Town of Marlborough

Board of Finance Members
Michael Nastri, Chairman
John (Jack) H Fidler, Vice Chair
Baird Welch-Collins, Secretary
Will Guzman
Ken Hjulstrom
BOF Alternate Members
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Board of Finance
Special Budget Kick Off Meeting Minutes
Monday, October 8, 2026 @ 6:30 PM
Town Hall

1. Call to Order, Alternate Appointment

Vice Chairman Jack Fidler called the meeting to order at 6:31PM.

Mike Nastri arrived at 6:32PM. Present and seated were regular members Mike Nastri (Chair), John (Jack) Fidler (VC) via Zoom, Ken Hjulstrom, Will Guzman, and Baird Welch-Collins.

2. Public Comment

None

3. Budget Kick Off: Presentation and Discussion from RHAM Board of Education, Marlborough Board of Education, and Town Manager

Vice Chair Jack Fidler addressed the group before the presentations and reviewed the parameters to consider when preparing budgets for the FY 2027/2028 years. These parameters were listed on the agenda and are included in the appendix of these meeting minutes.

1) RHAM Board of Education-Colin McNamara

Colin McNamara summarized RHAM's budget outlook for the coming year. He said the operating budget is expected to remain consistent, while several capital projects will soon require attention. He distributed a booklet outlining proposed improvements to the RHAM building and grounds. As the facility approaches 25 years of age, proactive maintenance will be needed to avoid disruptions. Proposed projects include repairs or upgrades to the roof,

exterior facade, HVAC system, safety features, wireless communications, tennis courts, and parking lot. Most projects may qualify for state reimbursement at the current rate of 61.4%. Some work may be funded through the regular budget, but the full list must be prioritized. The projects currently total approximately $41 million. Planning is expected to support a referendum in November 2027 or May 2028, with the bonding process explained beforehand.

2) Marlborough Board of Education, Superintendent of Schools-Paul Smith

Superintendent Paul Smith provided a high-level overview of the FY 2027–28 budget and distributed a summary sheet to the Board. Key cost drivers include staffing and benefits, with the goal of maintaining a consistent student-to-teacher ratio. Benefit costs remain uncertain and are expected to represent a sizable portion of the budget. Operations and supplies cover items such as textbooks, Chromebooks, and laptops, as well as a few small, reimbursable capital projects for a sound system and exterior repairs.

Mr. Smith also noted that the MES Building Improvement Committee is planning major capital projects for the elementary school, including roof and HVAC work, which will also be presented to voters in a referendum.

3) Town Manager-David Porter

Town Manager David Porter highlighted several major factors affecting budget preparation. Wages and health insurance are the primary cost drivers, followed closely by heating and utilities. Oil prices remain significant, although converting some facilities to propane has helped. Snow and ice treatment, particularly salt, is also difficult to budget. The town begins the season with salt from an early delivery and plans a second delivery, while salt prices have risen about 30% year over year. Capital projects remain part of a previously reviewed five-year rolling plan that the Board of Selectmen will update. Mr. Porter also emphasized the need for more proactive vehicle purchasing and noted that speed-camera revenue may help fund a new dump truck for Public Works.

Mr. Porter reported that the FY 2024–25 financial audit is complete and should be presented to the BOF at its next meeting. He also anticipates a surplus and plans to recommend using it to purchase a Public Works truck.

Finance Director Tony Genovese added that the FY 2024–25 audit is complete and the data and submissions for the FY 2025–26 audit are ready. That audit is expected to begin in November and conclude by April 2027. Future audits should follow a timelier schedule, allowing results to be available sooner.

4. Public Comment

None

5. Adjournment

Ken Hjulstrom moved to adjourn at 7:21PM. Baird Welch-Collins seconded the motion. ***The motion passed unanimously***

Respectfully submitted,

Dave Carter, Board Clerk

6. APPENDIX

The Board of Finance has the following parameters for all parties to consider when preparing their budgets for the upcoming 2027/2028 years.

1. Overall Increases for the coming year should not exceed 3.5%.
2. Outside of mandatory (Regulatory requirements, Agreements that have been signed, etc.) operational obligations, year over year expenses should be flat.
3. Five-year Capital plans should be shared with the Board of Finance. These schedules should have prior year balances as the starting point so we can see what the Reserve balances are for each item going into the current year.
4. For the town, we would like to have a schedule of the unallocated balance (Beginning balance, additions, subtractions, projected ending balance).
5. Budget schedules should reflect the actuals to budget for the prior 2 yrs
6. Since personnel are such a large percentage of the overall expense for each area we would like to have summaries for these expenses from each group
7. All budget presentations, regardless of where they come from, must be submitted to the Chair and Vice Chair of the Board of Finance 2 days prior to the meeting date. This will give Board members the opportunity to review them and be prepared for discussion at the meetings.