

Town of Marlborough

Board of Finance Members
Michael Nastri, Chairman
Karen Pakulis Paul, Vice Chairman
Jeffrey Plourde, Secretary
John (Jack) H Fidler
Will Guzman



Board of Finance Alternate Members
Christopher Barella
Sal Senna
Baird Welch-Collins

Board of Finance Special Meeting Budget Workshop

Thursday, May 9, 2024

7:00 PM

Marlborough Elementary School Library Media Center and Zoom

All minutes are considered 'DRAFT MINUTES' until approved at the next meeting.

1. Call to Order, Alternate Appointment

Present at the meeting were Board of Finance members Michael Nastri, Karen Pakulis Paul, Jeffrey Plourde, Will Guzman, Jack Fidler, and Christopher Barella.

Michael Nastri called the meeting to order at 7:03PM.

Chairman Nastri provide comments to begin the meeting. Volunteer board members are elected individuals that need to hold themselves to higher standards, to work collaboratively with each other for the town. Improvements can be made for better communication and as chairman, will work to better that.

2. Public Comments

Ken Hjulstrum

It is good news that the RHAM budget passed. Going forward, encourage board not to change the BOE budget, including the capital projects associated with elementary school.

Attention should be given to the Town hall budget and BOS Capital proposed projects.

20 years ago, the BOE budget had a proposed cut, which failed a second referendum.

Deb Borbeau

Spoke as an individual. The Board of Selectmen presented a budget that was believed to be fair and responsible. A great deal of time went into discussing the proposed projects, in particular the critical nature of culverts due to rain storms straining the systems in town. The suggestion of bonding for a solution to capital

needs requires a strong credit rating for a favorable interest rate. Audits need to be completed in a timely manner. Asked BOF to be fair and equitable in asking for reductions.

John Rizza

Spoke to reiterate the BOF chairman's words on civil discourse. The Boards should work together. The campaign posters that were all over town highlighted his desire to find common ground – the BOS and Town Manager are trying to do that. Supported Deb Borbeau's letter read to the Board.

Louise Concodello

We all live in this town, and work for the town. Everyone has to get along. Supported Deb Borbeau's letter read to the Board.

Sue Stolfi

Appreciated the letter Deb Borbeau read. Spoke to being able to take a different route; the BOE presented and Deb Borbeau and Betty O'Brien attacked the BOE. It takes two parties to move forward. Felt strongly that the two principal critique took it down a rabbit hole. Spoke in support of that and children of the community. The questions are happening due to comments made about two administrators not being needed. The BOE would like to work together and it started off terribly. If it's going to move forward, move forward. School came in the third lowest budget in the state. Work together, but starts with BOS as well.

Chris Barella

Spoke in his concern of censorship occurring. The March 14, 2024 BOF minutes, comments made by the public that were critical of BOS and BOF that were not included and have not been updated. Censorship should not be part of public forum and how the town is run.

Kerri Barella

Spoke with Anne Kilby regarding the cost of a referendum. Each referendum is \$4,818. That is the cost of the first one and would be factored into town budget. Each referendum will cost that. Try to reduce the 9%.

Pamela Farrington

Thanked the BOF for the hard work done. Disappointed in the BOF meeting that voted going forward with the budget. Exit survey discussion – the exit survey did not occur and could have helped give a clearer picture of what the town thought. Concerned with nearly 9% increase. Spoke in support of school and BOE budget. Hope to reduce the percentage, but understands how much the BOE and Dr. Hageman has put into the budget, that is responsible and reasonable. A budget this low for a school should be commended.

Matt Warner

Spoke in finding it disheartening that rules had to be set at the beginning of the meeting. With the "No" vote, the town is frustrated and voted no. As a school

administrator, the 2.7% budget increase is incredibly low across the state. Remarkable to operate with that low of a budget increase.

Holly Hageman

Spoke to being very knowledgeable on the BOE budget, familiar with the RHAM budget, and less familiar with the BOS/Town budget. However, the Town budget is able to offset projects with reserves/surpluses when possible. This is able to offset real costs and expenses. One of the great things with the RHAM budget is the ability to use audited funds balances. RHAM was to apply a fairly large audited fund balance to their budget to offset actual expenses. Marlborough BOE budget does not have the ability to use those surpluses. Any surplus funds must be approved by BOF to be applied if and when they do exist.

What is presented in the budget documents is all there is. There are no offsets. Real monies, real needs with no tools to have softened the budget even further. When there's a cut, there's a cut. No reserves to apply in the first place.

3. New Business

a. Budget

Town Manager provided updates on recent developments. The State Legislature finished their session last night. State of CT budget line, (State Shared Aids), had been a decrease. \$135,000 put back into budget instead of a decrease as originally proposed as the state not reducing the funding.

An updated spreadsheet will be uploaded to the website for further breakdown of how the proposed increase is being calculated.

With just the update to the Revenue changes (+\$135,000), but no assumptions of reductions would result in a 37.23 mill rate, 7.2% increase. With no cuts. This was stated to level set where we are with the updated revenue.

The BOF discussed what number they would like to get to in order to propose a new budget to the town to vote on. Initial discussion included three stakeholders. Now, due to RHAM passing its budget, it is down to two parties. The BOF looked to get a percentage closer to 5%.

Looked at potential areas for cuts and reductions. Would get to 5.40% increase with a \$300,000 reduction from the BOS/Town budget, and a \$45,000 reduction from the BOE totaling a \$345,000 reduction.

- Suggestions were made by members for areas to reduce the budgets. For example, the BOE - Roof, boiler reserves suggestions.
- Dr. Hageman explained the dangers of depleting reserves too much.

Jack Fidler made a motion to request a \$300,000 reduction from the Town/Board of Selectmen budget and a \$45,000 reduction from the Board of Education

budget. Jeffrey Plourde seconded the motion. Michael Nastri called for a vote. All in favor. Motion carried.

A suggestion for an exit poll was also encouraged. The BOF will decide on the questions working with the Chairs of the BOS and BOE.

b. Timeline: Final Adjusted Budgets Due, Public Hearing, Referendum

Per the Town Charter:

The referendum must occur no more than three weeks from previous vote. Due to logistics, Town Manager suggested Thursday, May 23, 2024 as the next referendum.

Public Hearing before referendum and notice at least 5 days prior.

Public Hearing to occur May 22, 2024. Public Notice will go out in May 17, 2024 Riverast.

4. Adjournment

Michael Nastri made a motion to adjourn. Jack Fidler seconded the motion. All in favor. Meeting adjourned at 8:42PM.

Respectfully Submitted,

Kathryn Overturf Nohelty
Board Clerk