

**Finance Committee Meeting  
Meeting Minutes  
Wednesday, October 25, 2023, at 6:00 pm  
Bellingham Municipal Center  
Lower-Level Meeting Room**

Finance Committee Members Present: J. Allam (Chairman), J. Collamati (Vice-Chairman), K. Keppler, B. Boyd, J. Kuzmeskas

Finance Committee Members Absent: J. McCarthy

Meeting Commenced: J. Allam called the meeting to order at 6:00 pm.

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4. K. Keppler made a motion to approve the minutes from the October 17, 2023, Finance Committee Meeting, as presented. J. Kuzmeskas seconded. Recommended 5/0.

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5. **Public Hearing:** DPW Director, Jesse Riedle was present to discuss additional DPW requests, as presented below:

**TRENCH BOX**

Mr. Riedle provided members with information on the request for an aluminum trench box that will be used to keep staff protected during repair/maintenance work. It is a strong but lightweight aluminum that is adjustable and can be set up to 8' tall. 3 quotes were provided to the Committee, with the lowest price being \$18,950 and includes the 3" x 6' spreaders.

J. Collamati made a motion to recommend \$18,950 from Retained Earnings for the purchase of an aluminum trench box. K. Keppler seconded. Recommended 5/0.

**OLD BRIDGE SEWER STATION**

Information from the recent bid opening for the Old Bridge Sewer Station Replacement was provided to all members present, with a breakdown of what the project pricing includes. This is located right behind the DPW, in the Old Bridge condominium complex. This would be a complete system replacement to be done with submersible pumps, as they are the more reliable option. The project cost is \$415,800, with a 10% contingency of \$44,410, making a total of \$460,210.

J. Kuzmeskas made a motion to recommend \$175,000 from Retained Earnings and \$285,210 from Free Cash, as described above. B. Boyd seconded. Recommended 5/0.

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6. **Public Hearing:** Building Commissioner, Tim Aicardi was present to discuss the request for a Town Center Sign, as listed below:

Mr. Aicardi presented information to the Committee regarding an LED sign for the Town Center. Members had questions regarding dimensions and what the sign would be sitting on for a base. Mr. Aicardi provided pictures to Committee members to show a masonry base that would be used and gave a description on what the LED sign would look like. The purchase and installation of the sign and base would be \$72,000. Committee members had concerns of the appearance of the sign taking away from the Town Center, as well as not being seen by people driving through traffic in that area.

J. Collamati made a motion to recommend the amount of \$72,000 for an LED sign to be placed at the Town Center. J. Kuzmeskas seconded. Opposed 3/2 to not recommend.

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**7. Public Hearing:** Chief Fitzgerald and Lt. Russell were present to discuss the Police Department Requests, as follows:

**ELECTRONIC CONTROL DEVICES:**

Chief Fitzgerald provided Committee members with a presentation he prepared on a request for electronic controlled taser devices. This would be for the purchase and deployment of 30 Axon Taser units, for sworn personnel. The cost of \$129,110 would be for the 30 devices and would also include warranty, liability policy, and all necessary parts/supplies for the 5+ year life span.

J. Kuzmeskas made a motion to recommend the purchase of 30 Axon Taser devices, as presented, in the form of a lease funded in five equal payments of approximately \$26,000 a year from the Operating Budget. Motion seconded by B. Boyd. Recommended 5/0.

**ANNUAL CRUISER REPLACEMENT (2 VEHICLES REQUESTED):**

A request for a new unmarked admin vehicle was provided to Committee members. The make & model will be determined based on availability from the vendor due to supply chain and ordering constraints. The current vehicle being used is 6 years old, with over 80,000 miles and it would be reassigned to the Detective fleet for the next 3 to 4 years, which would be replacing the 10-year-old vehicle that is still currently being used. The proposed cost of a replacement vehicle and emergency equipment is \$62,700.

A second unmarked admin vehicle is also being requested, to replace the 7-year-old vehicle with over 77,000 miles. The current vehicle failed its recent safety inspection in July and will be repaired in order to be reassigned to the Detective fleet for the next 1 to 2 years. The same purchase constraints apply to this vehicle, due to the vendor supply chain and ordering constraints. The proposed cost for the replacement vehicle and emergency equipment would also be \$62,700.

J. Collamati made a motion to recommend the purchase of the 2 vehicles as described above, in the total amount of \$125,400 from Free Cash. K. Keppler seconded. Recommended 5/0.

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**8. Public Hearing:** Chief Miller and Deputy Milot were present to discuss Fire Department Requests, as presented below:

**ENGINE 3:**

The 2007 Pierce pumper truck, Engine 3, was recently taken out of service. This was due to extensive rust, frame rail separation and mechanical issues. The truck would not pass DOT inspection, which is why it had to be permanently removed from service. There is currently a 2-year wait time for stock pumpers, which the Department is in need of purchasing. In addition, there is a yearly price increase of 20%, which is \$220,000 per year. This is the standard increase across the board from all manufacturers. The cost of a new pumper truck is \$1.1 Million.

B. Boyd made a motion to recommend the purchase of a Pierce Enforcer Engine to replace Engine 3, in the amount of \$1,100,000 from two different funding sources. A total of \$500,000 would be from Free Cash and \$600,000 from the Capital Investment Trust Fund. J. Collamati seconded. Recommended 5/0.

#### **ENGINE 5:**

There was also discussion about the need to soon replace Engine 5, which is the 1995 E-One pumper truck, also at the estimated price of \$1.1 Million. That truck is still currently in service but has passed the 15-year life expectancy set by the National Fire Protection Association, which sets the criteria for fire apparatus. This truck is 28 years old and will be going for its yearly inspection in October. The Department needs this Engine to pass inspection since they are already down one, with Engine 3. Chief Miller will not know the status of this truck until after inspection is complete but wanted to make the Committee aware of the current Engine status.

#### **CAR 3:**

A request to replace Car 3, which is a 2015 Chevy Tahoe was presented to the Committee. The current vehicle is used daily for inspections and emergency responses. The vehicle has been maintained, however, due to its age and daily use, the vehicle is showing significant signs of body rot, rust, and frame delamination. It has now become strongly recommended to store personal protective equipment (PPE), as well as self-contained breathing apparatus (SCBA) outside of the passenger compartment or in a sealed, vented compartment. It is the goal of this administration to protect the members of the BFD with the purchase of pickup trucks instead of SUV's, in order to keep the contaminated equipment and gear separate from the occupants. This request is for the replacement of a 2015 Chevy Tahoe at the cost of \$83,735 for the truck, radios, IT, and command equipment.

#### **CAR 4:**

A request to replace Car 4, which is a 2017 Chevy Tahoe was also presented to the Committee. The vehicle is also used for inspections and emergency responses, just like Car 3. Due to the same issues this vehicle is experiencing with the signs of body rot, rust, and frame delamination, it is also being requested to replace with a similar pickup truck, in the amount of \$83,735, with the same radios, IT and command equipment. Pictures of current vehicle conditions were provided to all Committee members with the descriptions and quotes.

J. Collamati made a motion to recommend the purchase and replacement of Car 3 and Car 4, with two F-150 pickup trucks, from Free Cash, in the amount of \$83,735 each. J. Kuzmeskas seconded. Recommended 5/0.

#### **STATION PLANNING / DESIGN CONSULTATION:**

This request in the amount of \$100,000, is to start the evaluation process for future expansion, and conditions at the 3 Fire Stations in town. As the community continues to grow, so has the request for fire services from the department, which has resulted in the need for additional staffing. As the department plan shows future growth, there is a need to update/expand the current stations. This request is to hire an outside firm to propose renovations and potential expansion of the Stations.

J. Kuzmeskas made a motion to recommend \$100,000 from Free Cash for the Fire Station evaluation process as described above. K. Keppler seconded. Recommended 5/0.

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**Public Hearing:** Ms. Cornell-Smith and Ms. MacKinnon were present to discuss the remaining FY24 Town Warrant Articles as presented:

**Article 1 – Amend Annual Town Meeting Article 1 – Operating Expenses and Salaries**

Committee members reviewed information provided by Ms. MacKinnon with the department and totals requested for each line item in Article 1, as listed below:

<b>Department</b>	<b>Purpose</b>	<b>Amount</b>
Veterans	Wages – Full Time	\$26,000
Veterans	Wages – Part Time	\$8,000
Veterans	Expenses	\$3,000
DPW	Wages – Collective Bargaining Agreement	\$7,407
MIS	Cybersecurity Services	\$50,000
HR	Professional Services for Consulting Study	\$10,000
Parks	Part-Time/Seasonal Wages	\$20,000
Parks	Elected Officials	\$3,000
Transfers	Expenses – Transfer to Health Insurance	\$300,000
Transfers	Expenses - Compensated Absence Fund	\$50,000
Transfers	Expenses - OPEB Trust	\$50,000
Assessors	Wages – Full Time	\$67,000
Police	Move from Salaries to Expenses	\$(55,942)
Police	Move from Salaries to Expenses	\$55,942
Police	Overtime	\$50,000
Police	Expenses - Tasers	\$26,000
Fire	Overtime	\$50,000
Conservation	Wages – Full Time	\$32,000
Tree Warden	Expenses - Tree Removal	\$50,000
Bldg. Maintenance	Expenses - Property Repairs	\$25,000
	<b>TOTAL:</b>	<b>\$827,407</b>
	<b>Funding Source:</b>	<b>Raise and Appropriate</b>

J. Collamati made a motion to Amend Article 1 in the amount of \$827,407 from the Funding Source of Raise and Appropriate. K. Keppler seconded. Recommended 5/0.

**Article 2 – Amend Annual Town Meeting Article 2 – Trash**

Department	Purpose	Amount	Funding Source
Trash	AFSCME Contract	\$418	Retained Earnings
	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$418</b>	

**Article 3 – Amend Article Town Meeting Article 3 – Water Enterprise**

Department	Purpose	Amount	Funding Source
Water	AFSCME Contract	\$17,130	Retained Earnings
	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$17,130</b>	

**Article 4 – Amend Annual Town Meeting Article 4 – Sewer Enterprise**

Department	Purpose	Amount	Funding Source
Sewer	AFSCME Contract	\$5,260	Retained Earnings
	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$5,260</b>	

**Article 5 – Amend Annual Town Meeting Article 5 – Stormwater Enterprise**

Department	Purpose	Amount	Funding Source
Stormwater	AFSCME Contract	\$4,285	Retained Earnings
	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$4,285</b>	

B. Boyd made a motion to Amend Articles 2, 3, 4, and 5, with their amounts being listed above and the Funding Sources of Retained Earnings. J. Kuzmeskas seconded. Recommended 5/0.

**Article 8 – Town Charter Revisions**

Action was taken by the Town Charter Committee for this Article item.

**Article 9 – To Approve and Fund the AFSCME Labor Contract**

The AFSCME Contract was settled with encompassed the period from July 1, 2022, through June 30, 2025. Therefore, a retro amount is due to employees for a prior fiscal year. The totals and funding sources for this Article are listed below:

Trash Retained Earnings	\$275.
Water Retained Earnings	\$17,130.
Sewer Retained Earnings	\$5,260.
Stormwater Retained Earnings	\$4,285.
Free Cash	\$5,080
TOTAL -	\$32,030

B. Boyd made a motion to recommend Article 9, as described above. J. Kuzmeskas seconded. Recommended 5/0.

**Article 13 – Transfer to Capital Investment Trust Fund**

The Finance Committee took No Action on this Article. The Finance Committee was informed this Article would be passed over at Town Meeting

**Article 14 – Transfer to Group Health Insurance Trust Fund**

The Finance Committee took No Action on this Article. The Finance Committee was informed this Article would be passed over at Town Meeting

**Article 15 – Transfer to Compensated Absences Fund**

The Finance Committee took No Action on this Article. The Finance Committee was informed this Article would be passed over at Town Meeting

**Article 16 – Transfer to Stabilization Fund**

The Finance Committee took No Action on this Article. The Finance Committee was informed this Article would be passed over at Town Meeting

**Article 17 – Unpaid Bills**

The Finance Committee took No Action on this Article. The Finance Committee was informed this Article would be passed over at Town Meeting

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New Business, Emails, Correspondence, Bills:

The next Finance Committee Meeting will take place on Wednesday, November 1, 2023, at 5:30 pm.

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J. Kuzmeskas made a motion to adjourn at 8:26 pm. Seconded by B. Boyd. Approved 5/0.

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Respectfully Submitted,

*Tina M. Griffin*  
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