100,000.00 for the School Study project. Members from the Boards of Selectmen, Finance and Education comprise the committee. The study will look at the schools, buildings and what needs to be done with them. Members feel it is wise to put money into a consultant who can evaluate and provide guidance.

- \$163,000.00 for DPW Plow Truck. This will complete the purchase that Town Meeting approved. \$81,500.00 was budgeted the current year budget. Board of Finance thought to use some of capital to place the order now as it takes a longer time for the truck to be delivered.
- \$37,500.00 for DPW 1 ton dump truck. \$37,500.00 is in the current year budget. The additional \$37,500.00 will complete the purchase.
- \$200,000.00 for High School roof repairs. The High School is 30 years old, and the roof needs repairs/replacement. The Board of Education looked into three options: 1) A total roof replacement, which will need to be done in the future. The cost would be about \$2.6 million. The State would reimburse about 40 percent; 2) restore at \$1 million; and 3) repair roof which would cost about \$200,000.00. Repairs come with a five-year warranty. This will allow the Town to plan the roof replacement when doing other projects to be bonded together.

The Board of Finance feels these are highest priority items. Fund Balance will be about \$4.7 million and keep it in 16% range of the current fiscal year budget.

Moderator Malozzi opened the floor for questions/comments.

Sheree Swenson, 53 Leonard Bridge Road: What is involved in the School Study? What are the potential outcomes?

Board of Finance Chair Liz Charron: Looking at all facilities is a major part. Facilities need work such as the Elementary School windows in the 66 wing; HVAC needs repairs/replacement. The High School needs the roof and other facilities related issues that need to be taken into consideration. Enrollment will be looked at to help determine the best use of space for current and projected enrollment over the next five to ten years. The Strategic Plan will be looked at and what the district is trying to accomplish from a curriculum standpoint.

Superintendent Andrew Gonzalez: The committee is looking for an unbiased opinion on the direction the district should go. Bringing in a consulting firm that specializes in this type of study will help to make prudent financial decisions moving forward.

Sheree Swenson: Understands goal of the school study committee was to determine whether the three school buildings will remain or close one and begin bussing children out of town.

Board of Finance Chair Liz Charron: This is not the goal of the committee.

Moderator Malozzi: Stated this question is for Board of Education and other meetings. The question does not pertain to passing or not passing this evening. The meeting must be kept on track.

Kelly Lawer, Olenick Road: Would like to know out of the surplus revenue, is there any remaining? Is there an opportunity for anyone else to bring items to the Board of Finance? Would like to know the time of year that surplus is discussed?

Board of Finance Chair Liz Charron: Capital is looked at twice a year. As part of the annual budget process in December/January and at the end of the fiscal year. Board of Finance looks at any surplus which would not be audited, but the Board looks at potential list of capital requests, usually in September. Chairman Charron indicated that any time during the year requests can be sent to the Board of Selectmen.

Kelly Lawer: If there is any surplus revenue available, the Town needs to look at the safety and hygiene of the current Public Works building.

Moderator Malozzi asked if there were any further questions/comments. There were no further questions/comments.

Moderator Malozzi called the vote on Item 2.

“Consider and act upon authorizing the expenditure from the general fund in the amount of \$1,220,500 for the following projects:

- I. Trees - \$300,000
- II. Complete wall at North Lebanon Cemetery – \$45,000
- III. Replace firetruck ET106 – Down Payment, lease at a later date – \$100,000
- IV. Asbestos at LES/LMS Schools – \$145,000 (completes this)
- V. Alarm at Schools – \$30,000 (district wide)
- VI. LES Gym Floor – \$100,000
- VII. School Study – \$100,000
- VIII. DPW Plow Truck – \$163,000 (completes purchase with the \$81,500 allocated in the FY24 budget that was approved)
- IX. DPW 1 Ton Dump Truck – \$37,500 (completes purchase with the \$37,500 allocated in the FY24 budget that was approved)
- X. High School Roof Repairs with 5-year warranty - \$200,000”

Vote called. Item 2 passed unanimously with no objections.

Moderator Malozzi asked for a motion to bring the item 3 to the floor as written:

Moved by Fran Malozzi seconded by Alan Olenick to bring item 3 to the floor. Vote called— Motion passed.

Board of Finance Chair Elizabeth Charron spoke to the question as follows: Last fiscal year, Police Services was \$27,405.00 over budget because of overtime, but the town brought in \$142,000.00 of extra revenue because of these services. State statute and Charter states if over a certain amount, Town Meeting must authorize the transfer from Contingency to Police Services, so the large deficit does not show in our financials.

Moderator Malozzi opened the floor for questions/comments.

Kelly Lawer, Olenick Road: Are overtime rates set by State Statute?

First Selectman Kevin Cwikla: The Town has a contract with the State Police, and the constable work is set under that.

Paula McDowell, Leonard Bridge Road: Should we consider increasing the cost to any facilities utilizing Police services?

First Selectman Kevin Cwikla: Resident State Trooper works with Selectmen on setting budget, but these requests are difficult to determine each year.

Sheree Swenson, Leonard Bridge Road: Are the Fairs paying for Police services the same way non-profits pay?

First Selectman Kevin Cwikla: Everyone pays for Police services. The Board of Selectmen are looking at 4013c non-profits going into the next budget cycle. Possibly a special one-time, half-day use to try to help non-profit groups.

Moderator Malozzi asked if there were any further questions/comments.  
There were no further questions/comments.

Moderator Malozzi called the vote on Item 3: "Consider and act upon transferring \$27,405 from Contingency to Department 420 Police Services."


Vote called – Motion carried. Item 3 passed unanimously with no objections.

Moderator Malozzi stated as this is a Special Town meeting, no additional items may be brought forward.

Moved by Fran Malozzi, seconded by Alan Olenick to adjourn the Special Town meeting. Moderator Malozzi called for vote. Motion carried unanimously.

The October 18, 2023, Special Town meeting adjourned at 7:27 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

  
Mary Ellen Wiczorek, CCTC  
Town Clerk