

TOWN OF ROCKLAND
FINANCE COMMITTEE
February 16, 2022

Signing in for the remote Finance Committee meeting of February 16, 2022 were Chairman John Pumphrey, Bill Principe, Bill Stuart, Joe Gambon, Cara O'Neill, Susan Gaines and Linda Sternfelt. Vice Chairman Bob MacDonald, Secretary Julie Shaffer and Meghan Rooney were absent. Ms. Childs resigned from Finance Committee, as she has taken out papers to run for Selectman. The meeting was called to order at 7:02 PM. Chairman Pumphrey read aloud a statement that the meeting was being recorded by WRPS and would be broadcast on YouTube.

Also signing in to the remote meeting were Assistant Town Accountant Sirena Amaral, Town Administrator Doug Lapp, Tax Collector Judy Hartigan, HR Director Stacy Callahan, Building Inspector Tom Ruble and IT Director Geno Gingras.

Chairman Pumphrey announced that the Committee minutes would be available from the Town Clerk's office and on the Town's website once they are voted on by Finance Committee.

Building Inspector Tom Ruble presented the Building Department budget. The Building Department budget was level with the exception of a 13% raise for the Administrative Assistant and a 9% raise for the Junior Clerk. These are union positions and are subject to being finalized via the wage classification study currently being conducted. An increase of 34% was recommended to the Local Inspector salary, based on a comparable search conducted by Mr. Ruble, with the assistance and review of HR Director Callahan.

The Building Department has no articles this year.

Building Inspector Ruble also presented the Gas Inspector, Plumbing Inspector, Weights/Measures and Wiring Inspector budgets. Mr. Ruble also conducted comparable salary searches for the inspector positions, again with the assistance and review of HR Director Callahan. Based on his search of nine comparable towns, he is recommending an increase of \$1,000 each for the plumbing and gas inspectors and \$500 each for the two wiring inspectors. Chairman Pumphrey inquired as to whether there would be a commensurate increase in permit fees. Building Inspector Ruble stated that there would not be an increase in permit fees, as the Town of Rockland is in line with other neighboring towns. The rest of these budgets are level with FY 2022.

These departments also have no articles this year.

Tax Collector Judy Hartigan then presented her budget. The Assistant Tax Collector position is due for a step increase. Tax Collector Hartigan is seeking the restoration of the part time Clerical position to full time. In order to balance the budget during the pandemic, this position was reduced to a part time position. Since Town Hall is now open, the volume in the office has significantly increased, and additional work has resulted from splitting the trash billings from the water and sewer billings. The

proposed full time salary is the same as it was prior to the pandemic. Dues, meetings and travel has increased as Ms. Hartigan would like to send her Assistant Tax Collector to school at UMass Amherst in the fall. Mr. Stuart asked if there was a way to automate water, sewer and tax bills. Tax Collector Hartigan said that the Town is already using UniPay and Invoice Cloud. However, there is a credit card fee attached which is quite high (up to \$35-\$40), and there is no cost for utilizing the Bill Pay through residents' banks. However, this does not help the Tax Collector's office, as this process generates a check from the resident's bank that has to be processed by the Tax Collector's office. Ms. Hartigan also said that many residents like to pay in person and get a receipt. She stated that she will send out a buck slip with the next real estate tax billing that highlights the auto pay options.

The Tax Collector has no articles for FY '23.

IT Director Geno Gingras presented his budget. The increase in computer services is due to the costs of the new Town online permitting system, the requirement for multifactor authentication by the Town's insurer, software maintenance fees and a doubling in the fees for the Town's website. In addition, the Town's financial software cost (Munis) increased by 5% and backup and security software costs increased by 7% year over year.

The IT Director has no articles this year.

HR Director Stacy Callahan presented the new Personnel budget. Previously, the HR budget fell under the Selectmen's budget. HR Director Callahan is requesting a new part time position for a Human Resources coordinator, as HR Director Callahan has been working 50-70 hours per week for the last five years to complete all of the tasks required to be performed by the department, including personnel issues, tracking of FMLA, OSHA, workers comp, CORIs and onboarding retirees, the number of which has doubled over the last year. Chairman Pumphrey asked if the department was trying to automate. HR Director Callahan said that she and IT Director Gingras had meetings to explore this last spring and summer. They reviewed 4-6 different type of technologies, but that the systems were expensive to operate, with annual costs of \$30M-\$60M per year. She will continue to explore cost-effective automation for the department. Mr. Stuart asked if HR Director Callahan validated the process used in the Building Department's wage compensation study. Ms. Callahan stated that she worked on the study with Mr. Ruble and provided him with several of the comps used in the study.

The HR Director has no articles this year.

Town Administrator Lapp presented the remaining budgets. He began with the Board of Selectmen budget. The Town Administrator is in the last year of his contract. The Assistant Town Administrator and the Executive Assistant are showing as flat, as they should be covered by the wage adjustments from the classification study. The Human Resources Directory now falls under the new Personnel budget, and the Land Use Coordinator now falls under the new Land Use budget. Wage Adjustment Obligations should cover all union and non-union wage increases that were shown as flat line items in FY '23's budget. Landfill Monitoring cost increased, as both positions were consolidated to the Board of Selectmen budget. Professional and Technical expense covers departments that need help or have

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people out. In FY '22, the Joint Waterworks used it to hire an outreach person to communicate with Town residents. Advertising cost is advertising for public hearings. Conference Meetings/Registration includes Selectmen MMA dues, plus a small increase for professional development. Postage was moved to this budget from the Town Hall Maintenance budget.

Town Administrator Lapp went on to present the Legal Services budget. This is level funded but there is a lot of uncertainty due to litigation.

Mr. Lapp also presented the Public Buildings & Properties – Maintenance budget. The increase in the Custodian line item includes an increase from the clerical union plus a stipend to the lead custodian. As mentioned previously, the Postage line item was reclassified to the Board of Selectmen budget.

The Town Reports budget dropped slightly as the Town continues to try to decide how many town reports to print for all residents who request one.

The Utilities General Government budget is projected to stay level funded after the effects of net metered solar credits. The Library was broken out separately so that it doesn't negatively affect the State aid available to the Library.

The Audit budget was a reasonable estimate, as a new contract has been requested.

The Traffic Control budget is hard to predict, as it is dependent on accidents and damage. It was level funded.

Liability Insurance is based on a quote from a broker. There is additional flood insurance cost, and a premium is being paid due to ongoing litigation.

Overlay is significantly less and should be addressed by the Assessor.

Land Use is a new department this year. The budget proposes moving the Land Use Coordinator from a part time to a full time position, and adding a Town Planner. Ms. Sternfelt asked if towns our size typically have a full time planner on staff. Mr. Lapp replied that it is unusual not to have a Town Planner for towns our size.

Mr. Lapp promised to send the Finance Committee members a link to his presentation of the Town budget to the Selectmen from last night. The Finance Committee will review the presentation and come back to Mr. Lapp with any questions they may have.

Chairman Pumphrey reviewed the minutes from the Finance Committee meeting of 2/9/2022. Mr. Gambon asked that he be removed from the list of attendees because, although his video was working last week, his audio was not so he could not hear or participate in the meeting. Mr. Principe made a motion to accept the minutes as amended. Mr. Stuart seconded the motion. Mr. Gambon and Ms.

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Gaines abstained. Chairman Pumphrey, Mr. Principe, Mr. Stuart, Ms. O'Neill and Ms. Sternfelt approved.

Chairman Pumphrey asked for any updates on liaison meetings. Mr. Principe and Ms. Sternfelt are expecting to meet with Chief Duffey tomorrow. Mr. Principe will confirm the time with Chief Duffey. Chairman Pumphrey asked that any notes from the meeting be shared with the rest of the Finance Committee. Chairman Pumphrey will meet with the Police Chief and share notes with the rest of the Finance Committee. Mr. Gambon will work with the Chairman of the Capital Planning committee to come into Finance Committee with their recommended Capital Plan.

Chairman Pumphrey stated that the next meeting of the Finance Committee will take place on March 2, 2022. Proposed departments to review will be the Assessor, Police and Fire Departments.

Motion made by Ms. Sternfelt to adjourn was seconded by Mr. Gambon. Vote of approval was unanimous. The meeting was adjourned at 8:53 PM.

Respectfully submitted by Linda Sternfelt, Finance Committee Member