

Westwood Finance and Warrant Commission
MARCH 28, 2023 FINAL PUBLIC HEARING
IN PERSON
7:00 PM
Meeting Minutes

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

Finance and Warrant Commission members who were present: William Bruce Jr., John Carey, James Ferraro, Lauren Fitzpatrick, Mike Gay, George Hertz, Angeila Hughes, George Laham, George Maroun, Kristina Patyjewicz, Christopher Poreda, and Sean Weller. Member(s) who were authorized prior to the meeting, participated remotely via speakerphone: Alexander Yale.

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 March 28, 2023 Final Public Hearing.

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

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

Members were provided with the final agenda and all other related materials prior to the meeting.

Prior to the evening's presentations, Chairperson Hertz made some introductory comments:

- This is our Final Public Hearing in preparation for the Annual Town Meeting on May 1st. At the end of the hearing, FinCom will adjourn the public meeting and then review, deliberate and vote on all the ATM warrant articles presented before them. During the presentations, the Chair encouraged FinCom members to ask their remaining questions and address any issues and concerns about the warrant articles.
- The Chair mentioned it has been a challenging year in preparation for the FY24 town and school budgets. He also thanked town and school officials, department heads, staff, Select Board and the School Committee in their efforts to produce a sustainable and balanced budget.
- Tonight's Public Hearing will start off with a brief presentation from the School since FinCom didn't have a Public Hearing on the recently approved FY24 revised School Budget.

The Evening's Presenters:

- Emily Parks (WPS Superintendent), Lemma Jn-baptiste (WPS Director of Finance & Operations) - Final Update/Final Comments on FY24 School Budget

The Chair introduced the evening's first presentation. Emily Parks (WPS Superintendent) and Tony Mullin (School Committee-Vice Chair) were present. Ms. Parks presented an overview of FY24 School Budget Development. She mentioned there has been a 14% increase in private out of district tuitions. Another key point she highlighted was teachers' and instructional assistants' contracts have been ratified. In addition, ABA negotiations are in progress and Food Services contracts are pending. Ms. Parks also presented the revised FY24 Proposed Budget with the incorporated Chapter 70 increase which helped to resolve their issues in FY24 and place them in a better position for FY25. Lastly, Ms. Parks mentioned there have been no changes in the School's Annual Capital Budget since February. After her presentation, Ms. Parks spent considerable time answering member's questions. She also stated that it has been wonderful working with the FinCom. In addition, the School Committee selected an excellent Superintendent candidate. Chairperson Hertz gave special recognition to Ms. Parks and Ms. Jn-baptiste and wished Ms. Parks good luck in her endeavors.

- Christopher Coleman (Town Administrator), Stephanie McManus (Asst. Town Administrator/ Finance Director), Robert Gotti (Select Board Chair), Members of the Select Board, Town Staff – 2023 ATM “Select Board” Budget Warrant Articles #1-13

The Chair introduced the evening's second presentation. Christopher Coleman (Town Administrator) and Stephanie McManus (Asst. Town Administrator/ Finance Director) were present. Ms. McManus gave an overview of the FY24 Overall proposed budget summary, proposed budget revenue, and proposed expenditure budget summary. Then she presented the 2023 ATM Select Board Budget Articles #1-13. Ms. McManus also presented a history of the general debt overview for the borrowing articles #12-13. Q&A's took place after each article.

Afterwards, Chairperson Hertz made a few comments. He noted Chief Silva, Chief Deckers, Todd Korchin (Director of DPW), and Molly Kean (HR Director) were present and thanked them for their work and involvement in the subcommittee meetings. Then the Chair complimented Ms. McManus for her accomplishments in taking over the role of the Asst. Town Administrator/ Finance Director and welcomed her to the Town of Westwood.

Next, Mr. Coleman opened up questions to FinCom members in regards to Select Board Article # 1 and 2. Pat Ahearn (Town Counsel), Michael Walsh (Select Board Member) and members of the Charter Review Committee were present. For Select Board Article 1, Mr. Ahearn gave a brief update on the disposition of Town Owned Property, 47 Willard Circle in which he hopes to sell the house and regain on the property's back taxes. The money earned for the property will go back to the Town's general funds. For Select Board Article 2, members raised questions and concerns about the restructuring of the two appointed positions and how much money is involved in filling these

positions. Members were supportive of the underlying merit of shifting from elected to appointed Treasurer and Tax Collector but indicated that both FinCom and town meeting members needed to understand the potential increase in costs to the Town if the legislature supports this home rule petition. Mr. Coleman mentioned two processes need to take place: 1) The Town is looking for approval to submit the entire petition to the Commonwealth of MA and wait for state's response. 2) After the Town Administrator receives the state's response, he will present it to the Select Board. At the end of the discussion, the Chair echoed members' concerns and suggested to the Town Administrator that he have internal discussions about the salary range for the two proposed positions. Before the end of the Public Hearing, Mr. Coleman requested that he be allowed to update FinCom before the vote on Select Board Article 2. He then stated that the estimated salary for the position(s) will not exceed 130K and indicated the salary range hasn't been presented to the Select Board yet.

- Nora Loughnane (Director of Community and Economic Development), Christopher Pfaff (Planning Board Chair), Members of the Planning Board – Final Changes/Final Comments on 2023 ATM “Planning Board” Warrant Articles # 1-5

The Chair introduced the evening's final presentation. Nora Loughnane (Director of Community & Economic Development), Christopher Pfaff (Planning Board Chair and members of the Planning Board) were present. Mr. Pfaff called the meeting to order for the Planning Board. Then, Ms. Loughnane presented the 2023 ATM “Planning Board” Warrant Articles #1-5 with updated language on Article # 2. Ms. Loughnane spent considerable amount of time answering members' questions throughout her presentation. Chairperson Hertz thanked Ms. Loughnane, Mr. Pfaff, and the members of the Planning Board for their hard work. He also shared that it has been a very smooth process working with them. He would like Ms. Loughnane and the Planning Board to come back in the beginning of the next season to explain the roles and responsibilities of the department of the Community & Economic Department. After the presentation, the Planning Board motioned to adjourn their meeting.

Chairperson Hertz asked if there were any questions from the Public and the Press. There were no questions.

- Motion & Voting Process- Pat Ahearn (Town Counsel)

Prior to the meeting, members were given guidelines for the motion and voting process. Mr. Pat Ahearn (Town Counsel) gave a general overview of protocols and guidelines for making motions and voting for each warrant article. A brief Q&A took place after Mr. Ahearn's presentation.

The Chair called for a motion to adjourn the Public Hearing which was seconded and approved unanimously. There was a five minute break afterwards.

The Chair called for a motion to reconvene which was seconded and approved unanimously.

Before the deliberation and voting took place, FinCom finalized the signup sheet for the Article Write-Ups.

Deliberation & Voting for 2023 ATM Warrant Articles:

FinCom began deliberating and voting on all of the 2023 ATM Warrant Articles before them using the Roll Call voting method. The last two Planning Board warrant articles were voted and approved unanimously by a show of hands because there were no more remote participants.

Article No.	2023 Annual Town Meeting Article Description	Sponsor	FinCom Author
Budget-1	FY23 Budget Adjustments by Transfer (\$0) <i>FinCom voted & unanimously recommend approval</i>	Select Board	George Hertz
Budget -2	FY23 Budget Adjustments by Appropriation (\$598,000) <i>FinCom voted & unanimously recommend approval</i>	Select Board	Mike Gay
Budget -3	FY24 Operating Budgets (Appendix "D") <i>FinCom voted & unanimously recommend approval</i>	Select Board	George Laham
Budget -4	Appropriation (\$1,355,500) – Municipal Capital Improvements <i>FinCom voted & unanimously recommend approval</i>	Select Board	Chris Poreda
Budget -5	Appropriation (\$1,017,000) – School Capital Improvements <i>FinCom voted & unanimously recommend approval</i>	Select Board	Bill Bruce
Budget -6	Appropriation (\$1,260,000) – Sewer Capital Improvements <i>FinCom voted & unanimously recommend approval</i>	Select Board	Chris Poreda
Budget -7	Appropriation (\$500,000) – Sewer Capital Borrowing <i>FinCom voted & unanimously recommend approval</i>	Select Board	Chris Poreda
Budget -8	Appropriation (\$445,000) – Additional Capital Improvements <i>FinCom voted & unanimously recommend approval</i>	Select Board	Sean Weller
Budget -9	Appropriation (\$1,100,000) – Additional Capital Improvements <i>FinCom voted & unanimously recommend approval</i>	Select Board	Sean Weller
Budget -10	Appropriation (\$125,000) – Stabilization Fund FY24 <i>FinCom voted & unanimously recommend approval</i>	Select Board	George Maroun

Budget -11	Appropriation (\$1,540,000) – OPEB Liability Trust Fund – FY24 <i>FinCom voted & unanimously recommend approval</i>	Select Board	Chris Poreda
Budget -12	Appropriation (\$1,850,000) – Fire Ladder Truck Borrowing <i>FinCom voted & unanimously recommend approval</i>	Select Board	Jim Ferraro
Budget -13	Appropriation (\$1,500,000) – Cemetery Expansion Construction Borrowing <i>FinCom voted & unanimously recommend approval</i>	Select Board	Jim Ferraro
Select Board-1	Disposition of Town-Owned Property – 47 Willard Circle <i>FinCom voted & unanimously recommend approval</i>	Select Board	Alex Yale
Select Board-2	Home Rule Petition – An Act Creating the Appointed Positions of Town Treasurer and Tax Collector <i>FinCom voted with 11 in favor and 2 opposed</i>	Select Board	Sean Weller/Lauren Fitzpatrick
Planning Board -1	Amendments to Zoning Bylaw Related to Earth Material Movement (EMM) <i>FinCom voted & unanimously recommend approval</i>	Planning Board	Caitlyn Jurczak
Planning Board -2	Amendments to Zoning Bylaw Related to Sustainability <i>FinCom voted and recommended indefinite postponement by a vote of 9 in favor and 4 opposed</i>	Planning Board	Caitlyn Jurczak/ George Maroun
Planning Board -3	Amendments to Zoning Bylaw Related to Dumpsters <i>FinCom voted & unanimously recommend approval</i>	Planning Board	Caitlyn Jurczak
Planning Board -4	Housekeeping Amendments to Zoning Bylaw <i>FinCom voted & unanimously recommend approval</i>	Planning Board	Caitlyn Jurczak
Planning Board -5	Amendments to General Bylaws Related to Dumpsters <i>FinCom voted & unanimously recommend approval</i>	Planning Board	Caitlyn Jurczak

Member Discussion:

- Chair’s update: Chairperson Hertz reviewed the process with members whose terms are expiring and who wish to be reappointed. Members will need to send an email request to Ms. Wong. Ms. Wong will then forward the emails to Mr. Jim O’Sullivan (Town Moderator) who will make the final decision. Ms. Wong will set up the reorganization meeting in June. Terms expiring in 2023 will occur at the end of the May 1st Town Meeting. At the June meeting, the Chair would like feedback on the new subcommittee structures used for the FY24 budget process. He also stated the mentorship program for new members will continue next year.

- Under Old Business, the Chair reminded members that the article write ups are due on Friday, March 31st. The Vice Chair worked on reformatting the subcommittee reports for the Annual Report Book. They are waiting for the Education Subcommittee report.
- Members complimented the Chair for how he organized the meetings this year. Chairperson Hertz thanked the members for their compliments and stated he enjoyed working with all the FinCom members. He also hopes the Town will be comfortable with FinCom's recommendations.
- Members were asked to review and approve the meeting minutes for March 14, 2023. A motion was offered and seconded. Ten members raised their hands to approve the minutes. Two members abstained and three members were absent.

The Chair thanked members for attending and asked for a motion to adjourn. A motion was offered and seconded. Twelve members were in favor. Three members were absent.

Meeting Adjourned at 9:47PM

For a complete video of the 03/28/23 FinCom Public Hearing please see the following link:
<https://westwoodmediacenter.tv/>