

MINUTES**TOWN FINANCE COMMITTEE****Thursday – December 12, 2024****Hybrid****5:00 P.M.**

Item 1. Call to Order. Item 1. J. Anderson – Chair, called the meeting to order at 5:00 p.m.

Item 2. Those Present. Finance Committee members present: Jonathan Anderson – Chair, Donald Cushing and Karin Shupe. Others present: Thomas J. Hall, Town Manager, Liam Gallagher, Assistant Town Manager, Norman Kildow - Finance Director, Nick Cloutier, Town Assessor/Director of Special Projects and Kate Bolton, Director of Business and Finance for the School.

Item 3. Approval of Minutes: October 10, 2024. Motion D. Cushing, seconded by K. Shupe, to move approval of the October 10, 2024, Finance Committee minutes, as written.

Vote: 3 Yeas. Motion Passes.

Item 4. [Town Audit](#) Update.

- **Presentation – January 8, 2025**

- T. Hall, Town Manager, thanked the Finance Director for getting the Audit done in record time. There will be a workshop with the Board of Education prior to the January 8th Town Council meeting where the Auditors have a formal presentation.

- **Unassigned Fund Balance**

- N. Kildow, Finance Director, noted that this past year had been a good year fund balance we ended the year with unassigned fund balance of \$15,902,000 and when it is applied to our metric of last year's operating budgeted expenses that gives us a fund balance ratio of 14.46. He then went on to review the spreadsheet that had been provided in the packet and responded to questions from the Committee. A lengthy discussion ensued.

Item 5. Discussion on recommended Goals and unfinished business discussion.

- **Budget Process Improvements & Budget Presentation Discussion (Don Cushing)**

- D. Cushing, Committee member, stated that he had met with the Finance Director and the Assessor, to discuss the budget process. He then went on to review the basic discussion that had taken place. The object is to present a budget to the residents that they can understand.
- N. Cloutier, Town Assessor/ Director of Special Projects, offered comments with regards to the discussion on the budget process and presentation.
- Further discussion ensued around the process and what needs to be focused on e.g. wages, schools, referendums, union contracts to list a few. Show the value that residents get in tangible terms. It was noted that the Charter does have a specific process that is followed to bring the budget to the Council.

- **Capital Planning (20 years/\$5M threshold)**
 - J. Anderson, Chair, spoke on the major capital projects and where they landed. He also commented that he would like to see a resolution around the school item and have it as a goal that basically says we commit to the school as our top priority near term and that also have a summit for the other Capital needs, really making sure we do not lose sight of other Capital needs.
 - There was Committee discussion other major Capital Projects and that this could be part of the Council Goals workshop. There was further discussion around a community center, the Library and the School Project.
- **Sustainability Reserve Fund**
 - J. Anderson, Chair, stated this item was first brought forward last January by the Sustainability Committee and the Committee never got it because of other competing priorities. The Committee will have this on their next agenda for discussion.
- **Expanding the Downtown TIF to include additional contiguous properties**
 - The Committee had a discussion around updating the current policy; then do something and eventually revisit expanding the TIF Boundary. The Manager noted areas that could be expanded. At this point there's no proposal or request for any credit enhancement agreement on any of these additional areas.
 - J. Anderson, Chair, stated he felt that there is more in the Tiff fund than we have the ability to spend on qualified projects and didn't know if we're there yet, but felt that maybe this year we need to kind of reassess, are we withholding the right amount.
 - A lengthy discussion ensued. The Town Manager responded to questions from the Committee.
- **Stormwater Management Fee**
 - K Shupe, Committee member, spoke on this item. She felt that these fees should cover many fees that resident pays like Public Works and projects through Engineering. Would it be more beneficial for residents and it would be more cost efficient for the residents if we could remove it from the taxes that way I think it's worth pursuing.
 - Discussion ensued on other ways the Town could possible look at to obtain funding and what other fees that can be added or reviewed. They commented on different goals that would be looked at during Goal setting.
- **Other?** None at this time.

Item 6. Overview of 2025 Bond Issue.

- **Draft Schedule and List of items to be Bonded.**
 - T. Hall, Town Manager, stated that historically it has been to do an annual borrowing early in the spring of the year; however, due to COVID and then the transition with Finance Directors, we went a couple of years where we did not follow the process. We are back on schedule and what is for you is a list of projects they've been previously approved through the budget process or by the we pay ourselves back with Bond proceeds. Mr. Hall went on to review the proposed bond order that would be on the next Town Council agenda.
 - N. Kildow, Finance Director, noted we're basically uh 14 months after the last bond issue so we are back on that somewhat annual cycle. He went on to comment that he had been working with our Municipal Advisor and that the sale would be February 4th and we would get our proceeds February 20th. He responded to questions from the Committee.

Motion by K. Shupe, seconded by D. Cushing, to move approval to move this Bond on to the full Council at the next meeting.

Vote: 3 Yeas.

Item 7. Discussion on setting a standard meeting date and time. After a brief discussion, the Committee agreed to meet the second Thursday of the month at 5:00 p.m.

Item 8. Public Comments. None at this time.

Item 9. Adjourn. Motion by D. Cushing, seconded by K. Shupe, to move approve to adjourn the regular meeting of the Finance Committee.

Vote: 3 Yeas. Motion Passes.

Meeting adjourned at 6:25 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Yolande P. Justice
Clerk of the Council
[Transcribed by Video]