

MINUTES OF  
TOWN OF SEEKONK FINANCE COMMITTEE  
Regular Meeting  
April 3, 2023  
BOS Meeting Room, Seekonk Town Hall, 100 Peck St

PRESENT: Matthew Salisbury, Chairperson  
Michael Brady, Vice Chairperson  
Michael Bradley  
Normand Duquette  
Joanna L'Heureux  
Phillip Yan

Director of Finance: Jennifer Argo  
Town Administrator: Shawn Cadime

Mr. Salisbury called the meeting to order at 7:04pm

---

Review FY24 budget w/ Town Administrator

- Mr. Cadime presented a PowerPoint presentation on the Town's FY24 Proposed Budget. Questions & discussions were made during the presentation:
  - o Long-term growth & Sustainability
  - o Stabilizations Accounts – building up the Municipal Capital Fund to the minimum balance per the Town's financial policy (3% of prior year's tax levy - \$1.4m). Will reach that balance in FY24.
  - o Budget Assumptions:
    - New Growth - \$450,000
    - 2.5% Tax Levy increase
    - Conservative on local receipts
    - Local Aid based on Governor's budget
    - Payroll based on 52 weeks
    - No salary adjustments on expired or expiring Collective Bargaining Agreements
  - o Unrestricted General Government Aid
  - o Budget Summary:
    - Balanced budget - \$69,194,745 (3.5% increase from FY23)
      - General Fund - \$67,801,622
      - Sanitation Enterprise Fund - \$1,393,123 (3.3% increase from FY23)
  - o Budgeted Resources:
    - State Aid - \$9,350,915
      - Increase in Chapter 70
    - Tax Levy - \$51,901,613
    - Local Receipts - \$2,990,000
    - Motor Vehicle - \$2,900,000
    - Other Sources - \$1,811,579
      - Ambulance Receipts - \$1,300,000
      - Overlay Surplus - \$450,000
      - Other Revenue - \$61,579
  - o Revenue Type – 5 Year Trend Graph
  - o Departmental Budgets:
    - General Government - \$3,369,835 (3.6% increase)
    - General Government - \$165,000 (level funded)
    - Public Safety - \$11,284,156 (5.1% increase)
    - Education - \$33,345,175 (3% increase)

- Highway & Streets - \$1,923,884 (4.4% increase)
  - Other Environmental - \$135,336 (3.3% decrease)
  - Human Services - \$669,722 (2.2% decrease)
  - Culture & Recreation - \$1,257,563 (.6% decrease)
  - Debt & Interest - \$2,639,624 (9.9% decrease)
  - Other Fixed Costs - \$13,011,326 (7.2% increase)
  - Sanitation Enterprise Fund - \$1,393,123 (3.3% increase)
- % of Departmental Budgets Pie Chart
  - Education – \$33,345,175 - 49%
  - General Government – \$18,805,497 - 28%
  - Employee Benefits/Fixed Costs - \$13,011,326 – 19%
  - Debt Services - \$2,639,624 – 4%
- New Budget Items:
  - 5 Full-time positions – Fire Dept
  - 2 Full-time positions – Police Dept
  - 1 Full-time position – MIS
  - MUNIS Server – MIS
- General Government Highlights:
  - FinCom – 69% decrease
    - reduced \$1,000 allowance for clerk
  - Elections – 24.4% decrease
    - decreased number of elections
  - Director of Finance – 27% decrease
    - eliminated retirement buyout & consultant services
  - Assessor’s – 17.4% increase
    - increase in FY24 revaluation of property (DOR requirement on a 5-year cycle) & consultant services
  - Tax Title – 37.5% decrease
    - due to aggressive collection of tax title
  - Town Clerk – 2.8% increase
    - salary adjustment on the Assistant Town Clerk’s salary
  - MIS – 55.6% increase
    - new full-time position
    - server for MUNIS upgrade
    - increase in software & license costs
  - Building Operations – 8.6% decrease
    - payroll moved to DPW payroll
  - Town Meeting – 44% increase
    - adjusted rate for Police detail
    - annual cost for voting software & projector
  - Town Hall Expenses – 7.5% increase
    - increase in fuel costs
- Public Safety Highlights:
  - Police Dept – 5.6% increase
    - 2 new full-time positions
    - benefits costs for additional SRO
    - new Police Chief contract
    - increase in Military replacement
    - increase in auto services
    - increase in software contracts
    - increase in fuel costs
    - increase in training

- increase in armory
  - increase in K-9 expenses – new comfort dog
  - increase cost in outfitting police cruisers
  - increase in patrol equipment
- Fire Dept – 7.4% increase
  - 5 new full-time positions
  - decrease in overtime
  - increase in training
  - increase in contract services
  - increase in fuel costs
  - increase in turnout gear
- Building Inspector – 4.6% decrease
  - eliminated Commissioner stipend
- Streets & Highways Highlights:
  - DPW - 4% increase
    - increase in fuel costs
    - increase in equipment maintenance
    - increase in tools
    - decrease in capital outlay
    - moved Stormwater & MS4 related expenses to DEP/EPA Mandated programs
- Other Environmental Highlights:
  - Conservation – 3% decrease
    - vacant Conservation Agent position – salary dropped from Step 4 to Step 1
- Culture & Recreation Highlights:
  - Library Services – 2.2% increase
    - mandatory required spending to meet the Municipal Appropriation Requirement (MAR)
- Debt & Fixed Costs Highlights:
  - Debt & Interest – 9% decrease
    - older debt retiring
  - Other Fixed Costs – 7.2% increase
    - increase in Pension assessment
    - increase in Liability Insurance
    - increase in Health Insurance
    - increase in payroll taxes
    - increase due to Stormwater & MS4 expenses reclassified here
- Education Highlights:
  - Seekonk Schools – 3% increase
    - Net School Spending Requirement is \$25,865,535
    - School Department budget is \$31,790,853 - 23% above NSS
  - Tri-County School Assessment – 3.8% increase
    - 86 students enrolled
    - Seekonk represents 9% of total enrollment
    - Tri-County is looking to build a new school. The project is estimated at about \$270m. This would be an increase to Seekonk of \$900,000 per year
  - Bristol County Agricultural Assessment – 10% increase
    - this is an estimate based on prior year
- Sanitation Highlights:
  - Sanitation – 3% increase
    - Year 10 of 10 on the Collection contract. Will start the process of going out to bid end of summer/beginning of fall

- Discussion between the Finance Committee and Mr. Cadime on funding SROs. In particular, the SROs should be included in the Police budget & reimbursed by the School department. This keeps the authority over SROs in the Police department.
- Discussion between the Finance Committee and Mr. Cadime on staffing the Fire department in regards to the proposed South End Fire station. In particular, whether the required staffing level can be reached and if it's sustainable.
- Discussion between the Finance Committee and Mr. Cadime on how to close the 23% above Net School Spending gap.
- Discussion between the Finance Committee and Mr. Cadime on whether we can get rid of recycling. The costs outweigh the benefits. We are mandated by DEP to recycle.
- Mr. Bradley questioned the funding from various sources the Library has. Mr. Cadime clarified the Town has no authority over the Library of any funds outside the General Fund budget. Mr. Cadime requested Ms. Argo to reach out to the Library Director Kate Hibbert for clarification.

### Minutes

No minutes to approve.

### Future Meetings

Monday, April 24, 2023 Seekonk Town Hall @ 7:00.

Motion to adjourn Mr. Bradley, second Mr. Duquette (6-0) at 8:34pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Phillip Yan, Clerk