

TOWN OF GREAT BARRINGTON FINANCE COMMITTEE MEETING
December 13, 2021

1. Call to Order – P. Orenstein opened the meeting at 5:00pm; those present via zoom: Tom Blauvelt, Michelle Loubert, Meredith O'Connor, Anne O'Dwyer, Philip Orenstein. Town Manager Mark Pruhenski, Finance Director Sue Carmel.
2. Roll Call – T. Blauvelt, “aye,” M. Loubert, “aye,” M. O'Connor, “aye,” A. O'Dwyer, “aye,” P. Orenstein, “aye.”
3. Approval of Minutes from Joint Finance Committee/Select Board FY 22 Budget Meetings of Feb 16, Feb 17, Feb 24 and March 2. (previously included in the Nov 16 Finance Committee packet)
 - a. P. Orenstein stated he would abstain as he was not in attendance.
 - b. A. O'Dwyer stated she would have the minutes corrected to reflect last names and numbered pages.
 - c. The Committee discussed the February 16, 2021 minutes - M. Loubert made a correction on p.2, Selectboard/Town Manager highlights to clarify that Selectboard members apply payroll to cover their portion of their insurance premium.

T. Blauvelt made a motion to approve the February 16, 2021 minutes as amended; M. Loubert seconded. P. Orenstein asked if any additional discussion – there was none. Roll call vote: T. Blauvelt, “aye,” M. Loubert, “aye,” M. O'Connor, “aye,” A. O'Dwyer, “aye.” All in favor, 4-0.

T. Blauvelt made a motion to approve the February 17, 2021 minutes; M. Loubert seconded. P. Orenstein asked if any discussion – M. Loubert asked for clarification on minutes under Capital, #4. A. O'Dwyer stated she would clarify, and minutes were tabled.

T. Blauvelt made a motion to approve the February 24, 2021 minutes; M. Loubert seconded. P. Orenstein asked if any discussion – there was none. Roll call vote: T. Blauvelt, “aye,” M. Loubert, “aye,” M. O'Connor, “aye,” A. O'Dwyer, “aye.” All in favor, 4-0.

T. Blauvelt made a motion to approve the March 2, 2021 minutes; M. Loubert seconded. P. Orenstein asked if any discussion – there was none. Roll call vote: T. Blauvelt, “aye,” M. Loubert, “aye,” M. O'Connor, “aye,” A. O'Dwyer, “aye.” All in favor, 4-0.
4. Budget Calendar for FY 2023

A. O'Dwyer made a motion to confirm joint budget meetings and the public hearing would start at 6:00pm on dates as listed; M. Loubert seconded. Roll call vote: T. Blauvelt, “aye,” M. Loubert, “aye,” M. O'Connor, “aye,” A. O'Dwyer, “aye,” P. Orenstein, “aye.” All in favor, 5-0.
5. Review of proposed changes to FY 2023 Budget Policy and schedule for future review
 - a. P. Orenstein stated there are few changes in the policy for FY23 other than the dollar amount and duration of capital projects. He added there was not time to make any substantive changes this year, but there would be a rigorous review by the Committee in September/October to get ahead of next year's budgeting process.
 - b. S. Carmel clarified budget policy changes re: capital are for borrowing purposes.

A. O'Dwyer made a motion to approve the FY23 budget policy; T. Blauvelt seconded. P. Orenstein asked if any additional discussion – there was none. Roll call vote: T. Blauvelt, “aye,” M. Loubert, “aye,” M. O'Connor, “aye,” A. O'Dwyer, “aye,” P. Orenstein, “aye.” All in favor, 5-0.

6. Update from Finance Director: November 2021 Operating Budget Reports

- a. S. Carmel stated the budget was on track and noted purchase orders account for the higher spend reflected in the report. She also noted postage for Collector/Treasurer is high and will be discussed with Alicia Dulin and that Police Department and DOT overtime is high, but is expected to level off. She also stated the veterans' budget is at 20% spend and noted it has been decreasing over the years. The Committee asked why that was so and S. Carmel stated she would look into it. P. Orenstein asked if the library spend is lower due to staffing and COVID – S. Carmel replied it is lower for library clerks and M. Pruhenski stated there is only one open position at the library.

7. Finance Committee Member Comments

- a. A. O'Dwyer asked if there would be a forensic audit – M. Pruhenski stated since a criminal trial is pending he would caution against conversation that might impact the trial. P. Orenstein noted the audit itself is unqualified which is very positive.
- b. T. Blauvelt announced the Community Preservation Committee Step 2 applications are due December 17 and the CPA Committee will hold hearings January 6 and 11 on the applications.
- c. P. Orenstein announced the items to be covered in meetings to follow tonight at the joint meeting with the Selectboard and Selectboard regular meeting including the auditor's presentation and Senior Tax Deferral Program.

8. Citizen Speak Time

9. Media Time

10. Adjournment – P. Orenstein made a motion to adjourn; A. O'Dwyer seconded. Roll call vote: T. Blauvelt, “aye,” M. Loubert, “aye,” M. O'Connor, “aye,” A. O'Dwyer, “aye,” P. Orenstein, “aye.” All in favor, 5-0. Meeting was adjourned by unanimous consent at 5:45pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Stacy Ostrow
Recording Clerk