

**ADVISORY AND FINANCE COMMITTEE**  
**Minutes**  
**January 10, 2024, Hybrid Meeting**

**PRESENT**     **12 members of the committee were present:** Gail Butler, Louis Cabana, Brian Dunn, Daniel Green, Bruce Howard, Timothy Lawlor, Steve Nearman, Lorenzo Pizarro, Christine Richards, Emily Tompkins, Jim Young, and Robert Zupperoli.

**ABSENT**     **3 members of the committee were absent:** Joe Lalley, Bethany Rogers, and Ashley Shaw

Call to Order - The meeting was called to order by Chairman Steve Nearman at 7:00 PM.

Announcements

- **Hybrid Meeting:** This meeting is likely to be conducted in a hybrid format, with some participants attending physically and others attending virtually via a video conference application.
- **Ways to Watch:** The meeting will be airing on Comcast 9, Verizon 47, or on PACTV's YouTube channel which can be viewed at [pactv.org/stream](http://pactv.org/stream).
- **Public Comment:** Any speaker giving public comment is allotted up to 5 minutes in which to speak. Public Comment can be made at the beginning or end of each meeting, or in regard to a particular agenda item the speaker wishes to be heard on
- **Zoom Login Information:** Anyone who wants to attend the meeting virtually, including members of the public who wish to give public comment, can use one of the following methods in which to do so:
  - **Join via Zoom application:** Download the Zoom meeting application on your device, press/click on "Join", then enter Meeting ID: **995 2986 0638**, and then the Meeting Password: **100131**, or
  - **Join via website** (requires microphone): Go to [www.zoom.us](http://www.zoom.us), click "Join A Meeting" on the top righthand side, and enter the meeting ID: **995 2986 0638**, and then the meeting password **100131**, or
  - **Join via Telephone (voice only):** Dial **929-205-6099** and Enter Meeting ID: **995 2986 0638** and enter Meeting Password: **100131**

Public Comment - None.

Agenda Items

**Minutes:** Approve December 13, 2023, meeting minutes – Mr. Cabana motioned to approve the minutes as written. Ms. Butler second. Motion carried (9-0-2), Mr. Lawlor and Mr. Pizarro abstained.

**Town Meeting Articles**

Article 2: Reports of Boards/Committees – This article permits Boards and Committee's to submit their reports for recording. Mr. Dunn moved to recommend Article 2 to Town Meeting. Mr. Young second. Motion carried unanimously (11-0-0).

Article 4: Continuation of Committees – The purpose of this article is to authorize certain committees to continue to meet and perform work for the committee. Ms. Butler moved to recommend Article 4 to Town Meeting. Mr. Green second. Motion carried unanimously (11-0-0).

Article 6: Salaries of Elected Officials – This article sets the salary for the Chair of the Select Board, Select Board Members, and the Town Moderator. The amount set has not increased for some time. Mr. Lawlor moved to recommend Article 6 to Town Meeting. Ms. Tompkins second. Motion carried unanimously (11-0-0).

Article 12: Chapter 90 – This article authorizes the Town to accept State funding for the maintenance of public roads.

Mr. Howard has concerns with the warrant language authorizing the Town to borrow funds to repair roads, in anticipation of the state reimbursing the Town, without knowing for certain the amount of the State Aid to the Town. His concern is borrowing a set amount and then finding out that the State Aid is less than the amount borrowed.

Mr. James Downey, Asst. Director of Public Works, advised that the Town has not, to his knowledge, borrowed funding for road repairs under this program but that he would consult with the Finance Director and get back to the Committee with the Town's practice of Chapter 90 funding.

Mr. Zupperoli moved to recommend Article 12 to Town Meeting. Mr. Cabana second. Motion carried unanimously (11-0-0).

Old/New/Other Business Chairman Nearman noted that the Advisory & Finance Committee (A&F) annual articles review schedule has been developed and will be distributed to committee members.

Chairman Nearman noted that the Sub-Committee's will begin meeting soon and should decide the format of their meetings, either in-person or zoom and to get that information to Jeanette White asap.

Chairman Nearman noted that the A&F will have a Joint Budget Meeting with the Select Board and School Committee next week on Tuesday, January 17<sup>th</sup> and the Select Board will pass the budget to the A&F for their review process. Chairman Nearman emphasized that this is an important meeting and all should attend.

The A&F have formed Sub-Committees that will meet with each Department, within their Sub-Committee, and perform in-depth investigating & questioning of the budgets. Each Sub-Committee will write a report on their findings and make recommendations. The Sub-Committee's will present their reports to the entire committee at the Budget Hearing on February 21<sup>st</sup> at which the A&F will vote the Town Budget to recommend to Town Meeting.

Mr. Lawlor requested to address the group. He also wanted to stress the importance to attend the Joint Budget Meeting next Tuesday. He feels this proposed budget is different from any others and is concerned with the proposed 7% increase which represents between 15-20,000,000 dollars. Mr. Lawlor said that he has been intimately involved with the school budget for the last two weeks and there are some things that the committee, as a team, need to address. The A&F committee, as a team, needs to step up and understand what is going on. The increase would wipe out \$8.7 million in reserve funds and is bumping up against the 2.5% override and the team needs to stay focused and not be distracted. The team has a responsibility to review and investigate these things and do a good job. He would like the whole committee to get involved. Mr. Nearman said he can attest to Mr. Lawlor's involvement with understanding the numbers and that he has attended a meeting on this subject with him. Mr. Nearman cautioned that he doesn't want anyone to vote on anything if they don't understand the numbers and the impact it will have on the budget.

Public Comment - None.

Adjournment - Ms. Richards motioned to adjourn. Mr. Lawlor second.

Ms. Butler wanted to recognize Ms. Richards accomplishment for her recent completion of a bachelor's degree in criminal justice.

Motion carried unanimously (11-0-0). The meeting adjourned at 7: 38 PM.

Submitted by  
Jeanette White  
Budget Analyst