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TOWN CLERK

Board of Finance
REVISED Budget Hearing Minutes

Wednesday, March 17, 2025
Town Hall Auditorium 7:00pm

Present: Chairman Glenn Patterson, Ronald R. Fedor, Bill Sheehan, Michael Rocchetti, Robert Tuneski, Joseph Filippetti

Absent: Josh Kelly

Elected: Rob Brule, First Selectman; Paul Goldstein, RTM Moderator; Dave Camp, Town Clerk; Alan Wilensky, Tax Collector

Staff: Patti Waters, Registrar of Voters; Bigi Ebbin, Registrar of Voters; Paige Walton, Assessor; Steven Sinagra, Director of Emergency Management; Rebecca Hall, Admin Assistant Finance Office/BOF Recording Secretary

1. **Establishment of a quorum and call to order:**

A quorum was established and a call to order was established at 6:59 pm, March 17, 2025.

2. **Public comment:**

Standing Motion: was made by Joseph Filippetti and **seconded** by Bill Sheehan to consider the budget requests without individual motions for each series and department to expedite the meeting. Bill Sheehan will make motion on all budgets and Ron Fedor will second the motion.

Vote: 6-0-0

Motion: Passed

3. **Registrar of Voters Budget:**

Motion by Bill Sheehan and **seconded** by Ron Fedor to approve the Registrar of Voters budget request for FY25/26 in the total amount of \$121,255 designated by the Series Subtotals above.

Registrars Patti Waters gave an opening statement discussing how the department administered three (3) elections in the past year as well as early voting. New tabulators and a new voting system require new training for staff members in addition to higher costs of maintenance of the new machines. These additional costs are reflected in the request for increase in the budget for FY26. Bill Sheehan pointed out that the requested increase is 25.62% over FY25 and added that this department has been over budget in three (3) of the last five (5) years.

The Registrars do not expect the ROV office to receive further grant funding.

Vote: 6-0-0

Motion: Passed

4. Assessor Budget:

Motion by Bill Sheehan and **seconded** by Ron Fedor to approve the Assessor budget request for FY25/26 in the total amount of **\$319,641** designated by the Series Subtotals above.

Assessor, Paige Walton, began discussion of the budget. The Assessor pointed out that the Grand List saw a decrease of 1.69%. Her department has requested a budget with an increase of 11.29% to fund business/personal property audits that began last year. The cost for audits is done by one of only two assessment auditors in the state, therefore, the service did not go out to bid.

Vote: 6-0-0

Motion: Passed

5. Board of Assessment Appeals Budget:

Motion by Bill Sheehan and **seconded** by Ron Fedor to approve the Board of Assessment Appeals budget request for FY25/26 in the total amount of **\$1,829** designated by the Series Subtotals above.

Josh Kelly, via written questions submitted to the Chair prior to the meeting: Our elected officials, in particular our Tax Collector, Town Clerk, and Treasurer positions, are run by professionals who must have technical experience and training in their fields – the fact that they are elected or partisans does not change the functions of their job or the way the job is approached to any degree. While I am of the belief that these should be hired positions, our Charter currently requires they be elected, which severely limits the number of duly-qualified individuals who may seek the office. As such, we need to ensure that the position pays enough to attract qualified individuals to keep seeking it – and taking the risk every four years to possibly be ousted from said position for no reason aside from being a partisan from another political party. Do we feel that the proposed salary increases for these individuals is adequate considering that the CPI changed 3.0% between January 2024 and January 2025?

Paul Goldstein, RTM Moderator, approached the Board to answer Mr. Kelly's question. The Moderator advised that letters from the RTM have been submitted to the Board of Selectman to request an increase in pay for Registrar of Voters, Treasurer, Town Clerk and Tax Collector. This item will be on the RTM Agenda in April.

Vote: 6-0-0

Motion: Passed

6. Tax Collector Budget:

Motion by Bill Sheehan and **seconded** by Ron Fedor to approve the Tax Collector budget request for FY25/26 in the total amount of **\$227,817** designated by the Series Subtotals above.

The Tax Collector, Alan Wilensky, provided the BOF with the following statistics on his department's progress with collection rates for FY25 (as of January 2025):

Real Estate: 99.13%	Personal Property: 99.82%
Motor Vehicle: 96.14%	Motor Vehicle Supplemental: 85.39%
Overall: 99.03%	

Vote: 6-0-0

Motion: Passed

7. Town Clerk Budget:

Motion by Bill Sheehan and **seconded** by Ron Fedor to approve the Town Clerk budget request for FY25/26 in the total amount of **\$272,301** designated by the Series Subtotals above.

Dave Campo, Town Clerk, opened his department's budget discussion by thanking his staff and their dedication to the department. He takes pride in his department's commitment to the Town for being the first contact for most residents and being sure every resident is directed to the appropriate department to manage their needs.

Vote: 6-0-0

Motion: Passed

8. Representative Town Meeting Budget:

Motion by Bill Sheehan and **seconded** by Ron Fedor to approve the Representative Town Meeting budget request for FY25/26 in the total amount of **\$18,903** designated by the Series Subtotals above.

Vote: 6-0-0

Motion: Passed

9. Board of Selectmen Budget:

Motion by Bill Sheehan and **seconded** by Ron Fedor to approve the Board of Selectmen budget request for FY25/26 in the total amount of **\$206,402** designated by the Series Subtotals above.

First Selectman Rob Brule told the BOF he is blessed and thankful for the staff in our town. The Department Heads are doing a great job and noted many of them are new [in the past few years] to their positions. He operates to be fiscally responsible and responsive to the residents and taxpayers in the Town of Waterford. Bill Sheehan commended Mr. Brule on a good, detailed budget submitted this year.

Vote: 6-0-0

Motion: Passed

10. Emergency Management:

Motion by Bill Sheehan and **seconded** by Ron Fedor to approve the Board of Selectmen budget request for FY25/26 in the total amount of **\$1,230,035** designated by the Series Subtotals above.

The Director of Emergency Management, Steve Sinagra, presented his budget request to the BOF by first thanking the Board for rescheduling his department's Budget Hearing. He acknowledged his staff and complimented them on their selfless effort for the Town during a time of staff shortage. Currently, the department has nine (9) full time dispatchers, three (3) part time dispatchers, and one (1) vacancy. Overtime will decrease in FY26 for his department due to the increased regular staffing.

There was much discussion on the end-of-life public safety radio system replacement project which is estimated at \$6,500,000. Director Sinagra, First Selectman Rob Brule, and the Director

of Finance, Kimberly Allen, are working to secure funding from sources outside of the Town of Waterford to subsidize the cost of this project which boasts many regional benefits for public safety.

Vote: 6-0-0

Motion: Passed

11. Adjournment:

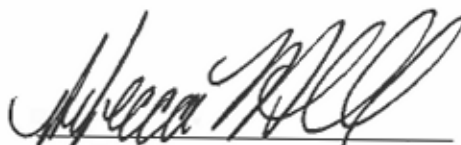
Motion by Bill Sheehan and **seconded** by Michael Rocchetti to adjourn the Budget Meeting of the Board of Finance at 9:05pm.

Vote: 6-0-0

Motion: Passed

Respectfully submitted

Bill Sheehan, Clerk



Rebecca L. Hall, Secretary