

**Board of Finance
Special Meeting – Hybrid
In person and Zoom
March 11, 2023
MINUTES**

A recording of this meeting is posted on the town website.

Members Present: Meghan Scott (Vice Chair), Philip Johnson and Gregg Lafontaine. Alternates: Mike Ninteau and AJ Dunnack.

Members Present via Zoom: Liz Charron (Chair), Diane Malozzi (Secretary).

Absent: David Scata, Haley Messier.

Also present: Kevin Cwikla, First Selectman; Hayley Wagner, Finance Director; Dean Hunniford, Director of Public Works/Facilities; Mark Waters, Fire Marshall.

Recording begins.

1.0 Call to Order

A quorum being present M. Scott called the meeting to order at 8:30 am.
M. Ninteau to sit for David Scata.

2.0 Discuss the following FY 2023-24 operating and capital budget areas. After each discussion there will be opportunity for public input.

NOTE: There was no public input after any department discussion.

2.1 Dept. 423 Fire Marshall

M. Waters said the Fire Marshall's office is in the process of being updated to accommodate additional space and to upgrade to current technology. Operating budget is close to what it has been historically, but this is his first year in the position.

TIP has a line item for a new iPad. Amount of \$2141.00 under supplies/equipment line item is to join the Fire Dept. software. This a yearly cost split with the Fire Department. Discussion of whether this is a onetime cost, or subscription. H. Wagner said it is fifty percent of the total between two budgets. The use of the software will eliminate paper files and allow the office to track buildings through other departments.

Revenue is about \$2,500.00 for the department from inspection fees.

Capital request of \$60,000.00 for a new vehicle, plus radio and amenities, to be used for emergencies and inspections and to alleviate the use of personal vehicle. Currently the equipment needed is stored and needs to be loaded into a personal vehicle and unloaded upon completion of the investigation. This equipment is often contaminated with cancerous compounds.

Discussion with the panelists included possible used vehicle, life expectancy, and annual mileage.

2.2 Dept. 400 Legal

K. Cwikla said legal is finishing up the litigation with the FC Church. Labor contracts of Town Hall begin in the coming fiscal year and DPW the following year. Expected legal costs for the Charter revision are the only anticipated costs at this time.

M. Scott commented on the funds set aside in legal counsel are historical on a three-year average. G. LaFontaine asked how much of general counsel funds go towards the green litigation and would a lower number be anticipated when the litigation is completed. K. Cwikla responded about 80%. H. Wagner said the FY 2021-22 legal cost for counsel for the Green was \$21,750.00.

P. Johnon asked why the Labor relations is listed under two separate lines. H. Wagner replied that appears to be an error and a line would be reduced by \$9,850.00.

2.3 Dept. 401 Selectman

K. Cwikla said the budget static with only usual salary increases.

2.4 Dept. 415 Computer Services

K. Cwikla said ARA funds will be used to upgrade cost of web host for FY24-25

L. Charron asked what is the driver for a 20–28-thousand-dollar increase. Wagner said the cloud, the VOIP phone system and additional data and services from Novus have driven up costs. M. Scott said she noticed 132 additional users and asked if there are any other options to Novus. H. Wagner said additional e mails for everyone involved in Town departments, commissions and boards have finally come on the system. Novus seems to have the market on municipalities.

Discussion continued to include cost of software contracts, user costs, school financial software, security and services.

2.5 Dept. 417 Town Hall

K. Cwikla said telephone line has gone down, but the cost is passed on to Computer Services. Town moved the phones to VOIP service. Billing info and support costs were discussed.

Further discussion included copier services and Misc. contractual Services, (dumpster/paper recycling). AJ Dunnack volunteered to assist with the negotiation of the misc. service contract.

2.6 Dept. Fire Safety Complex

Increases in budget due to oil costs, repairs and maintenance. On the public side of the facility new floors and repairs to the roof are needed.

M. Scott asked what drove the line item for repairs and maintenance up and would anything come out of the Town Improvement fund. D. Hunniford said increases are from the fire alarm system which was changed to a wi-fi system from a telephone system. H. Wagner said annual inspections from FASD contribute.

The roof replacement at the Fire Safety complex will likely come out of the Town Improvement fund.

2.7 Dept. 430 Public Works

D. Hunniford presented the proposed budget for the department. A 4.5% increase included across the board.

The current tree removal budget has about \$82,727.00 remaining. L. Charron asked why a line for tree removal of \$5232.00. D. Hunniford explained that is for in house small projects not included in other tree removal funding. D. Hunniford said to keep up with large tree removal contracts in the future will require an additional \$500,000.00 for the next year, \$500,000.00 for the year after that, \$250,000.00 for year 3 and \$100,000.00 for year 4, totaling \$ 1,350,000.00.

L. Charron noted that some salaries increased 2% while others increased 2.5%. H. Wagner replied that the difference is in whether the employee is union or non-union. An error on the proposed budget sheet was noted. The non-union contracts are *not* included in negotiations.

G. Lafontaine inquired about the increase in the cost and usage of oil. H. Wagner replied budgets increasing at different rates, consumption and lock in prices are causes. The Fire Safety Complex usage is up since covid restrictions have been removed and is seeing more use.

D. Hunniford explained capital requests for a plow truck, excavator and a new dump truck including purchase costs, ordering and lead times, life expectancy and maintenance cost.

Paving costs have increased. The town roads have been surveyed by a professional company to identify which need immediate attention. D. Hunniford explained how roads are maintained and the how long the particular maintenance extends the life of the surface. No other large projects are projected in the future for roads and bridges. Mack Road drainage and reconstruction and Tobacco Street bridge were discussed. Mack Rd. costs to be determined and Tobacco Street is the last bridge and is currently in the engineering stage.

2.8 Dept. 433 Snow Removal

Largest increase to budget is the cost of salt. Salt has increased to \$107.00 per ton, up from \$75.00 per ton. M Ninteau inquired to the sand cost. D. Hunniford said sand is used for unimproved roads.

M. Scott proposed a break of 10 minutes. Hearing no objection, the board recessed at 10:20 am. 10.30 am, meeting resumed.

2.9 Dept. 431 Buildings & Grounds

D. Hunniford said the increase is standard. Town mowing contracts are out to bid. The cemetery contract will be extended for one year. H. Wagner will review and adjust as necessary.

2.10 Dept. 425 Building Dept.

H. Wagner said increases in salary due to market adjustments.

2.11 Dept. 441 Health Department

Increase due to salary adjustment.

2.12 Fund 204 Community Center

Largest increase to budget due to pool maintenance.

The center will need roof, fascia, flooring, furniture, exterior painting and HVAC upgrades.

H. Wagner said the Trumbull fund has an estimated balance of \$87,000.00 with YTD interest income of \$19,175.00.

L. Charron said line item under revenue, operating transfers GF, for a \$100.00 historically has always been there and suggests dropping it to zero, if acceptable.

2.13 Fund 205 Animal Control

NEACOG controls animal control for Lebanon and surrounding towns. Increases typically due to inflation.

2.14 Fund 208 TIP

K. Cwikla said the fund has a healthy balance and feels the appropriation request is adequate. Nothing new has been added to the list, more projects coming off, as completed, than coming on.

As a side note, review of the TIP policy and balance guidelines will be added to the next regular meeting agenda.

2.15 Fund 228 Emergency Management

K. Cwikla said the budget is basically static this year with a very small increase.

3.0 Adjourn

M. Scott adjourned the meeting at 11:14 am without objection.

Recording ends.

Respectfully Submitted,

Diane Malozzi

Secretary, Lebanon Board of Finance

March 17, 2023

Please see the minutes of subsequent meetings for the approval of these minutes and any corrections hereto.