## FINANCE COMMITTEE MEETING

Tuesday June 21, 2022

1. Call to Order and roll call - P. Orenstein opened the meeting via Zoom at $6: 30 \mathrm{pm}$ with a roll call: Milena Cerna, "aye, Madonna Meagher, "aye," Anne O’Dwyer, "aye," Philip Orenstein, "aye." All members present.
Also in attendance: Town Manager Mark Pruhenski, Assistant Town Manager Chris Rembold.
2. Welcome new member Richard Geiler - P. Orenstein welcomed R. Geiler who stated he had not yet been sworn in so would be an attendee for the meeting.
3. Approval of Minutes for meeting of May 17, 2022
a. A. O'Dwyer stated on page $1, \# 5$ - should note Mark Pruhenski was not in attendance and the items were not discussed. She also stated for \#4c M. Meagher's statement should indicate she is "overextended" not "fully committed."
M. Meagher made a motion to approve the minutes of May 17, 2022 as amended; A. O’Dwyer seconded. P. Orenstein asked if any additional discussion - there was none. Roll call vote: M. Cerna, "aye, M. Meagher, "aye," A. O’Dwyer, "aye," P. Orenstein, "aye." All in favor: 4-0

## 4. Town Manager update

a. Pending items: legal review of Town's discretion over Unused Free Cash related to Cannabis tax revenue - M. Pruhenski stated Town Counsel, David Doneski, is aware of the Committee's request for legal guidance on use of free cash generated by the sale of cannabis - but he has recently been engaged on pressing Town matters. He stated D. Doneski would respond and he expects to report back well in advance of budget season.
b. Request for OPEB data - M. Pruhenski stated Alicia Dulin is working with KMS Actuaries and will provide updated data to them at FY22 close - including active employee updates, payroll figures, health coverage for employees/retirees, etc. - and the OPEB liability report will be shared when complete.
i. P. Orenstein stated that in his email he had raised questions/clarifications on last year's OPEB report - M. Pruhenski stated he would review the email again and respond with any information he has.
ii. For context, P. Orenstein stated this is an effort to explore funding of retiree medical benefits - how to set up a trust under state rules/requirements/procedures and provide a recommendation on if/how to fund the trust annually for Selectboard/Town decision. He noted this requires a better understanding of how it is being funded now and what it looks like over the next few years - and clarified the focus is on how to pay for the obligation the Town has already made, not to assess the benefits being received.
5. Guest speaker: Mr. Ross Vivori, Principal Assessor
P. Orenstein opened the discussion stating within the Finance Committee's purview is the fiscal impacts on the Town of property tax/assessments - i.e., increased late payments/penalties due to new semi-annual billing - and not on operational details.
a. Time for questions
i. A. O'Dwyer asked about R. Vivori's main responsibilities - He replied it is to ensure information on residential, commercial and industrial properties is accurate and current this is done through permit, abatement and sales inspections. He noted data is fed into the CAMA system which provides a mass appraisal of the residential market using DOR guidelines requiring us to be $+/-10 \%$ of the market and move everyone together up or down.
ii. M. Cerna asked how assessed value is determined - R. Vivori stated objective and subjective criteria/factors and cost tables are used to give a value, though he noted it is not exact science due to the mass appraisal approach. M. Cerna asked how market data was incorporated into the model and how recent sales in a neighborhood impact the valuation process - and A. O'Dwyer asked for clarification on recertification - R. Vivori stated all true arms-length sales across the Town are looked at - in recertification years (every five years) every property is recertified including a deeper dive/workplan/review by neighborhood and DOR sampling of properties. In interim years there is statistical sampling/analysis using sales prices across all properties to see where the market is going - values are adjusted, as needed, and submitted to the DOR for approval. He noted once approved, the tax rate can be set in a tax classification year. He clarified that specific neighborhoods are not looked at in interim years unless there is a significant change/ reason. He also stated every ten years there is a total reevaluation.
iii. The Committee discussed what would trigger a change in a property's assessed value R. Vivori clarified it would be a significant change in the house/property footprint requiring a building permit.
iv. P. Orenstein asked how taxpayers could better understand the assessment process and get more information on their properties - R. Vivori stated he can provide details and advise on how properties are differentiated. He also noted he can visit a property and make adjustments, if appropriate. It was clarified that all information on assessed values is public and maps/data can be found on the GIS system. R. Vivori noted it is helpful for people to have an understanding of the process/guidelines.
v. It was noted that in January-March tax bills are sent and system/maps are updated with any changes.
vi. A. O'Dwyer asked what is the relationship between a home's sale value and assessed value - R. Vivori stated the assessed value is different from the sale value. He noted an assessment sales ratio is used - assessed value divided by sales price to give a ratio of less/more than one - DOR determines where the Town needs to be statistically based on a sampling. A. O'Dwyer asked if the Town has an assessment ratio - R. Vivori stated yes, property is assessed at $100 \%$ full and fair market value - the Town generally in the mid $80-90 \%$ range, but with less state aid and local receipts - and increased costs it moves closer to $100 \%$ full/fair value - and he noted last year values were raised $12 \%$. It was also stated in a declining market it can work the opposite way.
vii. The Committee discussed the Board of Assessors process - specifically meeting in executive session. R. Vivori stated it is in executive session due to review/discussion of individual abatement applications. P. Orenstein noted other towns, such as Stockbridge, have a public component to the meetings to discuss general/broad issues, aggregate tax data, collection issues and procedure. R. Vivori stated every town is different and this is historically how GB has done it. It was noted it would be helpful for the Board of Assessors to clarify historical procedure. R. Vivori stated he supports discussing it further.
viii. A. O'Dwyer commented that the there is a lot of great information on the Town website - including helpful FAQs. She inquired about the FAQ stating that property tax payments are not affected by the assessment value. It was discussed that it depends on the tax rate - and suggested it should read - tax payments are subject to many factors not just assessed value.
ix. P. Orenstein asked if there were any questions from the public - there were none.
x. A. O'Dwyer asked about commercial properties and R. Vivori confirmed commercial properties are also reviewed, but they are only 325 out of 4700 parcels total in the Town.
xi. P. Orenstein asked about interest in the senior tax deferral and R. Vivori confirmed 3-4 individuals had inquired.
6. Discussion and comment on list of future Committee priorities (included in packet)
a. P. Orenstein highlighted for R. Geiler priority projects identified by the Committee - and noted the intent to match members with these projects for their additional focus/work.
b. Addition of property tax billing - This item was not discussed specifically.
7. Review of potential revisions to Budget Policy
a. Draft of proposed revisions and the first version of the Budget Policy from 2008 (in packet)
i. P. Orenstein stated this is a priority project that is part of the budget process. He noted this is the beginning of the conversation and there would not be decision-making at this point. He noted Sue Carmel and M. Pruhenski would be part of the review process as it impacts their work. He also stated the original 2008 Town Budget Policy is in the packet.
ii. P. Orenstein noted his suggested revisions - redlined in the document.

- Stating "comply with state law" only once in the beginning of the document and it will apply throughout.
- Spending more time on larger dollar amount/commitment topics that should receive more attention - such as the allocation of free cash; pension expenses/ OPEB; employee medical benefits and the reserve portion of the insurance line item in the budget.
- More information on the retiree medical pension - how the Town debt load has evolved and future projected debt payment.
iii. M. Meagher stated this is good work and a great starting point.
iv. A. O'Dwyer stated part of the Policy should focus on free cash and how it should be managed as it was a material part of the last budget discussion - she noted it needs to be formalized and there should be a target balance.
v. M. Cerna asked for an explanation of free cash - P. Orenstein stated it is a mandated budgetary protocol - after going through the budget, excess funds not used is free cash. Accountants/the state certify it and a year later the Town can determine how it wants to use it. He clarified that the decision about how to use free cash is part of the budgetary process. M. Pruhenski added, under the Town Charter he presents the FY budget to the Finance Committee - included is how much free cash to be used to offset expenses for the coming year. He added it is not only unspent dollars from the prior year, it is also generated from conservative revenue projects from the prior year.
vi. S. Bannon stated this is a joint Selectboard-Finance Committee policy and proposed changes will be considered at a joint meeting by the end of the summer. He noted the Selectboard will want to hear the Finance Committee's rationale for the changes and give input - he suggested only revising the policy once after the joint meeting. The Finance Committee agreed it would like to discuss/revise the Policy as a group before discussing with the Selectboard - and noted it is beneficial for new members.
vii. A. O'Dwyer stated dates other than the policy FY and approval date should be removed. She also noted on page 3, "budget workshop meetings" should read "budget meetings in preparation for budget hearings" for clarity.
viii. A. O'Dwyer asked if GB's policy was different from other towns'- P. Orenstein stated he had done some research and found other towns do not have this document.
ix. P. Orenstein stated he inserted exhibits on what other towns do re: free cash as well as a financial policy manual prepared by the Division of Local Services working with Town staff in 2020 - though it was not formally adopted.
x. P. Orenstein asked M. Pruhenski to provide his/staff feedback on the Policy.
xi. P. Orenstein asked for public input/questions - there were none.

8. Discuss replacement Finance Committee representative on Community Preservation Committee
a. C. Rembold presented stating he is the administrator for the Community Preservation Act and works with the CPC. He shared information on the composition of the Committee and its responsibility to set/draft an annual plan; get input on needs/funding priorities for parks, open space, affordable housing and historic preservation and review grant applications for recommendation to Town Meeting.
9. Review of Budget Reports thru May 31, 2022
a. It was noted S. Carmel was not in attendance. M. Pruhenski was asked if he had anything to add he did not, but asked for questions.
b. P. Orenstein stated the only note is that a Reserve Fund account transfer is needed for oil bills.
c. A. O'Dwyer asked about the Assistant Building Inspector role at $50 \%$ - M. Pruhenski stated the position is still vacant and should be at $50 \%$.
10. Future meeting schedule -3 rd Tuesday of the month @ $6: 30 \mathrm{pm} \cdot$ July $19 \bullet$ Aug $16 \cdot$ Sept $20 \cdot$ Oct $18 \bullet$ Nov $15 \cdot * * \operatorname{Dec} 13 * *$ (2nd Tuesday)
a. P. Orenstein confirmed it is the same schedule as last meeting.
b. M. Pruhenski clarified that for meetings, as of July 15, boards/committees will need to resume in person meetings to comply with the Open Meeting Law - though the public can remain virtual. He stated any updates will be shared with the chairs through the Town Clerk's Office.
c. A. O'Dwyer stated she might not attend the July 19 meeting.
11. Dept. of Public Works Reserve Fund Transfer Request
a. C. Rembold, in his role as acting DPW Superintendent, presented a request for reserve funds under Public Buildings and Highway Division to cover unanticipated expenses not budgeted for due to significant increases in gas/oil prices. He requested $\$ 13,500$ to cover gas/oil and gas/diesel fuel expenditures. He noted the transfer of funds does not have fiscal impact.
b. It was noted there is currently $\$ 25,000$ in the reserve fund. P. Orenstein clarified that the Reserve Fund is under the Finance Committee's purview and is used for small budgetary needs.
A. O'Dwyer made a motion to approve the requested reserve fund transfer; M. Cerna seconded. P. Orenstein asked if any additional discussion - there was none. Roll call vote: M. Cerna, "aye, M. Meagher, "aye," A. O'Dwyer, "aye," P. Orenstein, "aye." All in favor: 4-0
c. C. Rembold noted a signature is required.
A. O'Dwyer made a motion to authorize the Chair of the Finance Committee to sign on behalf of the Committee for the Reserve Fund transfer request; M. Cerna seconded. P. Orenstein asked if any additional discussion - there was none. Roll call vote: M. Cerna, "aye, M. Meagher, "aye," A. O’Dwyer, "aye," P. Orenstein, "aye." All in favor: 4-0

## 12. Citizen Speak Time

a. Eileen Mooney stated the Selectboard-Finance Committee Budget Policy was started by Town manager Kevin O'Donnell in 2008 as a way of listing what each board did in the process.

## 13. Media Time

14. Adjournment
A. O'Dwyer made a motion to adjourn; M. Meagher seconded. Roll call vote: M. Cerna, "aye, M. Meagher, "aye," A. O'Dwyer, "aye," P. Orenstein, "aye." All in favor: 4-0. The meeting was adjourned by unanimous consent at 7:52.

Respectfully submitted,
Stacy Ostrow, Recording Clerk

Subject: RE: Brief Summary of my OML Question
Date: Thursday, August 11, 2022 at 11:37:58 AM Eastern Daylight Time
From: OpenMeeting (AGO)
To: philip.n.orenstein@gmail.com
Good morning:

Thank you for contacting the Division of Open Government. Through our hotline we provide general guidance regarding the requirements of the Open Meeting Law.

The Open Meeting Law does not dictate who may attend a public body's executive session meeting. A public body may invite any individual or group to attend or participate in an executive session if the public body believes that doing so would assist the public body in its work and would not jeopardize the purpose for meeting in executive session.

As a reminder, a public body may only enter executive session for one or more of the ten narrow purposes enumerated in the Open Meeting Law. G.L. c. 30A, § 21(a)(1)-(10).

I hope this information is helpful.
Sincerely,

Elizabeth Carnes Flynn
Pronouns: she/her/hers
Assistant Attorney General
Division of Open Government
Massachusetts Office of the Attorney General
One Ashburton Place
Boston, MA 02108
Hotline: 617-963-2540
openmeeting@state.ma.us
https://www.mass.gov/the-open-meeting-law

From: Philip Orenstein [philip.n.orenstein@gmail.com](mailto:philip.n.orenstein@gmail.com)
Sent: Wednesday, August 10, 2022 3:22 PM
To: OpenMeeting (AGO) [OpenMeeting@MassMail.State.MA.US](mailto:OpenMeeting@MassMail.State.MA.US)
Subject: Brief Summary of my OML Question
CAUTION: This email originated from a sender outside of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts mail system. Do not click on links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

Our select Board is evaluating a matter of public interest using the executive session exclusion. I fully agree with their use of the executive session provisions in this situation. Question - Is there any provision for members of other town boards to request and receive permission to listen in to the executive session. I am the Chair of our Finance Committee and I believe our committee (or a portion thereof) should be kept apprised of the matter being discussed.

I would be happy to go through this matter in further detail if helpful.
Kind regards
Philip Orenstein
Chair, Great Barrington Finance Committee
4132300121

## NOTE: Comments from Susan Carmel are in Blue

## Great Barrington Budget \& Financial Policy for Fiscal Year 2024 <br> PROPOSED REVISIONS - FOR DISCUSSION Wednesday, June 15, 2022

The Town of Great Barrington will manage municipal finances wisely. This will include planning for adequate funding to:

1) Provide and maintain public services and facilities at a level that will ensure public well-being and safety;
2) Comply with all State and local by-laws, rules and regulations; and (no need to repeat this below)
3) Meet the strategic priorities of the Town.

The budget and financial goals set forth by the Town Selectboard and the Finance Committee in the policy document outlines the priorities and objectives of the Town and provides agreed upon financial guidelines to be used in the preparation and review of the annual budget.

## STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

- Ensure public safety.
- Ensure public health.
- Maintain a strong local economy.
- Strive for a high quality of life.
- Seek environmental sustainability.
- Ensure the fiscal stability of the Town.
- Maintain public infrastructure.
- Support affordable housing
- Follow Great Barrington's Master Plan.


## FINANCIAL GOALS

- Maintain adequate financial resources to sustain municipal services in the short and long term.
- FREE CASH POLICY including target percentage
o AS AN ILLUSTRATION - COPIED FROM https://www.mass.gov/doc/free-cash0/download - Under sound financial policies, a community strives to generate free cash in an amount equal to three to five percent of its annual budget. - When a community incorporates free cash into revenue source projections for next-year operational expenses, it is prudent to place a percentage restriction on the total free cash to be used.

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- Respond to the changes in the economy and meet the priority needs of the Town.
- Provide quality services efficiently and on a cost-effective basis.
- Maintain our top level bond rating. (a bit vague and is this really a goal?) YES
- Work to keep the overall tax levy reasonable in consideration of other priorities and goals. This is an important statement that is extremely vague


## FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT POLICY

## Revenue

- Services provided may not exceed available resources.
- Process must provide quality estimates of anticipated revenue.
- Process must anticipate any changes in revenue in upcoming years.
- Seek to diversify revenue sources.
- Estimate available resources including state funds, local funds, fees, grants and other sources.


## Real Estate Tax

- Evaluate estimated tax rate based on level of affordability including: average and median income; average and median value of real property and the cost of living.
I would recommend putting back the two bullets that were removed. User Fees ${ }^{\text {The }}$ one regarding the $2.5 \%$ is to protect us from an override
- Establish user fees and other non-property tax revenues to recoup, to the extent possible, the costs of supplying a particular service.
- Review current department fee structures and charges for services annually (this has not been done) to determine if they reflect the cost of the service and are also reasonable and affordable fees.


## Debt Management

- Allow no borrowing to fund operational programs
- Debt service payments may not require the elimination of essential Town services
- Ensure that the Town's general obligation debt ratio not exceed $50 \%$ of statutory limit ( $5 \%$ of equalized valuation). State Law??
- Exempt from Proposition $21 / 2$ any long-term capital debt for municipal buildings, WWTP improvements, fire apparatus acquisition and school facilities improvements. State Law?? No, town policy


## Service Delivery

- Manage financial resources through internal controls.
- Establish operation practices that minimize the cost of government and financial risk.
- Provide efficient public services.
- Minimize the cost of administration.
- Identify and measure performance outcomes.
- Review the level of services and standards annually.


## BUDGET PREPARATION PROCESS

The FY2023 budget will be estimated in accordance with municipal code and applicable state law. The budget is based on separate funds set forth from anticipated revenues and expenditures for the General Fund and the Enterprise Fund.

The annual operating budget will contain complete financial statements that show outstanding obligations of the municipality, cash on hand to the credit of each fund, funds received from all sources during the preceding year, funds available from all sources during the ensuing year, revenue estimates to cover expenses in the proposed budget and the estimated tax rate required to fund the proposed budget.
For Fiscal Year 2023, the Selectboard and the Finance Committee agree that the budget preparation and review process shall include the following steps:

1. Review and approve Finance Policy
2. Distribute Budget Books:
a. Forecast Revenues.
b. Updated Capital Plan.
c. Review Department Budgets.
d. Recommended Projects Proposed for CPA Funds. Consider separate tab for this
3. Participate in BHRSD joint budget meeting with Stockbridge and West Stockbridge. (Can we elaborate on this a bit?)
4. Hold Budget Workshop Meetings(What are these?). These are the budget hearing meetings that we hold (SB, FC \&
5. Hold Public Hearing.
departments). I believe they used to be called workshops.
The Selectboard and the Finance Committee will jointly set the dates for the above budget meetings.
For Fiscal Year 2023, the Selectboard and the Finance Committee agree that the following will be done to ensure there is community engagement in the budget process:
1) Provide on-line access to budget information.
2) Provide printed budget books for the public at the libraries.
3) Provide a digital budget book on the town website.
4) Hold open meetings and hearing.

## LOCAL GOVERNMENT SERVICES

- The Town Manager will prepare the budget for review by the Selectboard and the Finance Committee.
- The Town Manager may propose significant reorganizational changes and provide alternative ways to deliver services within the proposed budget.
- Performance objectives and goals will be identified and assessed.
- The Town Manager may propose elimination of services in the budget if it is not needed or cost-effective and/or propose new services as needed.
- Any service reductions shall be noted in the Fiscal 2023 budget presentation.
- Salaries and employee insurance contributions shall be set in the Fiscal Year 2023 budget pursuant to the Town's collective bargaining units and/or those already approved via a negotiated settlement and for non-represented personnel as authorized by the Town Manager.

For any proposed new initiatives, the Town Manager will:

1) Explain and justify the new needs(s).
2) Identify alternatives to what is being proposed and the pros and cons.
3) Identify the cost and benefit of the proposed alternative.
4) Identify financing source to pay for new need.
5) New need(s) include: any expansion of municipal services necessary; any additional staff and any additional resources needed to meet service needs or expanded service needs.

## TOWN BUDGET FORMAT

For Fiscal Year 2023, the Selectboard and the Finance Committee agree that the following will be done to ensure that the budget information is provided in a format that is clear, accurate and complete.

Operating Budget Process:

- The Town Manager to request that Departments submit proposed budgets with operational plans and reports. Background information will include department goals and objectives, strategic initiatives, summary of activities and level of service.
- The Town Manager to review methods of operation, program service delivery and expenditure of resources inclusive of manpower allocation to ensure maximum efficiency of the Town.
- The Town Manager to provide complete financial statements in the Budget Book to include:
- Cash on hand.

Deleted: <\#>Outstanding obligations. q

- Funds received from prior year.
- Sources of funds from prior year.
- Estimated revenues.
- Estimated expenses.
- Estimated tax levy.
- Estimated tax rate.
- Estimated user fees for services.
- Proposed borrowings


## Capital Budget Report:

- The Town defines a capital project as having an overall expenditure of $\$ 15,000$ and a life expectancy in excess of 3 years.
- The Town's annual budget will include a capital plan that identifies work to be started within that fiscal year.
- The budget shall include a five-year Capital Improvement Plan for all Town assets.
- Each year, the Selectboard and the Finance Committee will review the five-year Capital Improvement Plan to identify the future upcoming needs, review any changes to the schedule, cost estimate or sources of funding.
- Operational costs associated with any new equipment or infrastructure will be identified.
- The capital budget report will include the Debt Schedule broken down by department and function and a 10-year history be provided if possible.
- Identify a funding plan that reflects available State funds, grants, bonds and tax levy dollars to finance each project.
$\underline{\text { Historical Financial Report (at least } 5 \text { years if available with annual percentage change) }}$
- Estimated Local Receipts (includes Local Option Revenue such as Cannabis and hotel/STR) (these were provided by Sue Carmel as a follow-up exhibit during the budget process - lets add this to the book)
- Free Cash sources and uses - (these were provided by Sue Carmel as a follow-up exhibit during the budget process - lets add this to the book) including review of 3 year revenue cycle
- Tax Levy (already included)
- Special Articles, individual and totals
- School assessment and related special articles
- Property tax delinquency report Not sure this should be included.?

Balance Sheet Report we should rename this title; these items do not pertain to the balance sheet

- History of various reserve accounts, i.e., stabilization, capital stabilization, "excess health insurance" and excess levy capacity (these were provided by Sue Carmel as a follow-up exhibit during the budget process - lets add this to the book)
- Five-year history of long term and short-term debt
- Show 5-year projections of LT debt including approved future borrowings, NOTE: this was in the FY 2021 book but not in FY 22/23)
- Projected Debt Service payments
- Schedule of Authorized but Unissued Debt (already included) including changes from prior years

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Summary Report on Expenditures for Medical (current and Retired "OPEB") and Pension Benefits

- Five year history and projected (if available)
- Review funding for future retiree medical benefits (OPEB Trust)
- Pension Fund summary report
- What percentage of the obligation is funded
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Notes on Free Cash Policy Alternatives

FINANCIAL POLICY MANUAL | TOWN OF GREAT BARRINGTON,
Prepared by Division of Local Services Technical Assistance Bureau,
June 2020
p. 10

The Division of Local Services (DLS) defines free cash as "the remaining, unrestricted funds from operations of the previous fiscal year, including unexpended free cash from the previous year." DLS must certify free cash before the Town can appropriate it.

The Town will strive to realize year-to-year free cash certifications equal to five to seven percent of the annual general fund budget. To achieve this, the Town Manager will propose budgets with conservative revenue projections, and department heads will carefully manage their appropriations to produce excess income and budget turn backs. As much as practicable, the Town will limit its use of free cash to building reserves, funding nonrecurring costs (i.e., one-time expenditures, such as capital projects, snow and ice deficits, and emergencies), and offsetting the Town's unfunded liabilities. Avoided will be the application of free cash to reduce the tax rate on the annual tax recapitalization sheet, since this is the same as using it to fund recurring costs.

If the Town generates free cash consistently higher than seven percent of the budget, the Town Manager will closely examine future budget proposals to determine if revenue projections should more closely align with historical trends and make adjustments.

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## Town of ANDOVER. Free Cash

Free Cash is the term used for the portion of a community's fund balance that is available for appropriation by Town Meeting. It may also be used to reduce the tax rate. The balance in Free Cash increases when actual collected revenues are in excess of budgeted revenues, and/or when actual expenditures are less than appropriated expenditures. The balance in Free Cash is reduced when it is appropriated by Town Meeting. It is also reduced by property tax receivables and any deficits.

The balance in our Free Cash account must be certified annually by the Department of Revenue (DOR) before any funds can be appropriated.

Andover's policy is to use Free Cash for nonrecurring or emergency expenditures, for capital and equipment purchases or for appropriation to a stabilization fund, and to maintain the combined balance of Free Cash and the Stabilization Fund at 3\%-7\% of General Fund revenues. Free Cash is not to be used to balance operating budgets.

Funding for private warrant articles approved at Town Meeting that are not integrated into the Town's financial forecasting and budget must be funded, typically from Free Cash. Depending on the amount of the requested appropriation, approval of these articles may reduce Free Cash balances below our recommended policy levels.

## PLAINVILLE

https://www.plainville.ma.us/sites/g/files/vyhlif4871/f/uploads/approved_free_cash_policy_0.pdf https://www.plainville.ma.us/sites/g/files/vyhlif4871/f/uploads/draft_policy__general_stabilization_fund_v1.6_april_10_2021.pdf

## Finance Committee Topic for Discussion: Other Post Employment Benefits "OPEB" Funding

## Should the Town create a trust to reserve funds to pay for future OPEB costs (primarily retiree medical benefits)

## Pros and Cons



| Pro's | Con's |
| :--- | :--- |
| Enhance generational taxpayer equity <br> a funding benefits as they are being <br> earned by employees |  |
| Prefunding now means that future <br> taxpayers/employees will not bear <br> a disproportionate burden of the <br> costs |  |
| Financial reporting benefits: <br> when the Trust balance reaches a certain <br> level Actuaries/Accountants may use a higher <br> discount rate which will decrease the OPEB <br> liabilities reported on our annual financial <br> statements |  |

12/31/21

| $12 / 31 / 18$ | $12 / 31 / 19$ | $12 / 31 / 20$ |
| ---: | :---: | ---: |
|  | Calculated every other year |  |
| $243,644,680$ | $290,899,061$ |  |
|  | $272,013,475$ | $282,589,130$ |
|  | $18,885,586$ |  |
|  | $93.5 \%$ |  |
| $8.17 \%$ | $8.59 \%$ | $8.61 \%$ |
|  | $24,988,229$ |  |
|  | $1,622,272$ |  |

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## Funding the Town's Liability for other post-employment benefits (OPEBs) Finance Committee Discussion Notes

The cumulative Total OPEB Liability for all Massachusetts entities that reported is approximately $\$ 56.1$ billion.

- The aggregate funded ratio is 5.9\%.

Source: The Massachusetts Public Employee Retirement Administration Commission https://www.mass.gov/info-details/opeb-summary-report

| Entity | OPEB Liability in <br> thousands | Amount Funded (\%) |
| :--- | :--- | :--- |
| Commonwealth | $\$ 22,105,511$ | $6.4 \%$ |
| Alford | No plan |  |
| Dalton | $\$ 4,496$ | $56.2 \%$ |
| Egremont | $\$ 770$ | $17.5 \%$ |
| Great Barrington | $\$ 20,598$ |  |
| As of $6 / 30 / 2020$ | $0.0 \%$ |  |
| Lee | $\$ 24,698$ | $2.0 \%$ |
| Lenox | $\$ 22,334$ | $23.5 \%$ |
| New Marlborough | No plan |  |
| Sheffield | No plan |  |
| Stockbridge | $\$ 3,720$ | $103.1 \%$ |
| West Stockbridge | $\$ 878$ | $0.0 \%$ |
| Williamstown | $\$ 20,601$ | $2.4 \%$ |

## Summary of the Process to create an OPEB Trust

Prepared by P. Orenstein

Based on state law as described in https://www.mass.gov/doc/igr-2019-10-other-post-emplovment-benefits-liability-trust-fund/download

1. The establishment of an OPEB Trust requires approval at Town Meeting
II. The governing body may, by majority vote, appropriate monies to the OPEB Fund.
III. The OPEB trust requires a Trustee, which can be the Town Treasurer or a newly established Board of Trustees
A. The trustee has investment authority over the fund and may employ investment consultants to provide required services
IV. An appropriation by a two-thirds vote of the governing body is required to spend any monies in the OPEB Fund.
A. Monies can be used for expenses of the trust
B. to pay the governmental unit's share of health insurance benefits for retirees and their dependents

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| 0114151106 | PRINCIPAL ASSESSOR | $86,700.00$ |
| 0114151109 | BOARD OF ASSESSORS | $1,2000.00$ |
| 0114151113 | ADMIN ASSESSOR | $57,355.00$ |
| 0114151420 | LONGEVITY PAY | 750.00 |
| 0114153010 | CONTRACTED SERVICES | $25,0000.00$ |
| 0114154200 | OFFICE SUPPLIES | $2,000.00$ |
| 0114157100 | TRAVEL／TRAINING | $3,000.00$ |
| 0114157300 | DUES \＆MEMBERSHIPS | 500.00 |
| 0114157800 | RESERVE FUND TRANSFER | .00 |
| TOTAL ASSESSORS |  | $176,505.00$ |

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160.97 & 97.3 \% \\
697.23 & 95.6 \% \\
.00 & 100.00 \\
400.00 & 99.7 \% \\
619.20 & 97.5 \% \\
1,554.94 & 95.6 \% \\
3,432.34 & 98.5 \%
\end{array}
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499.85 & 50.0 \% \\
200.00 & .00 \\
.00 & 100.00 \\
2,279.97 & 82.5 \% \\
116.12 & 99.2 \% \\
6.74 & 99.9 \% \\
3,765.59 & 49.5 \% \\
1,071.00 & 40.5 \% \\
2,148.61 & 14.10 \\
150.00 & 25.0 \% \\
16,315.12 & 93.1 \%
\end{array}
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$\begin{array}{llll}01192 & 51106 & \text { CREW LEADER } \\ 01192 & 51115 & \text { HCC CUSTODIAN } \\ 01192 & 51135 & \text { WORKING FOREMAN }\end{array}$
01192 PUBLIC BUILDINGS


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01175 PLANNING BOARD


01177 PLANNING／COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

| 0117651113 | ZBA CLERK | $1,000.00$ |
| :--- | :--- | ---: |
| 0117653100 | TRAINING | 100.00 |
| 0117654200 | OFFICE SUPPLIES | 100.00 |
| 0117655860 | SUBSCRIPTIONS | 100.00 |
| TOTAL ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS |  | $1,300.00$ |

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01241 BUILDING INSPECTOR


TOTAL FIRE DEPARTMENT


01220 FIRE DEPARTMENT
TOTAL POLICE DEPARTMENT $22,840.00$
$95,030.00$
$125,408.17$
$175,292.01$
$37,299.82$
$7,000.00$
400.00
$87,254.83$
$4,000.00$
$110,000.00$
900.00
$29,162.45$
$1,000.00$
$12,100.00$
$2,000.00$
$709,687.28$

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.00 & 100.0 \% \\
23,099.79 & 86.0 \% \\
70.45 & 94.6 \% \\
2,062.89 & 74.2 \% \\
14,282.67 & 84.2 \% \\
33,511.03 & 73.1 \% \\
13,700.72 & 74.1 \% \\
9,622.34 & 85.5 \% \\
46.00 & 99.2 \% \\
709.44 & 96.3 \% \\
.00 & .0 \% \\
12,064.05 & 86.6 \% \\
.00 & 100.0 \% \\
534.26 & 99.5 \% \\
10,752.68 & 68.4 \% \\
-25,052.78 & 116.7 \% \\
75.35 & 97.5 \% \\
5.00 & 99.0 \% \\
.00 & 100.0 \% \\
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104,363.51 & 94.1 \%
\end{array}
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01541 COUNCIL ON AGING

| 01528 | 57807 | BERK SOUTH COMM CTR |  |
| :--- | :--- | :--- | ---: |
| 01528 | 57810 | GT BARRINGTON LAND CON | .00 |
| 01528 | 57812 | RR STREET YOUTH | .00 |
| 001528 | 57813 | VOLUNTEERS IN MEDICINE | .00 |
| 01528 | 57814 | ELDER SERVICES | .00 |
| 01528 | 57817 | BERK CTR FOR JUSTICE | .00 |
| 01528 | 57819 | HEVREH | .00 |
| 0152857820 | BERKSHIRE PULSE | .00 |  |
| TOTAL COMMUNITY SERVICES |  | $30,000.00$ |  |

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| 0169152400 | HISTORICAL COMMISSION | $7,470.00$ |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | ---: |
| 0169152700 | HISTORIC DISTRICTS COM | $12,0000.00$ |
| 0169157800 | AGRICULTURAL COMMISSIO | $2,000.00$ |
| 0169157820 | SUSTAINABILITY COMM | 500.00 |
| 0169157830 | TRANSPORTATION COMMITT | $1,000.00$ |
| TOTAL VARIOUS BOARDS／COMMISSIO | $22,970.00$ |  |

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$71,770.00$
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$-183,600.00$
$1,240,305.87$

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100.0 \% \\
11,243.52 & 99.5 \%
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01998 SPECIAL ARTICLES／APPROPRIATNS

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\begin{array}{rllll}
01998 & 57820 & \text { FY20 RECAP TAX TITLE } \\
001998 & 57821 & \text { FY21 RECAP TAX TITLE } \\
001998 & 58100 & \text { FY14 \#5 ASSR SFTWRE } \\
01998 & 58110 & \text { FY14 \#5 CSTLE ST RMDTN } \\
\hline 01998 & 58130 & \text { FY15 \#5 ECNMC DVLPMNT } \\
01998 & 58140 & \text { FY16 \#6 SENIOR CTR RPR } \\
\hline 01998 & 58150 & \text { FY17 \#5 PARKS IMPRVMNT } \\
01998 & 58170 & \text { FY21 \#10 CMMNTY PRGRMS } \\
019 & \text { FY22 \#11 CMMNTY PRGRMS } \\
01998 & 58185 & \text { FY22 \#11A CIF-GBPD } \\
01998 & 58188 & \text { FY22 \#11A } \\
01998 & 58190 & \text { FY22 \#12 STH BRK AMBLN } \\
01998 & 58195 & \text { FY22 \#13 TUITON/TRNSPR } \\
\text { TOTAL SPECIAL ARTICLES /APPROPR } \\
\text { TOTAL GENERAL FUND }
\end{array}
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| $\begin{aligned} & \text { 08/10/2022 } 13: 29 \\ & \text { 1184scarmel } \end{aligned}$ | TOWN OF GREAT BARRINGTON <br> \|FY22 BUDGET REPORT-THRU 6/30/22 |  |  |  |  | $\begin{aligned} & \text { AVAILABLE } \\ & \text { BUDGET } \end{aligned}$ | $\begin{aligned} & \mathbf{P} \quad \stackrel{2}{\text { glytdbud }} \end{aligned}$ |
| FOR 202212 | $\underset{\text { APPROP }}{\text { ORIGINAL }}$ | $\begin{gathered} \text { REVISED } \\ \text { BUDGET } \end{gathered}$ | YTD EXPENDED | MTD EXPENDED | ENCUMBRANCES |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  | $\begin{aligned} & \text { PCT } \\ & \text { USED } \end{aligned}$ |
| 6044259100 LONG TERM PRINCIPAL | 463,604.00 | 465,703.00 | 465,702.01 | 75,000.00 | . 00 | . 99 | 100.0\% |
| 6044259120 LONG TERM INTEREST | 169,996.00 | 180,675.00 | 180,674.53 | 13,949.18 | . 00 | . 47 | 100.0\% |
| 6044259130 SHORT TERM INTEREST | 20,000.00 | 7,222.00 | 2,678.60 | . 00 | . 00 | 4,543.40 | 37.1\% |
| 6044259150 DEBT ISSUANCE COSTS | 10,500.00 | 10,500.00 | 2,064.86 | 989.86 | . 00 | 8,435.14 | 19.7\% |
| TOTAL WASTEWATER TREATMENT | 2,414,500.00 | 2,440,702.59 | 2,113,951.39 | 403,054.14 | 18,296.38 | 308,454.82 | 87.4\% |
| TOTAL WASTEWATER TREATMENT | 2,414,500.00 | 2,440,702.59 | 2,113,951.39 | 403,054.14 | 18,296.38 | 308,454.82 | 87.4\% |
| TOTAL EXPENSES | 2,414,500.00 | 2,440,702.59 | 2,113,951.39 | 403,054.14 | 18,296.38 | 308,454.82 |  |
| GRAND TOTAL | 2,414,500.00 | 2,440,702.59 | 2,113,951.39 | 403,054.14 | 18,296.38 | 308,454.82 | 87.4\% |


[^0]:    Source: Berkshire County Retirement Board Annual Statements

    | Town of GB | $12 / 31 / 15$ | $12 / 31 / 16$ | $12 / 31 / 17$ | $12 / 31 / 18$ | $12 / 31 / 19$ | $12 / 31 / 20$ |  |
    | :--- | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
    | Pension Contribution | $\$ 711,322$ | $\$ 735,666$ | $\$ 757,064$ | $\$$ | 787,563 | $\$$ | 867,564 |

    Source: p.60, GB Accounting statements FYE June 30, 2020 and Berkshire County Retirement Board

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