

Town of Charlton

Finance Committee Minutes

Town Hall - 37 Main St., Charlton, MA

Date: March 8, 2023, at 6:30pm

Minutes taken by: Jaclyn Bonner, Clerk

Attendees: Henry Camosse Jr.-Chairman, Kristin Kustigian - Vice Chair, Mike Jacobs, Jason Julian

Absent: Kristen Lemire, Keith Johnson, Ruth Berringer

Guests: Ashley Obrzut -Town Finance Director, Andrew Golas – Town Administrator

1. Call Meeting to order at time.

Meeting was called to order by Hank Camosse at 6:30 P.M on Wednesday March 08, 2023.

2. Approval of Minutes from Previous Meeting

Motion to accept the minutes of February 15, 2023, was made by Mike Jacobs and seconded by Kristin Kustigian. Minutes approved by Hank Camosse Jr., Mike Jacobs, Jason Julian, and Kristin Kustigian.

3. Budget Hearings

A. W/S

- a. Peter Boria attends the meeting to discuss the W/S budget.
- b. Administrative salaries increased due to the promotion of the 38 hr. a week assistant to a full-time assistant.
- c. Maintenance increased 10% due to part replacements.
- d. Mike Jacobs interrupts to ask the Finance Director about the regional retirement jump to which she responds that every budget was hit with this increase. The general fund budget regional retirement number increased 15% according to actuarial provided information.
- e. Kristin Kustigian asks if any of the looming projects in town will affect the w/s operations. Peter responds by saying retained earnings would be impacted as apposed to operations. Mike Jacobs asks if Amazon had given any timeframe on connecting to sewer. Peter responds by saying the company should start using W/S by September 2024.

B. Assessing

- a. The Director of Assessing, Kathleen Stanley attends the meeting to discuss her departments budget.
- b. The Assessing department has not requested any changes to budget for FY24.

C. Fire

- a. Fire Chief Edward J. Knopf attends the meeting to discuss his departmental budget with the committee.

- b. The Chief is looking to hire 4 new bodies to the department. He highlights the need due to increased injuries on his staff.
- c. Mike Jacobs asking about disabilities. In response the chief shares that they did lose one body to an injury sustained on duty.
- d. The chief would like to fund the position of a town mechanic too keep down repair costs for the department.
- e. Hank asks for clarification on the capital requests made for station 2. The Chief responds that the 2nd fire station is in disrepair and the substation committee is working on requests. The next move would be an article too fund phase 2 of the study through free cash for around \$130K.
- f. Kristin Kustigian asking if we have expended all of our ARPA funds. Andrew responds most have been allocated and we have \$238K remaining. Kristin asks if we could use unallocated ARPA funds to cover the station 2 project. Andrew responds that we will want to take a public vote before expending the funds.
- g. The chief agrees with the need for additional police dispatchers.
- h. Jason Julian asking how ambulance receipts have changed from pre-covid to now. Responding the Chief explains we did not see much of a dip post covid.
- i. Jason Julian asking for more information on the Chief's mechanic request. The chief responds that the mechanic would not be budgeted to fire and would save money for the entire town.

4. Fire Department Reserve Fund Transfer Request

- a. The fire department is requesting \$20K to repair engine 1 faulty DEF system which was an unknown repair.
- b. Hank asks if the chief foresees a need for an additional transfer for OT in the future. The Chief does think he will be back.
- c. Frank entertains a motion to pass the reserve fund transfer in the amount of \$20K for the fire department. Motion to pass the transfer was mad by Jason Julian and seconded by Kristin Kustigian. All members present in favor and the reserve fund transfer is approved.

5. Review of DCRSD Updated Budget Request

- a. Andrew explains that the state released budget figures and part of the assessment for DCRSD includes the amount each town should be paying per student. The calculation will be 65% of the burden on Charlton and 35% of the burden on Dudley. The increase in State aid given will be .8% while the actual budgetary increase was 6.2%.
- b. ARPA money given directly to schools with expire at the end of 2024 – we will be transitioning a few positions initially funded with this money into the operational budget.
- c. Kristin Kustigian asks if the numbers from the state may change. Andrew responds that the senate may come out with more favorable numbers.

6. Update from the Finance Director/Town Manager

- a. Mike Jacobs asks for clarification on the 3% decrease on the fire department salary budget. Ashley responds that the budget he is referring too does not include any new hire requests.
- b. Hank Camosse Jr. stating that he is in favor of a permanent school override in order to avoid cutting other department budgets in the future.

- c. Andrew estimates that the school override would equate to an average of an additional \$280 a year per Charlton household.
- d. Ashley asks the committee to rank the requested new positions. Hank asks Ashley to present a list for them to refer to and make a more informed decision. He would like to see a budget incorporating the \$1.7 school number and the effect this would have on the remainder of the budget.
- e. Andrew adds that he would like to be conservative with new growth.

7. Other Business – Unknown at Time of Posting

- A. Andrew asks the committee if they would like to take an official stance on the building of substation#2 and the feasibility study for the school. The fire station would cost \$5K. The school feasibility study could be considered a capital exclusion.
- B. Hank reminds the committee that fincom still has \$130K left in reserve funds as well.

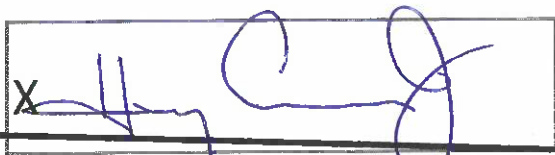
8. Adjourn Meeting

Kristin Kustigian

Motion to adjourn at 8:30 PM was made by ~~Kristen Lemire~~ and seconded by Mike Jacobs. Motion approved by Henry Camosse Jr.-Chairman, Kristin Kustigian, Jason Julian, and Mike Jacobs. The meeting is adjourned.

Town of Charlton Finance Committee Meeting Minutes

Voted: 3/22/23

X 

Henry Camosse Jr.

X 

Keith Johnson

X *Jason P. [Signature]*

Jason Julian

X *Kristin Kustigian*

Kristin Kustigian

X *abstain*

Kristen Lemire

X

Mike Jacobs

X *abstain*

Ruth Beringer

X