

Town of Great Barrington Massachusetts Finance Committee Meeting via Zoom
Tuesday December 19, 2023

1. **Call to Order and roll call vote** - P. Orenstein opened the meeting via Zoom at 6:00pm with a roll call: Milena Cerna, "aye," Madonna Meagher, "aye," Anne O'Dwyer, "aye," Philip Orenstein, "aye."
Absent: Richard Geiler
Also in attendance: Financial Coordinator Allison Crespo
2. **Committee Member announcements or statements**
P. Orenstein confirmed Finance Committee members received the FY25 budget process.
3. **Approval of minutes (September & October 2023)**
M. Meagher made a motion to approve the September and October Finance Committee meeting minutes; M. Cerna seconded. P. Orenstein asked for any 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 Accountant Budget Update**
A. Crespo stated the close out of FY23 budgets will be completed by the FY25 budget meetings. A. O'Dwyer asked about budget overages in the year-to-date (FY 24) budget reports. A. Crespo explained many include encumbrances and she has been working with department heads on transferring funds within their operating budgets. There was discussion about how snow and ice supplies are purchased in advance and the budget overage is ultimately covered by free cash. Regarding snow and ice and other overages, A. Crespo stated adjustments would be reflected in the January report. P. Orenstein asked about the trash removal overage – A. Crespo stated Joe Aberdale, DPW Superintendent, is working on correcting this. M. Meagher asked about the YTD spend for Emergency Management and Parks – A. Crespo stated that is likely due to encumbrances and annual expenses paid early in the year. She added average spend across departments is 46.5% YTD, which is where budgets are expected to be in December.
5. **Review and vote on proposed Budget Policy for FY 24 and 25**
A. O'Dwyer noted past updates by the Finance Committee and suggested the FY 24 version be approved to continue in FY 25 and to be sent to the Selectboard.
A. O'Dwyer made a motion to approve the Policy and send it to the Selectboard for its approval; M. Cerna seconded. P. Orenstein asked for any discussion – M. Cerna asked about the Policy's reference to the Master Plan and if it is still relevant. E. Mooney stated it is currently being updated by the Planning Board. Roll call vote: M. Cerna, "aye," M. Meagher, "aye," A. O'Dwyer, "aye," P. Orenstein, "aye." All in favor: 4-0.

P. Orenstein stated the Selectboard has made statements regarding Housatonic Water Works and he noted the Finance Committee does not know anything additional.

M. Cerna asked about Southern Berkshire Ambulance providing significant detail to support its FY25 budget request. P. Orenstein stated he has discussed with M. Pruhenski and a substantial budget increase for FY 25 is being requested by SBA.
6. **Citizen Speak Time** – No citizens asked to speak.
7. **Media Time** – No media asked to speak.
8. **Adjournment** - The meeting was adjourned by unanimous consent at 6:32pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Stacy Ostrow, Recording Clerk

Approved at April 1, 2024 Finance Committee meeting