



Town of Sterling

Joint Finance and Capital Budget Committee

BUTTERICK MUNICIPAL BUILDING

1 PARK STREET, Room: 205

Tuesday, January 30, 2024, 6:30 pm

MINUTES

Finance Committee (7):

George Handy, Chair (FinCom)

Joseph King, Vice Chair (FinCom)

Members: Paul Austin, Ezequiel Ayala, Mark Gauthier, Christina Lashua, Lynne Sheppard

Capital Budget Committee (7):

Lynne Sheppard, Chair (CBC)

Liz Pape, Vice Chair (CBC)

Members: Paul Austin, Ezequiel Ayala, Mark Gauthier, Joseph King, Christina Lashua

Recording Secretary: Valerie Handy

I. PRELIMINARIES

- **Attendees:** Joe King, Liz Pape, Christina Lashua, Lynne Sheppard. Mark Gauthier, Paul Austin, Ezequiel Ayala, George Handy
Other Attendees: Police Chief Sean Gaudette, Department of Public Works Superintendent Ryan Mouradian, Board of Health Member Rich Lane; Select Board Chair, Maureen Cranson, Dick Maki
- **Approved:** Motion to approve 1/24/2024 meeting minutes. Abstain: Liz Pape, Christina Lashua. All other members unanimously approved.

II. AGENDA ITEMS (time permitting)

Review FY24 Budget vs Actual results through 12/31/2023: Discussions were held regarding mid-year deviations between budget and actual spending. It was noted that the report did not show a midpoint in payroll expenses as payroll is run on a two-week period basis and the 12/31 report is mid-period. It was agreed that the members would review the report and liaisons would report back on any deviations greater than 35%.

Continue drill down discussions on FY25 Omnibus Budget from prior meeting to look for opportunities. Focus areas for next discussions: The FY25 Omnibus budgets submitted by Police, BOH and DPW were discussed. In attendance were Chief of Police Sean Gaudette, DPW Superintendent Ryan Mouradian. The Chair of the Board of Health, Alan Hoffman was not in attendance. Board of Health Member, Rich Lane was in attendance.

Police: A brief overview of the police submission was presented and there were no questions for Chief Gaudette. Consensus was that the Chief's submission was clear and straight-forward.

DPW: Opening the discussion on the DPW, Ryan Mouradian responded to a question regarding the submitted DPW salary line items; the committee members were satisfied with Ryan's answers. During a discussion on "roads and sidewalks" spending, it was pointed out that the only spending that shows in either the Omnibus or Capital Budgets is a single \$250K item; this is not reflective of the total work expenditure for these projects. Chapter 90 funding and the new "fair share" funding discussions revolved around how the available funds and residual planned spending could be best presented. As the Chapter 90 funds had not previously appeared in the Warrant and the Fair Share funds are new for FY25, it was decided that all road and sidewalk projected expenditures would appear on the Capital Budget as presented by the Capital Budget Committee (CBC) and the associated outside grants would also be highlighted as funding sources. Ryan Mouradian stated that, from a practical standpoint, his DPW Department can only process about \$800K of new Paving per year. A brief discussion regarding the requested wage increase line item resulted with Ryan stating that the Department has achieved full staffing levels which have not previously been met.

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The Committees thanked Chief Gaudette and Superintendent Mouradian and moved on to the Board of Health submission.

BOH: The Chair of the Board of Health was not present and BOH member Rich Lane was in attendance.

The Permit Log Sheet given to the Health Agent at the beginning of January and due January 22 has not been completed with the information requested by FinCom.

Exhibits were presented from available public resources that showed an obvious slowdown in the required BOH activity over the past several years.

A cost comparative of Sterling BOH costs versus other surrounding town costs indicated that Sterling was spending more than two times the other towns for BOH activity. It was noted that the BOH FY25 budget is 65% higher than the FY20 Actual Department Spending.

The BOH has been asked to investigate regionalization as a viable cost savings alternative. As there was no representative from the BOH at the meeting, the FinCom will prepare appropriate questions regarding their budget for their public hearing before the FinCom within the coming months.

Review updated Capital Request Financing matrix with changes requested at last meeting plus any more recent changes.

The CBC reviewed the Capital Request Funding Matrix (CRFM) and concluded that it was satisfactory at this stage of discussions. It was mentioned that there is an intimate relationship between the CRFM and the Omnibus Budget and both would be considered as the process moved forward. A motion was made and approved unanimously to accept the CRFM.

Discuss timing for FinCom/CBC item by item committee vote on Capital requests. Deferred to CBC meeting on Feb 6.

Next Meeting CBC: Feb 6, 5:45pm

Next Meeting Joint FinCom & CBC Feb 6, 6:30pm

Adjourned at 8:30pm