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**COMMITTEE ON FINANCE AND TAXATION**  
**WEDNESDAY, March 29, 2023 7:00 PM**  
**School Committee Conference Room, Stoughton Public Schools District Office**  
**31 Pierce Street, Stoughton, MA 02072**

**Agenda items may be taken out of order at Chairman's Discretion**

1. Mr. Vaughan Enokian, Chairman called the meeting to order at 7:07 PM .
2. Mr. Enokian asked all to stand for the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. Anzivino made the motion to open the meeting, seconded by Mr. Desmond. The motion passed.

Present: Vaughan Enokian Chair, John Anzivino Vice Chair, Eric Anderson, Chet Collins, Bob Desmond, Elliot Hansen, Laura Gunn, Adam Iacobucci, David Lurie, Dr. Jess Miner, Mark Struck, Joel Wolk

Absent: Dianne Dolan Secretary, Kerry Marrocco, John Walsh

3. Request from Recreation Department to Increase Recreation Department Revolving Account Spending Limit Authorization from \$150,000 to \$200,000 for FY23 (votes to be taken)

Mr. Matt Cauchon, Recreation Director, spoke in favor of this request explaining that the need for more funds indicates there is greater participation, more people in the programs. He explained that he had an increase in the number of youths interested in ski lessons at Blue Hills. He noted that Blue Hills had increased its fees. Mr. Cauchon said many increases directly relate to the rate of inflation. He remarked that the salaries of seasonal employees had increased to approximately \$80,000. He remarked that the request is not new funds but for the authorization to use money already in the account.

Mr. Anzivino made the motion to approve the request from the Recreation Department, seconded by Mr. Lurie. The Board voted to approve unanimously. 12 yes 0 no.

4. Any Matters relating to FY24 or FY23 Budget and Town Meeting Warrant Articles (votes may be taken)

Ms. Sandra Groppi, Chair of the School Committee introduced Chair Debra Roberts and Vice Chair Stephen Cavey of the Select Board. She expressed her thanks for their presence in support of the school committee's request to add \$2.5 million to the school budget. She explained that these funds were available from Chapter 70, the Student's Opportunity Act (SOA). Ms. Groppi acknowledged the presence of Dr. Thomas Raab, School Superintendent, available for questions or to confirm the need for the request. Ms. Groppi said these are funds for Special Needs Students. She said there is a large increase in transportation costs. She indicated the town needs to plan for a 14% increase in this area.

Mr. Enokian invited Chair Roberts to speak. Chair Roberts thanked Mr. Enokian and the finance committee for the opportunity to support the school system. She said her three children had attended Stoughton Public Schools and had received a fine education.

Mr. Cavey offered support as well, noting that budget preparation time is stressful. He said that the hard work of Chair Sandra Groppi and the Vice Chair, Katie Pina-Enokian was appreciated, and their stepping down would surely be a great loss to the town.

Ms. Groppi said in all previous years, the school department has presented a conservative budget. She said this money is needed.

Mr. Enokian thanked the speakers.

Mr. Anzivino gave a breakdown of the school budget: \$2,430,176 distributed as follows:

\$1,180,176 Special Education Transportation

\$350,000 plus for contract services

\$775,000 for OOD (out of district costs)

\$75,000 for ESL

\$45,000 for maintenance of fields

Mr. Anzivino echoed his appreciation to Ms. Groppi and her cooperation during her tenure as Chair. He noted that the bottom-line would remain the same.

Mr. Enokian said the request is to increase the school budget by \$2,430,176.

Mr. Lurie said this was a one-time event. He asked if some of the money received by the school department could be used against the health care deficit.

Mr. Anzivino objected commenting that the school department is behind now, falling short of state requirements for spending per pupil.

Dr. Raab clarified that the deficit occurs because of what the town is required to spend per pupil and what the town receives from the State to meet those requirements. Dr. Raab noted that the SOA funds are not definitive.

5. The committee continued discussion of matters pertinent to the FY24 budget.

Dr. Miner asked for the future that changes be highlighted for easy reference.

1. Health Insurance: Mr. Rowe stated that after negotiations changes to the health insurance resulted in a savings of \$472,201.

Mr. Lurie asked if the consultant Gallagher had signed off on the changes.

2. Facilities: Mr. Anzivino stated the department would be reduced by 2 custodians.

Mr. Rowe stated that the town manager has the discretion to transfer funds.

Mr. Wolk commented that this would not substantially impact on the budget.

Mr. Anzivino asked where to find health insurance/medicare benefits.

Mr. Rowe responded in the joint costs budget.

Mr. Enokian asked the consensus. Mr. Wolk replied that this is acceptable, if the process is to cut \$76,000 from the salary, add \$100,000 under expenses, the budget would change by an additional \$24,000.

Mr. Rowe suggested that the health care number not be removed. He said the town pays life insurance and medicare taxes for the entire body of employees.

3. Central Dispatch

Mr. Anzivino noted that there are 3 positions covered under joint costs, 2 positions are vacant. He said 2 positions will be moved to Central Dispatch, and the request is to cover salary for these two until October.

4. Regional Schools (Southeastern, Norfolk County Agriculture)

Southeastern, additional \$121,596

Norfolk County Agriculture additional \$113,316

Mr. Anzivino explained that the budget is increased by \$88,408.

5. Assistant Town Accountant additional \$10,000 to the budget

Mr. Rowe explained that the current position will become the internal auditor. He said the position will be advertised at \$70,000.

Mr. Anzivino pointed out that this results in an overall increase of 12.6% to the salary.

Ms. Gunn remarked that the committee has heard from other department heads of the difficulty in finding quality candidates due to salaries offered.

Mr. Enokian said salaries are increased to attract better candidates.

Mr. Rowe stated that the increase for the internal auditor is justified because of the candidate's expertise, and expansion of duties including analysis of policies and procedures plus bank reconciliations.

The consensus was favorable to this increase.

6. Town Planner

Mr. Anzivino questioned the difference between the dollar amount specified in the budget (\$99,225), and the dollar amount at which the new town planner was hired, (\$110,000). He expressed concern for the increase which also would be eligible for an additional increase of 2% July 1, after only 3 months of being on the job.

Dr. Miner suggested increase the salary of the town planner to \$110,000 and eliminate the automatic 2% increase on July 1.

Mr. Desmond made the motion to reduce the salary from \$12,597 to \$10,775 in view of the automatic 2% increase July 1. Mr. Lurie seconded the motion. The committee voted unanimously for this change.

7. Firefighters – Two have been hired, but the budget does not cover holidays, benefits, nor education incentives.

A third firefighter is requested at \$78,000 plus holidays and education incentive.

Mr. Anzivino expressed consent for two but rejected the hire of a third firefighter.

Dr. Miner opposed the third firefighter as well.

Mr. Anzivino suggested that the education incentive line go to \$4,000; holiday line to \$7296.

The consensus of the committee, a third firefighter was not recommended.

8. DPW an addback of a laborer at \$52,000, sanitation department

Mr. Desmond said a third person was needed on the truck. The committee consensus yes to this request.

9. Assistant Town Manager stipend \$30,000

Mr. Anzivino opposed this addition stating if the individual was to divide his time 80/20% this meant that one of the jobs would suffer.

Mr. Lurie agreed stating that when a position is carved up, it is difficult to track.

Dr. Miner expressed her concern that the town was developing a trend of consolidation of duties, changing titles, and adding stipends to cover the extra duties. She stated she believed this to be a wrong direction. She commented that the town needs a full-time engineer. She said if an assistant town manager is needed, then one should be hired.

Ms. Gunn said this was discussed with the town manager. She repeated her concern that additional duties would add to current workloads and lead to burnout.

Mr. Wolk agreed with Dr. Miner, suggesting that stipends should be eliminated and positions should be more clearly defined.

Mr. Lurie reminded the committee that Mr. Calter was looking to his successor, hence the request to split the duties of the current engineer with duties in the town manager's office. Mr. Lurie pointed out to reject this split would result in the hiring of an engineer or assistant town manager. Either position would cost more than \$30,000, the proposed stipend.

Mr. Anzivino added that it is not up to the town manager to select the next town manager. He said stipends are not sustainable as a practice.

The committee consensus against this request to add a stipend to the current town engineer.

10. Water/Sewer request to add \$7,120 for water and \$7,120 for sewer to the salary of the Superintendent's salary.

Mr. Wolk commented that Mr. McNulty is doing a fine job. Mr. Desmond stated that Mr. McNulty is high caliber and that this ask is to incentivize Mr. McNulty to remain in Stoughton.

Dr. Miner said this is done that Mr. McNulty is already receiving the pay increase.

Mr. Anzivino expressed his objection, citing that this was the second individual to be offered more money to remain. The budget lists this position at \$135,000 the request puts the position at \$149,240.

Mr. Lurie said he is not in favor because of the health care deficit.

Dr. Miner said that she objected to the manner in which it was done. She said she understands but if the town has difficulty retaining employees, this needs to be addressed.

Mr. Wolk said he agrees with previous speakers, but noted this has already been effected. He accepts for this year but should there be a request for an increase in salary for the position next year, he will oppose.

Mr. Anzivino stated that this salary increase will also impact the water/sewer subsidy.

Mr. Wolk made the motion to accept the increase of \$14,240 (\$7,120 for water, \$7,120 for sewer). Mr. Lurie seconded the motion. The vote of the committee 7 yes 5 no.

Mr. Enokian commented that the enterprise funds need to be under control.

Mr. Lurie added that the Select Board voted in February not to establish guard rails for the enterprise funds. He said the consumer rates will have to be increased.

11. Assessor request for \$20,000

Mr. Anzivino expressed his objection.

Ms. Gunn asked if this was a stipend.

Mr. Rowe responded that it was an increase for the IT director to compensate for additional duties to be performed. The IT director is filling in pending the hire of an assessor.

Mr. Lurie asked what would happen when the assessor is hired.

Mr. Desmond pointed out the IT director is already receiving a stipend for assistance with the procurement of grants.

The committee consensus was against.

12. Assessing, Appraisal Services Request \$10,000 increase.

Mr. Anzivino stated that currently the budget is \$5,000 and the request is to add an additional \$5,000.

Mr. Enokian asked Mr. Rowe to explain the cost of \$800,000 in overlay.

Mr. Rowe clarified that this was an allowance to be made available to settle abatements. He said there are some big cases pending. These funds will permit the Town to order independent appraisals.

Mr. Lurie said this request could result in returning money to the town. He said the town needs to aggressively pursue the tax taking of properties in arrears.

The committee consensus in favor.

13. Motor Equipment Repair to correct a clerical error add \$1,690

Consensus in favor

14. Certified Mechanic reduce salary by \$750 (\$375 water and \$375 sewer)

15. MWRA Preliminary Assessment Increase \$417,949 plus \$7,120 equals \$425,069

Committee consensus in favor

16. Reduction in MWRA \$16,488 less \$7,120 equals \$9,368 reduction.

17. Custodians, two retirees, add \$24,000

Mr. Wolk made the motion to accept, seconded by Mr. Lurie. The committee voted 10 in favor, 2 no.

17. Central Dispatch

Mr. Hansen said the proposal is that 4 will be sent to Central, leaving 5 in the town. He asked if these are union positions.

Mr. Anzivino suggested leaving the budget as is.

Dr. Miner suggested the committee vote to accept the decreases.

Mr. Wolk asked that line items 4-7 be agreed to.

Mr. Iacabucci pointed out that if the request to fund until October, goes beyond October, the finance committee would be asked to fund a shortfall.

Ms. Lurie suggested footnoting this recommendation. He said it should be understood that the employees are covered in the budget until October.

Mr. Wolk pointed out to not vote for this request resulted in having to vote to fund the entire department for the entire year.

Mr. Wolk moved the motion to accept, seconded by Dr. Miner. On the motion, 5 approved, 6 against, 1 abstention.

In summary: the committee approved the custodians.

Rejected the dispatch request.

Approved the assistant town account at \$10,000.

Approved the Town Planner at \$110,000.

Rejected the 3<sup>rd</sup> firefighter.

Approved the additional laborer for DPW.

Rejected the assistant town manager.

#### Departmental Budget Review

1. Cedar Hill decrease of \$4300
2. Town Counsel- ok
3. Town Moderator- \$1,800.00 ok
4. Select Board - \$14,860 ok
5. Town Manager- ok

(Mr. Anzivino noted a salary increase for title change from senior clerk I to Administrative assistant)

#### 6. Finance Committee

Mr. Struck asked if money should be added in anticipation of printing costs of the warrant.

Mr. Rowe noted that last year the printing cost was \$5700.

Mr. Struck made the motion to increase the finance committee line for printing and stationery from \$5,000 to \$10,000. The committee approved 12 yes 0 no.

Legal Consultant line- to remain the same.

#### 7. Town Accountant

Mr. Anzivino reminded the committee that it had agreed to the request to increase the salary of the internal auditor.

Mr. Rowe pointed out that it would result in a net change to the budget because of the elimination of the department audit and analytics. He said the budget would decrease by \$4,900.

Mr. Struck asked about the in service/education line.

Mr. Rowe responded that there hasn't been much time for training. He said certifications were done as required.

Mr. Struck suggested an increase from \$775 to \$1,000. Mr. Rowe said he didn't think it necessary.

Mr. Anzivino said the difference between the salary for senior clerk to program admin I was a wash at 1.5%.

#### 8. Auditing and Analytics (department disbanded)

#### 9. Central Purchasing -ok

10. Board of Assessors Data Collector will become full-time, increase of 2.6%

#### 11. Treasurer/Collector

Department head 9.4% increase

Land recorder and service consultant increase to \$50,000.

Mr. Rowe gave the following rationale. He said that there is \$4,000,000 outstanding in taxes on foreclosed properties. He said 2017 was the last year the town had taken properties. He said the town had attempted to recover 8 but ended up with 5. Mr. Rowe commented that the town needs to have the funds to pursue these land-takings aggressively.

Mr. Anzivino made the motion to increase the request from \$20,000 to \$50,000. The committee voted 12 yes 0 no.

Mr. Rowe asked for consideration re the cost of postage. He said the Select Board granted \$7,500 and \$8,100 has already been spent.

12. Human Resources

Mr. Anzivino stated that HR moved from joint costs. Program Admin \$59,469, Office Administrator \$72,706 representing 3.9% increase. 2 Stipends were rolled into salary.

Mr. Rowe added that Crossing Guards and Resource Officers were returned to the Police Budget. Benefits management to HR.

Mr. Anzivino made the motion to accept positions moved to the Police Budget and Benefits Management moved to HR. Motion seconded by Mr. Wolk. The committee voted 12 yes 0 no.

HR page 13 senior clerk will become Program admin salary from \$59,490 to \$72,706.

13. Procurement- ok

14. Information Systems- change to increase salary by \$20,000 rejected

15. Town Clerk (recusals by Desmond, Struck, Wolk)

Mr. Anzivino explained that the Select Board had put in for a part time position, the town clerk had asked that position be full time. Mr. Anzivino said he approved the change, salary to be \$45,000.

Mr. Anzivino made the motion to increase the budget request from a part time position to a full-time position, salary to be \$45,000. Mr. Lurie seconded the motion. The committee voted 12 yes to support.

16. Planning Board changed approved to \$110,000

17. Economic Development- ok benefits management moved to HR.

18. Police Department two SRO (school resource officer) moved to Police Department. Crossing Guards moved back to Police department.

19. Civilian Dispatch- voted as is.

20. Fire Department ok as amended. Add-ons voted on.

Mr. Struck inquired about additional \$20,000 for cancer screening. It was explained that the cost is approximately \$300 per firefighter.

21. Building and Zoning- ok

22. Animal Control- ok

23. Educational/Regional Schools modified increase to \$1,563,861

24. Engineering Department

a. Project Engineer 14.5% increase. Mr. Anzivino noted that the budget for this position is at \$85,000.

b. Stormwater coordinator - \$95,000 Mr. Enokian stated this is a federal requirement.

Engineering Department- ok

25. DPW/Highway Administration -ok

26. Highway Construction- ok
27. Facilities Department 159  
p. 34 Fleet Manager change to serve as assistant to DPW and Facilities
28. Snow Removal \$400,000 in the budget; currently in deficit at \$98,000
29. Street Lighting- ok
30. Fleet Management- ok as amended
31. Waste Disposal/Sanitation ok as adjusted 3.15% salary increase
32. Human Services Mr. Anzivino asked for an explanation for 1/10<sup>th</sup> position.  
Mr. Rowe said this is a shared position.
33. BOH Program Admin I went to senior clerk- salary increase- ok
34. COA-ok
35. Veterans Services- senior clerk II to Program Admin I 34.4% salary increase  
Mr. Anzivino said this was one of the positions where the new hire came in at a level below the previous employee.
36. Substance Abuse \$7,500 stipend to director -ok
37. Library-ok
38. Commission on disabilities added \$7,000 -ok
39. Recreation Program facilitator changed to Program administrator salary increase \$49,000 to \$60,000.  
Mr. Anderson offered an explanation that training would now be done in-house.
40. Parks Department -ok  
Tree work and pesticides
41. Community Events- ok July 4<sup>th</sup> expense FY22 \$36,000
42. Debt Retirement page 50  
Mr. Rowe said on the \$50,000,000 bond principal and interest- cost is \$3,000,000 annually.  
Total project cost at \$49,000,000, \$50,000,000 cannot be excluded from the tax levy. Interest has to be prorated.
43. Excluded Debt- ok
44. Health Insurance- reduction in town-wide insurance. Retirement contribution



Mr. Desmond asked how many people are covered. Mr. Anzivino stated that per the end of the year report 15% school, 85% town.

Mr. Desmond said new hires pay more into the retirement fund. Mr. Desmond asked the outstanding liability. Mr. Rowe responded \$255,000,000.

45. Unemployment compensation, Enterprise funds -modified

46. Sewer Subsidy- Park Street

47. Water Department- ok

48. Public Health VNA p. 59

Mr. Enokian suggested a possible reduction in contract services. Mr. Anzivino stated that as of 1/31 the balance was \$68,000, and \$11,000 used so far this year.

Mr. Anzivino made the motion to reduce the subsidy from \$75,000 to \$29,800. The \$29,800 to be reserved for contract services. Mr. Lurie seconded the motion. The committee voted yes 12 to 0. This decision brings the public health subsidy to zero.

49. Cedar Hill

Mr. Anzivino objected to the proposed raise, stating it represented a 17.8% increase at \$92,000 and also a request for an assistant at \$35,000.

Mr. Enokian said he had researched the comp offered by the superintendent and the comp salary paid at Strawberry Hill was \$83,574,

Mr. Lurie approved of matching the comp offered.

Mr. Anzivino suggested offering the salary at \$82,000 representing a 4% increase.

Dr. Miner offered the opinion that Mr. Barruzza has been working very hard for many years, putting in extra hours. Dr. Miner recommended meeting the comparable salary at \$83,574.

Mr. Iacabuccl added that Victor has really done a great job and suggested the committee go close to the salary requested.

Mr. Wolk said he was uncomfortable setting the salary of a town employee. He asked if this was truly under the purview of the Finance committee, considering that the Select Board had approved the salary request.

Mr. Lurie made the motion to set the salary at \$83,574, seconded by Mr. Desmond.

Mr. Anzivino made the motion to adjourn, seconded by Mr. Hansen. The meeting was adjourned exactly at 11:00 PM.

