

*Westwood Finance and Warrant Commission*  
**JANUARY 31, 2023 REMOTE MEETING**  
**ZOOM WEBINAR**  
**7:00 PM**  
*Meeting Minutes*

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Finance Commission Chairperson George Hertz called the meeting to order at 7:00PM.

Finance and Warrant Commission members who were present: William Bruce Jr., James Ferraro, Lauren Fitzpatrick, Rene Gauthier, Mike Gay, George Hertz, Angeila Hughes, Caitlyn Jurczak, George Laham, George Maroun, Kristina Patyjewicz, Christopher Poreda and Sean Weller.

Chairperson Hertz then granted permission to Westwood Media Center to live stream and record the meeting. He also asked if anyone else would like to record this meeting.

He then welcomed all participants, members, presenters and members of public and press to the FinCom January 31, 2023 meeting.

The Finance Commission administrator, Ms. Wong then called the ROLL.

Afterwards, Chairperson Hertz led members in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Next, he read the Open Meeting Law pursuant to Chapter 20 of the Acts of 2021. He then stated the February 14<sup>th</sup> meeting will be on Zoom and will look into the health situation in terms of the Town to have the Public Hearing in person.

Members were provided with the final agenda and 01.17.23 meeting minutes prior to the meeting.

Member Discussion:

Chair's update-

- Chairperson Hertz watched the Select Board meeting earlier tonight. There are no changes or deletions in the warrant articles. The Select Board will be presenting the budget warrant articles more in detail to FinCom on February 14<sup>th</sup>. The municipal and school budget presentations will be on the same day.
- FY24 Budget- the school and municipal budgets have a goal of sustaining services through a balanced budget in a very challenging fiscal year.
- Based on observations from the Budget Steering Committee, the School and Town administrators have worked diligently to prepared budgets that are balanced. Challenges for the town and schools include major inflationary costs such as energy and increased programming and transportation costs for Chapter 766.

- Contracts for teachers and firefighters have not been finalized but appropriate financial assumptions have been included in the respective budgets.
- The School Committee has not yet voted on the budget presented by the Superintendent. They will be voting prior to our February 14th meeting.
- Highlights on FY24 Budget- Total Budget is proposed at 115.6 million: 6.1% increase over FY24. This includes 4.2% for municipal budget, 4.5% for School budget and 5.2% for fixed costs including in part health insurance pensions. The Town does not have final state aid numbers at this time. Debt service is increased by 32.5%, primarily due to the first year full funding of debt service related to the Hanlon School.
- The chair encouraged members to view Stephanie McManus' (Finance Director) presentation slides presented at the Select Board meeting on Jan. 24th. Information is available on the town's website under the Finance Department.
- The Capital Budget subcommittee will be meeting with the Town Administrator, department heads and School Administrators on Feb. 7th. They will review and develop recommendations on the entire capital budget including municipal improvements, school improvements and borrowing articles.
- The Chair is relying on the subcommittee reports to confirm that the FY24 budgets are sustainable and balanced and other recommendations they have for the town.
- Vice Chair Update- He will share his notes with FinCom members about the Feb 7th Capital Budget meeting. In addition, he will also share his notes on the Hale Info Session after he attends it.
- Chairperson Hertz asked members to start scheduling their subcommittee meetings after February 14th.
- One member followed up on the question in regards to members' approval on meeting minutes. The chair agreed that members who missed the meeting are allowed to vote on the minutes after they confirm that they watched the meeting on Westwood Media Center.
- Another member asked about the timeline for the subcommittee reports. Subcommittees should prepare their reports in between February 14<sup>th</sup> to March 14<sup>th</sup>. Vice Chair Poreda stated both the Chair and himself will work on the reports that go into the town meeting book.
- FinCom members received a letter concerning the article dealing with the appointment of the Tax Collector and Town Treasurer. The Chair will request that the Charter Commission and/or Select Board address this issue when FinCom reviews this warrant article.
- Members were asked to review and approve the meeting minutes for January 31, 2023. A motion was offered and seconded. A ROLL call took place. Thirteen members approved the minutes. Two members were not present for the vote.

Chairperson Hertz asked if there were any questions from the public and press. There were no questions from the public and the press.

The Chair thanked members for attending and asked for a motion to adjourn. A motion was offered and seconded. Thirteen members were in favor. Two members were not present for the vote.

**Meeting Adjourned at 7:22PM**

For a complete video of the 01/31/23 FinCom meeting please see the following link:  
<https://westwoodmediacenter.tv/>