



Canton Finance Committee
801 Washington Street
Canton, MA 02021

Minutes Voted on: 3/29/23
Vote: 8-0-0

Meeting Minutes
February 22, 2023

Finance Committee Members Present: Dan Cole, Karen Foley, Emilio Mauro, Tim McKenna, Maureen Menconi, Cindy Thomas and Reuki Schutt.

Finance Committee Members Absent: Dave Clough.

Guests Present:

Andrea Capone, Library Director
Nancy Connery, Secretary, Library Trustee
Charlie Doody, Town Administrator
Ellen Jones, Finance Committee Recording Secretary
Peg Mead, Chair, Library Trustee
Emily Prigot, Library Trustee
Wendall Robery, Fire Chief
Randy Scollins, Finance Director
Joan Schottenfeld, Library Trustee

Call Meeting to Order: Ms. Thomas called the virtual meeting to order at 7:02 p.m.

Ms. Thomas took a few minutes to review the Finance Committee's agenda for the meeting stating that the Committee would hear from the Library Director and Fire Chief regarding their FY24 Budget requests.

FY24 Budget Discussions

#610 - Library – Andrea Capone

Mr. Scollins screen shared a Fiscal Year 2022 Profile provided by Ms. Capone with the following highlights::

- The Library had 231,264 total transactions, 147,580 total checkouts, 52,848 digital checkouts and processed 1,432 passport applications in FY22.
- A critical service of the Library is to offer programs to the community. Last year the Library offered 466 programs, in particular the 156 programs offered to teens. A total of 7,178 people attended programs offered by the Library. The Library is utilizing their outdoor space more frequently since COVID.
- The Library is on track to have over 200,000 visits for 2023. The Library is open 51 hours per week Monday thru Saturday year round, with shorter hours offered on Saturdays during the summer.
- 194 community groups utilize the Library facilities.
- Teen Library services have increased 817% since 2013 and attendance is up 793% since 2013.
- On any given day after school hours you may see 60 teenagers milling about at the Library. **The Library is in critical need of staff** to help engage these students in a meaningful way that is not disruptive to the rest of the Library. Safety is also of key importance to the Library for not only staff but also patrons.
- Ms. Capone's major request for the Library is not a new request and has been requested in past budget requests (this is the fourth year for this request). **The Library needs a Young Adult Staff Position.** The position has been funded for one year with grant funding (State aid the Library receives through the Cherry Sheet) for an 19-hour position. Ms. Capone has been working with the HR Director on developing a job description, grade and step and salary for this position and hopes that the Finance Committee will support the funding for this much-needed position.
- **Ms. Capone is looking for \$33,700 in the Library's Assistant Salary budget line item for a Young Adult Staff Position as well as \$10,000 funding for Overtime costs associated with providing the Library Outreach Program offered at the Farmer's market.** The recently negotiated AFSCME contract requires that the Library pay the overtime at double time which is approximately \$88 per hour.
- Ms. Capone is also requesting \$2,900 for Overtime Earned Time. This will be used to supplement coverage for staff who are on vacation or using personal time. A request of \$3,300 for the Night Differential budget line item is to correct an error in the calculation of this payment in the past.

- Ms. Capone is also seeking the following increases: Building and Maintenance Supplies (\$8,000), Custodial Services (\$5,000), Toner (\$3,200), Books (\$10,000), Library Supplies (\$2,000), **Digital Supplies (\$15,000)** and **E-Books (\$19,000)**. The request for Digital supplies and E-Books is based on historical budget expenses and to accommodate demand for digital books. The Library is required to pay a platform fee for all of the digital books it purchases.

Mr. Mauro inquired if the cost increase for Digital and E-Books is to meet demand or is it mostly for licensing increases for the same content or is it for increasing the content to meet demand. While the numbers are down slightly year over year for usage of digital checkouts (55,423 for FY21 as compared to 52,848 for FY22) Ms. Capone thinks this could be attributed to patrons coming back into the library. While the platform fee remains the same, the increase is the cost of the E-Books. The Librarians have to monitor digital holds to see which books have expired for those that have reached the end of the life cycle. The metered access is monitored. No matter how many E-Books the Library purchases there is the challenge of keeping up with the popularity of some purchases. Colleges and University also pay Platform Fees.

Cell phone stipends have been calculated into the Library's FY24 budget. The Library receives State Aid via the Cherry Sheet awarded to the Library for the intended purpose to augment programs and services at the Library. The Library is allowed to hire staff with the State Aid but it takes away from the Library's ability to provide "robust" programs and services to the community. The Library received \$54,000 for FY23 and is using \$33,000 for the critically-needed Young Adult position. Library Trustee Peg Mead spoke in favor of the Young Adult staff position. The current Young Adult staff position works only 35 hours per week when the Library open 51 hours per week.

#220 - Fire Department, #215 – Dispatch Services, #221 – Fire Alarm, #231 – Ambulance and #291 – Emergency Management – Chief Wendell Robery

#220 – Fire Department - Chief Robery stated that most of his FY24 budget increases are for salary contractual increases based on a 3% increase. One item in the budget that is not a contractual item is a salary **request for a second Deputy Fire Chief**. The existing Deputy Fire Chief oversees the operations and administration side of the Fire Department. The second Deputy Fire Chief would be in charge of the EMS Division which is the busiest division of the Fire Department. The EMS division generates the most revenue for the Department but also generates liability making training an important requirement. Chief Robery stated that they are trying to **set up a new Para-Medicine Program within the EMS Division**, which the new Deputy Fire Chief would take the lead on this Program.

The Fire Department also applies for many grants throughout the year. In the past few years the Fire Department has been able to obtain \$700,000 in grants which is used for equipment purchases and training. By having the new Deputy Fire Chief apply for many of the grants going forward would allow the Existing Deputy Fire Chief to perform more inspections and code inspections. Increased construction in the Town has caused an increase in fire prevention duties and inspections. The Chief would like to remain "proactive" instead of "reactive". Having a second Deputy Fire Chief would also allow the department to have another command officer to respond to emergencies.

Many of the Fire Chief's **FY24 requests for expenses have been due to cost increases for utilities, gas and diesel, vehicle repair and maintenance, building maintenance, equipment and software maintenance**. The Fire Department is currently **short two firefighters which the Department will incur costs for uniforms, fire gear and equipment**.

#231 - Ambulance – In addition to **3% increases for contractual line items such as Paramedic training overtime and Ambulance Station 2 overtime**, the Fire Chief is also looking for a **40% increase to the diesel fuel line item** (due to additional ambulance runs). If the Fire Chief is unable to hire Paramedics he will need to send the firefighters for EMT training at a cost of \$10,000 for each firefighter. The Finance Director, Town Administrator and Fire Chief agreed to two reductions for the Ambulance budget. One reduction of \$8,300 is for defibrillator maintenance line item. Because there is an FY24 capital request item for new defibrillators there is the expectation that the maintenance for the first year will be free. The other reduction is for a \$4,000 reduction to the Paramedic Overtime stipend.

#291 - Emergency Management - The Emergency Management **Stipend was reduced by \$6,000 from \$9,000 to \$3,000** per year.

911 - Dispatch – The FY24 budget request increase of **\$8,214 for the 911 Dispatch department is for a 3% contractual increase for the Norfolk regional emergency communications Center located in Holbrook**. There is an annual increase as per the contract.

#215 - Fire Alarms – There are no increases for FY24 for the Fire Alarms budget.

In response to Ms. Foley's inquiry regarding the Community Paramedic Program Chief Robery responded that the Town received a \$175,000 grant, at no cost to the Town. The Fire Department is applying for a license to carry

blood. This would allow Canton to arrive at a medical scene and provide blood for someone in the County in need of blood due to an emergency situation. The County currently has medics that are trained to administer blood to the patient. Canton would meet them at the site. Through the Community Paramedic Program the Fire Department would work in conjunction with the Council on Aging, Town Nurse, Board of Health to conduct check-ins on residents to see if they are taking their medicines, to see if any combustible items are being safely stored or to see if any entrances are being blocked. The Chief will be meeting with the Chief of the Mansfield Fire Department who already has a similar Paramedic Program in place.

Ms. Thomas inquired if the Town is able to pull funds from the Ambulance Receipts Reserved fund. Mr. Scollins indicated that this fund is performing well and that he, the Town Administrator, Fire Chief and Revenue Forecasting Committee are proposing the new Deputy Fire Chief position if supported, be funded dollar for dollar by a commitment from the Ambulance Receipts Reserved Fund. Mr. Scollins has further indicated that the projections for years after FY24 the Ambulance fund will be able to continue funding some Fire Department operating costs as well as ambulance replacements.

The Fire Department pays rent to the Draper property for space in which one of the firefighters does mechanical work on Fire Department vehicles. They also use this space to store an antique Fire engine.

Mr. Mauro inquired if there were any other Fire Departments other than Mansfield that had a Community Paramedic program. Chief Robery believes that Mansfield is the only Town that runs such a program and he will be meeting with them soon to go over the Mansfield program. With regard to the Draper rental property Mr. Mauro inquired if there was any plan to find a permanent location or to continue to rent the property. Chief Robery stated that the property is leased up to August 2025, but that if the Town could they would extend the lease because the location is convenient, the mechanic has set the space up for the repairs and the space has been working out well for everyone. Mr. Mauro also asked the difference between EMT training and Paramedic training. Chief Robert explained that a Paramedic involves very involved school and training, is able to administer drugs and is also required to do so many rounds with a doctor. The EMTs are required to keep up their training and accreditation.

Debt Service Budget Review – Randy Scollins Mr. Scollins had presented the debt budgets to the Finance Committee at a previous meeting but no votes had been taken at that time. Since that meeting Mr. Scollins has incorporated the savings (lower interest rate than expected) associated with the new bond offering in the FY23 new issues budget requests. All of the exiting debt that had been reviewed at a prior meeting remained the same. Mr. Scollins made downward adjustments to the principal and interest payments for the FY23 new issues.

#710 - Principal Payments – General Fund Principal Debt Service Payments FY24

The FY24 budget for FY23 new bond issued include principal debt (inside the levy) is \$499,500 (\$307,000 principle attributed to the District Improvements Plymouth Rubber site) and excluded principal debt (outside the levy) is \$15,000. Combined between principal and interest the Town saved approximately \$54,000 across general fund debt and water and sewer debt. The new total principal debt for the FY24 budget is \$3,557,551.

#751 - Long-Term Interest Payments – General Fund Interest Debt Service Payments FY24

The FY24 budget for FY23 new issues included debt for interest (inside the levy) is \$327,285 (\$266,907 attributed to the District Improvements Plymouth Rubber site) and excluded interest debt (outside the levy) is \$3,677 (attributed to the St. Gerard's property). The new interest debt for FY24 budget is \$1,106,930.

Mr. McKenna inquired about the 4.00% rate on the Debt in "Pipeline" exhibit. The interest rates for the \$11,938,000 borrowing was assumed at 4.00% but the Town received a lower interest rate at 3.07%. Mr. Scollins explained that the 3.07% is the effective rate. The Town borrowed \$11,935,000 but will be paying back approximately \$1.0 million less than that in principal but paying a higher interest rate which makes the bonds more attractive to bond buyers. The coupons on these bonds will be in the 4-5% range but 3.07% net net to the Town because the Town received all the cash it needed. The Town will only have to pay back approximately \$1.0 million less because the interest is being subsidized with bond premium so they can be marketed to the buyers.

#610 - Water Enterprise Principal and Interest Payments – Water Debt Service Payments FY24

The Town had new issues for Water Enterprise in the latest bond offering. The FY24 budget for the FY23 new bond issues for water principal debt service is \$348,296. The total Water principal and interest budget request for FY24 is \$3,740,966.

#600 - Sewer Enterprise Principal and Interest Payments – Sewer Debt Service Payments FY24

Town did not issue new debt with the latest bond offering, therefore, the total Sewer principal and interest budget request for FY24 is \$549,611.

#700 - Rink Enterprise Principal and Interest Payments – Rink Debt Service Payments FY24

The FY24 budget request for the Rink principal debt is \$50,000 and \$53,702 for interest debt. Mr. Scollins spoke in favor of the Finance Committee voting on the debt service budgets at the time of the meeting since these budgets would not be affected by the release of the Governor's budget. He suggested that the Committee wait to vote on any other budgets until the Governor has released the state budget sometime around March 1 at which time the Finance Committee can review the Revenue Forecast, discuss the budget target numbers on the March 8 and then it would be appropriate to vote on the other budgets after the Select Board votes their recommendation.

Vote - #710 - Principal Payments – General Fund Principal Debt Service Payments FY24

A motion made by Mr. Mauro that the Finance Committee recommend an FY24 budget of \$3,557,551 for General Fund Principal Debt Service Payments was seconded by Ms. Foley.

Roll Call Vote:

Ms. Schutt	Aye	Mr. Cole	Aye
Ms. Menconi	Aye	Mr. Mauro	Aye
Mr. McKenna	Aye	Ms. Thomas	Aye
Ms. Foley	Aye		

Vote: 7-0-0.

The motion to recommend \$3,557,551 for the Principal Debt Service Payments FY24 budget passed.

Vote - #751 - Long-Term Interest Payments – General Fund Interest Debt Service Payments FY24

A motion made by Mr. Mauro that the Finance Committee recommend an FY24 budget of \$1,106,930 for General Fund Long-Term Interest Debt Service Payments was seconded by Ms. Schutt.

Roll Call Vote:

Ms. Schutt	Aye	Mr. Cole	Aye
Ms. Menconi	Aye	Mr. Mauro	Aye
Mr. McKenna	Aye	Ms. Thomas	Aye
Ms. Foley	Aye		

Vote: 7-0-0.

The motion to recommend \$1,106,930 for the Long-Term Interest Debt Service Payments FY24 budget passed.

Vote - #610 - Water Enterprise Principal and Interest Payments – Water Debt Service Payments FY24

A motion made by Mr. Mauro that the Finance Committee recommend an FY24 budget of \$3,740,966 for Water Enterprise Principal and Interest Debt Service Payments was seconded by Ms. Schutt.

Roll Call Vote:

Ms. Schutt	Aye	Mr. Cole	Aye
Ms. Menconi	Aye	Mr. Mauro	Aye
Mr. McKenna	Aye	Ms. Thomas	Aye
Ms. Foley	Aye		

Vote: 7-0-0.

The motion to recommend \$3,740,966 for the Water Enterprise Principal and Interest Debt Service Payments FY24 budget passed.

Vote - #600 - Sewer Enterprise Principal and Interest Payments – Sewer Debt Service Payments FY24

A motion made by Mr. Mauro that the Finance Committee recommend an FY24 budget of \$549,611 for Sewer Enterprise Principal and Interest Debt Service Payments was seconded by Ms. Schutt.

Roll Call Vote:

Ms. Schutt	Aye	Mr. Cole	Aye
Ms. Menconi	Aye	Mr. Mauro	Aye
Mr. McKenna	Aye	Ms. Thomas	Aye
Ms. Foley	Aye		

Vote: 7-0-0.

The motion to recommend \$549,611 for the Sewer Enterprise Principal and Interest Debt Service Payments FY24 budget passed.

Vote - #700 - Rink Enterprise Principal and Interest Payments – Rink Debt Service Payments FY24

The Finance Committee did not vote the Rink Enterprise Principal and Interest Payments Budget. This budget would be voted on as part of the Total Rink Enterprise budget when Parks and Recreation Director Tyler Radicioni presents the Rink budget at the Finance Committee meeting on March 1.

Discussion of Sub-Committee Report and Recommendations – Elected Officials Compensation

Ms. Thomas stated that she has been in contact with Town Counsel who is doing research on elected official's compensation and will be providing information to her prior to the February 28 Select Board meeting. Ms. Thomas is scheduled to attend that meeting.

Some of the issues that Town Counsel is researching are as follows:

- 1) State law that might mandate or require health insurance for elected officials who are compensated or if there is any option for a Town to opt out.
- 2) The issue of vesting for elected officials. The information received from Norfolk County is that compensation under \$5,000 per year for an elected official does not qualify an elected official for vesting and therefore would not qualify the elected official for a pension and therefore benefits. Discussion with a few folks in Town that have been elected officials they noted that when they left their elected official position even if they had more than 10 years they were told directly that they were not eligible for any benefits.
- 3) Ms. Thomas further stated that it appears that those retired elected officials that were receiving benefits were probably done on a case by case basis versus any broad policy that at the time of retirement you would be eligible for health insurance if you were compensated.

Ms. Thomas would attend the Select Board's meeting on February 28 and welcomed any Finance Committee members to attend this meeting, so long as there is no quorum of the Finance Committee attending the meeting. She also suggested the alternative of attending the March 14th meeting to allow more time for information gathering. Mr. Doody indicated in the Chat portion of the virtual meeting (his audio was not working) that Ms. Thomas' attendance at the Select Board meeting was on the agenda for February 28th but that it would not be problem if it were moved out two weeks to March 14.

Discussion of the Liaison List – The Committee reviewed the Liaison List as there were a few vacancies to fill. Ms. Schutt volunteered to be the liaison for the Fire Department. Ms. Menconi volunteered to be the liaison for the Historical Commission and the Veterans' Department. The Committee also decided that it was most likely unnecessary to have an alternate liaison for Parks & Recreation and the Police Department. Mr. Cole would be the sole liaison for those departments.

Approval of Minutes - The February 15, 2023 minutes were not ready for approval.

A motion made by Ms. Schutt to approve the meeting minutes for February 1, 2023 as written was seconded by Mr. McKenna.

Roll Call Vote:

Ms. Schutt	Aye	Mr. Cole	Aye
Ms. Menconi	Aye	Mr. Mauro	Aye
Mr. McKenna	Aye	Ms. Thomas	Aye
Ms. Foley	Aye		

Vote: 7-0-0.

The February 1, 2023 minutes were approved.

Next Meeting Date: The next Finance Committee meeting will be held virtually on Monday, February 27, 2023 at 7:00 p.m. (This meeting was later cancelled due to technical difficulties with Zoom.) The next meeting took place on March 1, 2023.)

Mr. Scollins reported to the Committee that he had emailed out to the members a Summary of FY24 Municipal Operating Budgets Summary. He stated that the list did not reflect any definitive decisions made yet by the Select Board and that the list would be updated as the budget process progresses. He further stated that all departments are on board for a centralized Maintenance Department and to proceed with it effective July 1. Mr. Scollins' Budget Summary also included information for various department budgets that were "harvested" and reassigned to the centralized Maintenance Department.

A motion made by Ms. Schutt to adjourn the meeting at 8:28 p.m. was seconded by Mr. McKenna.

Roll Call Vote:

Mr. McKenna	Aye	Ms. Thomas	Aye
Ms. Foley	Aye	Mr. Cole	Aye
Mr. Mauro	Aye	Ms. Menconi	Aye
Ms. Schutt	Aye		

Roll Call Vote: 7-0-0.

The meeting adjourned at 8:28 p.m.

Minutes reviewed by: Dan Cole

Respectfully submitted,

DocuSigned by:

Cindy Thomas

CBFFB405FE6C4BB...

Cindy Thomas

Chair, Canton Finance Committee

Sub-Committee to Review Compensation of Elected Officials

**Finance Committee
Meeting Documents
February 22, 2023**

Please note: Some meeting documents may be found on the Town's website under the Posted Minutes section (Laser Fiche).

Agenda for February 22, 2023.

Canton Public Library – Fiscal Year 2022 Profile, provided by Library Director, Andrea Capone (1 page).
Canton Public Library – FY22 Usage by the Numbers (1 page)

#710 Principal Payments Budget FY24 Budget (4 pages).

#751 Long-Term Interest Payments FY24 Budget (4 pages).

#601 Water Enterprise Principal and Interest Payments FY24 Budget (5 pages).

#600 Sewer Enterprise Principal and Interest Payments FY24 Budget (3 pages).

#700 Rink Enterprise FY24 Budget (Including Principal and Interest) (2 pages).

FY24 Municipal Operating Budgets Summary – 2/6/2023 (5 pages).