

Town of Dartmouth  
400 Slocum Road, Room 304  
Dartmouth, MA 02747

FINANCE COMMITTEE MEETING DISCUSSION NOTES  
MARCH 2, 2023

Finance Committee Members present:

Janine Simmons, Vice Chair  
Teresa Hamm  
Elizabeth Huidekoper  
Brian O'Hare

The Finance Committee met at 6:30pm, Ms. Simmons presiding. Mr. Shawn MacInnes, Town Administrator, and Mr. Gary Carreiro, Director of Budget & Finance/Treasurer were present to provide information and answer questions. However, as there was no quorum, no official business could take place.

Ms. Simmons congratulated Mr. Carreiro for his promotion to the position of Director of Budget & Finance/Treasurer. Members gave Mr. Carreiro a round of applause. Mr. Carreiro stated that he will still be serving as the Collector until reorganizations are contemplated more fully. Mr. MacInnes complimented Mr. Carreiro for his talents and abilities.

1. Set FY24 Budget Hearings Schedule for: DPW, Water/Sewer Enterprise Funds, Police

Mr. Carreiro stated that the large departments' hearings need to be scheduled. The Police budget will be presented on March 9, 2023. He suggested scheduling the DPW and Enterprise Funds on March 16, 2023. He stated that he has met with every smaller department, and none of the them are choosing to schedule hearings with FinCom. Mr. MacInnes added that the only new position is for a Facilities position, which he will discuss at a later date. There are a few other positions that are being modified for job descriptions, but they are not new positions. Mr. Carreiro stated that none of the departments are glaringly over their FY2023 budgets except for some fuel expenditures. Smaller departments will be presented on March 23, 2023, leaving March 30, 2023 for the School Department.

Mr. MacInnes stated that the Planning Board has four articles for Spring Town Meeting, ConCom has bylaw updates, and there is a citizen petitioned article. The citizen petition is to allocate \$200,000 in funding from the Reserve Fund for Mass DEP Title V negotiations.

Mr. Carreiro stated that the vocational schools' budgets are approximately the same as in the prior year with little change.

Mr. Carreiro presented a PowerPoint showing the schedule of meetings up to the Spring Town Meeting. Ms. Hamm will attend the Community Preservation Committee meeting this week regarding their grant proposals. A FinCom joint meeting with the Select Board is scheduled for April 24, 2023. The warrant is due to the Town Clerk by May 16, 2023. Spring Town Meeting is to be held on June 6, 2023.

Regarding the Capital Plan, Mr. Carreiro stated that Administration is working with Mr. Bruce Brooks, Chair of the CIC to prioritize the items before presenting the plan to the full Committee, simply to make the process easier and faster. Ms. Hamm and Ms. Huidekoper serve on that committee.

Members wondered why the budget process seems to be advancing so quickly this year with time to spare. Mr. Carreiro stated that efficiencies of time are being found with the strategy of not hearing each individual department's budget. He will prioritize the department data that FinCom members may be interested in viewing and discussing.

## 2. FY24 School Department Budget ongoing discussion

Ms. Hamm stated that the School Department has responded to FinCom's questions. She will make sure to send the responses to members.

She stated that the March 30, 2023 meeting with the School Department will cover the budget, but she would also like FinCom to help them to present their budget to Town Meeting. Perhaps brainstorming at the budget meeting toward that goal would be helpful. She stated that the School District is not clear about where their budget could be cut, though this question will likely come up at Town Meeting as the student population has decreased. Ms. Hamm thinks that that issue will be on people's minds along with how to measure the value that the School District brings to the Town. These issues should be communicated, but whether the School District feels prepared to make a presentation to Town Meeting is a question to be answered. Also, the Town Moderator will have to be contacted about adding this presentation to the Town Meeting agenda. A separate video could be offered, but it is up to the School District to determine the amount of time and content necessary. Mr. MacInnes added that the proposed School budget increase is untenable. Ms. Hamm stated that the School District is well aware of the budget concerns. The School Committee hearing is scheduled for March 22, 2023.

She continued that the School Department understands that its proposal is high at a 5.1% increase over the prior year. The Teachers Association is concerned this year in particular with health benefit costs. Mr. O'Hare stated that the School budget should forecast out the trajectory of expenses for the next few years so that it can be added to the overall discussion.

In regard to the Superintendent of Schools search, Ms. Hamm stated there are two additional senior positions that are also being filled. There should be a report by June. Mr. MacInnes added that the Town Administration is not involved in this process. Mr. O'Hare finds this ridiculous as the School District represents approximately 55% of the budget. Ms. Hamm pointed out that the search is confidential. Ms. Simmons asked if, with a shortage of applicants, the credentials for