

**Town of West Stockbridge
Finance Committee**

Meeting Notes: 01/25/24 2:00 PM

In Attendance:

Fin Com Members - Bob Salerno, Steve Sautman, Frank Landsberger (via Zoom), Ed Sporn (via Zoom), Dan Buehler (absent)

Other: Marie Ryan – Town Administrator, Kathleen Keresey (Select Board), Andy Potter (Select Board), Curt Wilson – Director Dept of Public Works, Marc Portier – Police Chief

Initial FY25 Budget review.

- Marie walked through the proposed line item account changes compared to the FY24 Budget. Details and explanations were included in the FY25 Budget Books.
 - The Education budget from BHRSD has not been submitted yet.
- Curt walked through the proposed changes to the Town Buildings.
 - Fuel (Heating Oil) increase was to bring the budget number closer to the past actual expenditure based on ending fuel tank level and increased heating oil prices.
 - Electricity increase was to bring the budget number closer to the past actual expenditures which increased due to the solar array not working for over a year while waiting for inverter parts and paying higher prices from the grid.
 - Town Signage has not been spent in FY24 and either need to be re-budgeted or roll-over to FY25.
- Marc walked through the proposed changes to the Police Department.
 - Budget salaries are based on 1 Chief and 5 full-time officers and contractual increases.
 - Overtime has been higher in FY24 being down 1 full-time officer and because of additional time for investigations and court appearances due to the number of arrests. The proposed budget plans for these activities to continue and potentially increase.
- Curt walked through the proposed changes to the Public Works.
 - Gas and Diesel increase was to bring budget to actual spend.
 - Line Painting increase was to bring budget to actual spend.
 - Snow and Ice Services increase was to bring budget number closer to the past actual expenditures.

Questions/Follow-up Items:

- Bob asked for Actuals to be run from July – December FY24.
 - Elaine (Accountant) sent them out on 1/16/24.

- Finance Committee asked for comparable salaries for Town Accountant proposed increase.
- Finance Committee asked what was the Town Community Outreach budget to be used for.
- Finance Committee and Select Board discussed if a Grant Writer should be added to the budget and the proposed scope and benefits of such a position.
- Finance Committee discussed the use of Free Cash for the items listed under Special Articles. Proposed budget uses \$418,048 of the available \$528,840 in Free Cash. A minimum amount should be set to be kept in Free Cash.
 - Bob asked what is the current borrowing rate from the State notes.
- The proposed FY25 Budget increase is **8.33%** not including Education.

The meeting adjourned at 3:15 PM.