



Town of Adams Massachusetts 01220-2087

FINANCE COMMITTEE

TOWN HALL BUILDING
8 PARK STREET

Monday, August 29, 2022, 6:00 p.m.

TOWN HALL, 8 PARK STREET, ADAMS, MA 01220
1st Floor, Sun Room

CALL TO ORDER: On the above date the Finance Committee held a meeting at the Town Hall First Floor Sun Room. The Finance Committee Workshop was called to order at 6:00 p.m. by Finance Committee Chair Carol Cushenette. Present from the Finance Committee were Chair Carol Cushenette, Vice-Chair Timothy Burdick, Members Carrie Burnett, Sarah Klein, Michelle Butler, Jeff King, Aimee Kupiec, Dave Lennon, Jay Meczywor, Stephanie Melito, Erin Mucci, Bob Murray, Jay Nocher and Rachel Tomkowicz. *Member Justin Duval was absent.* Also present were Jay Green, Town Administrator; Crystal Wojcik, Finance Director; Bri Hantman, Recording Secretary; and Brian Rhodes from iBerkshires.

WELCOME TO NEW MEMBERS

The meeting was called to order at 6pm. All members introduced themselves.

BUDGET OVERVIEW

Chairperson Cushenette commented that over the last 5 years the overall town budget has increased by about 2 million dollars.

Town Administrator Jay Green commented that the town is operating in a way that is lean and mean, but it might not always be possible to operate at that rate.

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

Stabilization Fund: *Crystal Wojcik, Town Finance Director:* Stabilization fund should be 5-10% of the total Town Budget. We appropriate funds to the reserve fund each year. At the end of each fiscal year, the balance of the reserve fund is transferred to the Stabilization Fund. To appropriate money out of the Stabilization Fund, it must be approved by a Town Meeting.

A lot of town buildings need emergency maintenance and repair. The establishment of the Facilities Department helps us manage the buildings and keep them up. An asset management plan helps us not overtax the reserve fund.

Member Mucci: It could be helpful to pull together a list of grants that the Town has received. It will be helpful to understand how much the town receives that offsets some of the expenditures we have.

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Free Cash: *Crystal Wojcik, Town Finance Director:* Free cash can be a tough concept. Should be 3-5% of the total Town Budget. At the end of each year, we take any unencumbered money or money not spent from appropriated funds, and move it to free cash.

While the tax-rate has gone down, tax bills will still be higher because property values are up. The town of Adams takes sewer costs off the tax levy. There is no sewer bill in the town of Adams. If the Town moves toward a user fee for the sewer, then we would see the tax bill go down as well.

We put \$250K into the budget to lower the tax rate. We become dependent on that every year to lower the tax rate. That money could be put in the free cash and used for capital improvement.

If we decide to lower it to \$200K we can start weaning off of this dependency while keeping the tax rate in check. We could potentially shift that to a percentage instead of a flat amount. We legally cannot raise the tax levy by more than 2.5%

Every year, 1/3 of the properties in town must be re-assessed and every 10 years the entire town inventory must be re-assessed. Every property is re-assessed when it sells.

BUDGET MEETING FORMAT

Meetings(s): Initial and Final

Initial meeting and final meeting will be held separately from the BOS in order to help the finance committee Member Tomkowicz asked for clarification on what is meant by “first meeting” and “last meeting”.

Carol Cushenette, Finance Comm Chair and Town Administrator Jay Green explained that the initial overview meeting will be held with the Town Administrator and Finance Director. The final meeting when votes are taken will also be held separately. Department Head meetings will be held in conjunction with the BOS.

SCHOOL BUDGETS

For several years the schools have reported historical budgeted numbers and not historical actuals.

The Finance Committee Chair will formally request historical actuals. It is important for us when analyzing trends and year to year variances.

There was a question and discussion regarding the amount of money that HVRSD sends to BaRT for each student. The Fin Comm would like clarification on the process.

SUBCOMMITTEES

There was a discussion on the effectiveness of the sub committees that were established last year to look into specific departments pre-budget sessions. The general consensus was that they were useful and effective.

Carol Cushenette, will ask for members specific interests and send out a new listing. Jay Green will contact us when he is ready to start the process.

CIP Planning Subcommittee

A subcommittee for Capital Improvement Planning has been established and will be meeting in November. The goal is to have a long-term plan for projects and associated costs.

WORKSHOP FREQUENCY

A question was posed to the committee regarding the frequency of Workshop meetings. The decision was to have them on an as need basis not to schedule regular sessions.

Motion made by member Burnett to adjourn. Seconded by member Burdick. Motion passes unanimously. Meeting is adjourned at 7:13pm.

Respectfully Submitted, Bri Hantman, Recording Secretary.



Carol Cushenette, Finance Committee Chairperson