

## Finance Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes: September 11, 2023

### Present were:

Dennis Howe, Chair, FAC	Jason Somero, BOS	Susan Mallet, Building
Mitch Gluck, FAC		Andrew Morrill, Sexton
	Debbie Deaton, Town Administrator	
Melissa Mack, FAC	Michael Abel, Police Chief	Bob Romeril, Moderator
Luke Moran, FAC	Mindy Buxton, Parks & Rec	Gary Somero, Fire Chief / Building
Joe Woodworth, FAC	Lisa Carbone, Town Clerk	Peter Somero, Highway
Shawn Talbot, Chair, BOS	Dee Daley, Planning	
Lou Alvarez, BOS	Matt Hatcher, Fire	

### 2024 Budget Kickoff

FAC, BOS and Department Heads met to kick-off the 2024 budget process.

Dennis provided a brief overview of the 2023 process that described how FAC members partnered with Department Heads to develop budgets, shared proposed budgets with the BOS, and together with the Department Heads and BOS prioritized expenditures and formalized a budget proposal for presentation to the town.

Shawn summarizes his perception of the FAC budget involvement, shared some of the benefits of FAC involvement, and offered his suggestions on how the process can be improved and expanded through 2024. Shawn also welcomed Melissa Mack to the FAC team.

Dennis reviewed a PowerPoint overview of the 2024 plans. A few key points were emphasized:

- Emphasis will be placed on maintaining a flat budget, using the 2023 budget as the baseline.
- Each individual account line will be prioritized as done with the 2023 effort. Priorities are:
  - 1 – absolute minimum to keep the doors open
  - 2 – recommended expenses above the absolute minimum
  - 3 – desired expenses, and expenses that may be required in future budgets
- Timely budget preparation is critical. The FAC appreciates adhering to the schedule (see below).
- In addition to annual expenditures, FAC will gather capital investment requirements (items costing >\$5,000 with a minimum 5-year life cycle) with emphasis on vehicles for 2024

## FAC Department Assignments

Here are the assignments:

Joe Woodworth	Mitch Gluck	Luke Moran	Melissa Mack	Dennis Howe
Auditor BOS Communications Elections Electric Insurance Legal Regional Assoc. ACO Police	Assessors EM Fire Health P&R PB Pool Treasurer Trustees Welfare ZBA	Cemetery Conservation Heritage Patriotic	Vital Statistics Moderator	DPW Transfer Station Government Bldgs Building Permits

## 2024 Budget Development Schedule

Tentative Budget Timelines & Milestones	
Completed By	Task
Sept 11 (Today)	FAC/BOS/Department Head "All Hands" Meeting
Sept 12 - Oct 15th	FAC meets with each Dept Head for initial budget orientation & budget development discussion
Oct 23rd	Finalize Departmental submissions to FAC. All requests provided
Oct 24 – Nov 6	Department Heads & FAC members review, document, and consolidate into FAC Excel Workbook
Nov 7 <sup>th</sup>	Draft budgets available for review with BOS; Incorporate adjustments (COLA)
Nov – Dec (as scheduled)	Department discussions, updates, narrative justifications, with BOS. All Departments can brief BOS if requested.
Dec 14th	Final budget delivered to BOS
Jan - Mar 2023	Deliberative Session / Town Voting

## Comments

Several comments were made throughout the discussion. Here are a few:

- Mindy commented that the quarterly budget execution review data compiled by the FAC were very helpful in identifying discrepancies and allowed her to quickly make updates. She felt this would make end-of-the-year closing much easier.
- Dee commented that this upcoming year is a planning year, and that she will solicit input from the Department Heads to include in the master Capital Improvement Plan (CIP). She commented that the FAC's focus on vehicles is part of the operational budget which will ultimately be included within the master CIP. The FAC intent is to gather the Town's vehicle information for integration into the master CIP.
- Debbie commented that we missed an opportunity to clearly communicate COLA adjustments for 2023, and some employees receiving stipends were disappointed that stipends were not adjusted. There was discussion around eligibility for stipends, as well as whether COLA adjustments were appropriate for stipends. Ultimately the BOS suggested that employees receiving stipends, particularly those that have not been adjusted recently, should raise their concerns directly to the BOS for consideration in the 2024 budget. The FAC will work with the Department Heads to incorporate each stipend, as mutually agreed upon by the Department Head and the BOS, into the 2024 budget.

## Next steps

- FAC to initiate weekly meetings at Monday, 5:00pm, beginning September 18, 2023.
- FAC to setup time with the Department Heads to initiate 2024 budget planning.

## Meeting Adjourned

The FAC 2024 Kickoff meeting was adjourned at 6:00pm.