



TOWN OF TEWKSBURY

TOWN HALL
1009 MAIN ST

TEWKSBURY, MASSACHUSETTS 01876

FINANCE COMMITTEE

Robert Kocsmiersky, Chair
Richard Levasseur, Vice Chair
Jason Christian, Clerk
David Aznavoorian
Susan Bishop
Thomas L. Cooke
Stephanie Klinkenberg-Ramirez

Finance Committee

March 13, 2023 – Meeting Minutes

1. Call to Order

A meeting of the Finance Committee was called to order by Mr. Rob Kocsmiersky, Chair at 7:01 PM on Monday, March 13, 2023. Also present at the meeting were Committee members Mr. Richard Levasseur – Vice Chair, Mr. Jason Christian – Clerk, Mr. David Aznavoorian, Ms. Susan Bishop and Ms. Stephanie Klinkenberg-Ramirez.

Committee member Mr. Thomas Cooke was not present for the meeting.

Also participating in the meeting were Town Manager Mr. Richard Montouri and the Business Manager for the Tewksbury public schools Mr. David Libby.

2. Budget Reviews

- School Department
 - Mr. David Libby, Business Manager for the Tewksbury public school system gave a PowerPoint presentation to the committee outlining the Fiscal Year 2024 budget. The budget included four areas of focus Personnel, Operational, Technology and Building Improvements. He noted that in the technology area there continues to be a push to improve communications systemwide and conversion to Cleartouch monitors throughout the district. Wiring improvements at the middle school to accommodate these updates would be given a 40% discount through the E-Rate program. Printing solutions also are an area of focus. They are looking to close the copy center and move copiers that the school owns throughout the district, the goal is to save money on paper costs. The Fiscal Year 2024 school department budget as requested represents a 3.07% increase from last year, if you include fixed costs and debt this amounts to a 2.7% increase. Mr. Libby also noted that the budget includes a 14% increase to the out of district tuition costs and that transportation costs for fiscal year 2025 are going out to bid. Capital outlay priorities include funding new ELA

curriculum materials, HVAC assessments for the Heath Brook and Dewing schools as well as several other projects. Mr. Libby also discussed the grades given to the individual school building systems as one might expect the older schools are doing poorly in some areas. The school department is always looking for grant opportunities to offset some costs, these were highlighted in his presentation.

Committee Member Ms. Stephanie Klinkenberg-Ramirez had a question around the new Communications Systems and what languages were supported. Mr. Libby responded that it would cover 16 languages but we have a need for additional language support to cover a total of 27 languages. He believes that these additional languages should be able to be downloaded as modules in the new system. Ms. Ramirez also asked about out of district costs. Mr. Libby responded that students who have needs that Tewksbury cannot accommodate are sent to out of district schools, Tewksbury pays for their transportation.

Committee member Mr. Jason Christian asked about applying for repairs under an accelerated program offered by the state of Massachusetts. Mr. Libby responded that this program was put on hold by the State until June.

Committee Member Mr. Rob Kocsmiersky also had questions on the Special Education budget increase. Mr. Libby discussed the program and mentioned that each individual students' needs are assessed and any special plans are developed to ensure their success. There is a "Circuit Breaker Fund" in place at the state level that reimburses 75% of the costs spent by the town in the following fiscal year. Mr. Libby took this year's dollar amount and increased it by 14% to arrive at the figure presented. Mr. Kocsmiersky also asked if the education loss due to Covid could be quantified and how we are making up for that lost time. Mr. Libby responded that he would get an answer from the Superintendent of Schools. Transportation costs to out of district schools are shared between local towns. Mr. Kocsmiersky also asked if there could be grades put for the ventilation in each of the schools. Mr. Libby responded that he would add this information to the building systems grading spreadsheet.

Committee member Mr. David Aznavoorian asked Mr. Libby if he could provide metrics around student enrollment numbers over time. Mr. Libby responded that he will provide this information to the committee in the near future.

- Other Budget Updates
 - Town Manager Mr. Richard Montouri had no additional budget updates. He did note that he has reached out to Shawsheen Tech on multiple occasions for their budget and has not heard back. He will continue to reach out to them. This budget information is needed by April 3, 2023.

3. Town Manager

No finance director report.

No Transfer requests.

Finance Committee Transfer Policy

Proposed Transfer Policy

The committee discussed the following new transfer policy.

If a transfer request is within a statutory category that is voted at town meeting (Salaries, Operating, Capital Outlay), a transfer request is approved by the town manager only. There is no dollar threshold, if it is within the same statutory category, and the overall category does not go over what total budget was voted at town meeting, no other action needed. No Finance Committee approval needed.

If a transfer request is from one statutory category to another (Salaries to Operating), the request is approved by the Town Manager and the Finance Committee, regardless of amount. There is a \$25,000 total transfer amount per fiscal year threshold for these types of transfers. Anything exceeding this will be presented at a town meeting for vote. The transfer request must be within same department. However, if a situation arises where not approving the transfer request over \$25,000 within the department would expose the town to an exuberant expense; the Finance Committee will review and reserves the right to approve the transfer as a representative of town meeting. These types of requests should be requested very sparingly and will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis.

The Town accountant will send a transfer spreadsheet to the Finance Committee with quarterly reporting or as requested. The Finance Committee will vote on all the transfers within the spreadsheet at year end as one final check with what has been transferred throughout the fiscal year.

Any requests to transfer from one department to another would continue to follow M.G.L CH.44, S.33B, presented and voted at town meeting, or by the Select Board and Finance Committee at fiscal year-end.

There was some general discussion and questions centering around the adoption of this new policy by the Finance Committee Members and the Town Manager.

MOTION: A motion was made by Committee Member Mr. David Aznavoorian to adopt the new policy, seconded by Committee Member Mr. Jason Christian.

Motion Carried 6-0

4. **Finance Committee member representation on other committees**

- No reports

Although there were no reports there was a great deal of discussion regarding the gymnasium floor at the new school. Town Manager Mr. Richard Montouri noted that he would keep the committee apprised of the situation.

5. **Ratify Payment of Recording Secretary Timesheet**

A timesheet was submitted totaling \$353.09 by the Recording Secretary for ratification by the committee.

MOTION: A motion was made by Committee Member Mr. David Aznavoorian to ratify the timesheet, seconded by Committee Member Mr. Jason Christian.

Motion Carried 5-0-1 (Committee Member Mr. Richard Levasseur did not vote on this motion)

6. **Approval of Meeting Minutes**

None

7. **Adjourn**

MOTION: A motion was made by Committee Member Mr. David Aznavoorian to adjourn at 8:11 PM seconded by Committee Member Mr. Jason Christian

Motion Carried 6-0

Documents Presented and/or Discussed:

- Memo, Budget Presentation and spreadsheets by the Tewksbury School Department.
- Proposed Transfer Policy document submitted by Town Manager Mr. Richard Montouri.
- Recording Sec. timesheet dated March 1, 2023

Minutes approved by the Finance Committee on March 20, 2023.