

Town of Charlton

Finance Committee Minutes

Town Hall - 37 Main St., Charlton, MA

Date: January 18, 2023, at 6:30pm

Minutes taken by: Jaclyn Bonner, Clerk

Attendees: Henry Camosse Jr.-Chairman, Ruth Beringer, Mike Jacobs, Kristen Lemire, Keith Johnson

Absent: Kristin Kustigian – Vice Chair, Jason Julian

Guests: Ashley Obrzut -Town Finance Director, Andrew Golas – Town Administrator

1. Call Meeting to order at time.

Meeting was called to order by Hank Camosse at 6:30 P.M on Wednesday January 18, 2023

2. Approval of Minutes from Previous Meeting

Motion to accept the minutes of November 16, 2022 was made by Keith Johnson and seconded by Ruth Beringer. Mike Jacobs abstained. Minutes approved by Hank Camosse Jr., Kristen Lemire, Keith Johnson, and Ruth Beringer. Motion to accept the minutes of December 21, 2022 was made by Keith Johnson and seconded by Mike Jacobs. Kristen Lemire abstained. Minutes approved by Hank Camosse Jr., Mike Jacobs, Keith Johnson, and Ruth Beringer.

3. Budget Hearings

A. Human Resources

- a. The HR Director, Lynn Dyer, is attending the meeting to discuss her budget.
- b. The HR budget increased \$58K (17%) from FY23 to FY24. The increase is 81% driven by a 31% increase to HR contract obligations, and 13% driven by a 13% increase to the HR administrative assistant salary.
- c. The town was able to employ three interns last year who worked in different departments. The wage expense for interns is taken from the HR budget.
- d. The director is asking for a \$46K increase to her 'HR Contract Obligations' expense line. The increase is being requested because the highway contract has not yet been settled.
- e. The HR expense line increased \$1.4K due to the addition of drug testing costs related to the highway department.
- f. The HR director would like to add a 'wellness' expense line to the budget for \$3K.
- g. Kristen Lemire asked the HR director for more information about the wellness expense she would like to add to her budget. Lynn explains that the HR department used to have a grant to cover wellness related expenses, but it has since expired.

B. Technology

- a. The IT Director, Jeff Sorel, is attending the meeting to discuss his budget.

- b. IT Technology Licenses increased \$17.7k.
- c. ArchiveSocial Inc social media backup; charging station license; and poll pad annual licenses each increased to \$3K, \$1.9K and \$2.7K respectively.
- d. Several new items including a zoom licensing fee, civic HR software, and CRMPC software MUNIGIS were added to the IT budget for \$2.4K, \$7.8K and \$4.2K respectively.
- e. Internet and telephone connection increased \$13K due to a necessary upgrade to the phone network.
- f. The EV charging station contract term was increased to 3 years.
- g. Red Sky E911 is a new line item under telecommunications adding \$3.3K due to new laws surrounding 911 compliance.
- h. Hank comments that all items on the IT budget are licenses and contracts.
- i. Hank asks for an evaluation of the hardware situation in the town. Jeff replies that the situation is excellent with all of the upgrades we were forced to make during the past year.
- j. Hank comments that he does not see a lot of fat in the IT budget.

C. Police

- a. The Chief of Police, Dan Dowd, is attending the meeting to discuss his budget.
- b. The FY24 police operating budget increased 11% from FY23. The increase is 87% due to a 12% increase in police salaries, 4% due to an 83% increase in police uniform allowances, 3% due to a 15% increase in police training and wages, 2% due to a 7% increase in police expenses, 2% due to a 100% increase in K9 expenses, and 1% increases to police overtime, sick time, and shift coverage respectively.
- c. The Chief explains that the new POST laws place new administrative responsibilities on officers.
- d. Last year the town authorized two new hires for the department. The chief was unable to hire these officers until now due to the decision to leave civil service. The chief anticipates a decrease in overtime when the two new officers begin work.
- e. The chief is requesting a 6th dispatcher. He explains that other towns equitable in size to Charlton are a part of regional dispatch programs.
- f. Hank asking for clarification of the 'police coverage other' expense line which increased \$2.2K from FY23. Dan responds this line covers specific types of overtime created by things like mandatory court, range, training time.
- g. Kristen Lemire asks if the addition of two officer's and a dispatcher will decrease the OT expense for the department. Dan responds that he can't confirm that this will help with OT.
- h. The police department is requesting 3 new cruisers at an estimated cost of \$210K in FY24.
- i. The chief is requesting tactical gear to respond to an active shooter situation at a onetime cost of \$50K.
- j. The chief obtained a grant for body cams. The cloud service for cameras will cost \$250K per year. The chief has not officially accepted this grant.

D. Council On Aging

- a. The council on aging director, Shari Russell, is attending the meeting to discuss her budget.
- b. The COA operating budget has remained the same from FY23 to FY24.
- c. Shari explains that the COA general expense line includes the elder bus and food. The elder bus was not charging during covid but will begin charging again.
- d. Shari is asking for an increase of \$8K to her expense line in order to cover the rising cost of food. Most of the COA expenses are covered by donations.
- e. Hank asks how many seniors are serviced at the center on average. Responding, Shari explains that it often depends on the menu. She estimates between 20-40 people per day.
- f. Hank asks Shari if she has an issue with space in the senior center. Shari responds that space is a huge issue and limits activities greatly.
- g. Shari would like to add money to the emergency repair expense line so the center is covered in case of emergency repairs like a broken refrigerator. Hank responds that the finance committee offers emergency transfers to departments for situations such as this. The Finance director chimes in that timing is important in situations like this.
- h. Kristen Lemire asks if the COA department has shopped around for lower prices regarding the purchase of food.

4. Update from the Finance Director/Town Manager

- a. The Finance director updates the committee on the status of revenue numbers being entered into clear gov. We are still waiting for official numbers from the state.
- b. Hank is asking if it would be possible to set up training for the finance committee on the new ClearGov software. Ashley responds that there are webinars available online.
- c. Andrew comments that ClearGov is useful for the departments to all keep up to date, but the system does not export data well.
- d. Ashley mentions that cola's will be added to the budget by next week.

5. Other Business – Unknown at Time of Posting

NA


6. Adjourn Meeting

Motion to adjourn at 7:53PM was made by Keith Johnson and seconded by Kristen Lemire. Motion approved by Henry Camosse Jr.-Chairman, Ruth Beringer, Keith Johnson, Kristen Lemire and Mike Jacobs. The meeting is adjourned.

Town of Charlton Finance Committee Meeting Minutes
Voted:

X 

Henry Camosse Jr.

X 

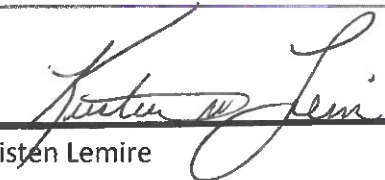
Keith Johnson

X

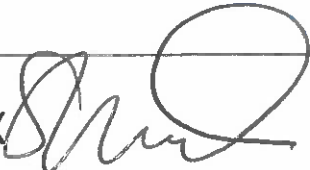
Jason Julian *ABSTAIN-NOT PRESENT*

X

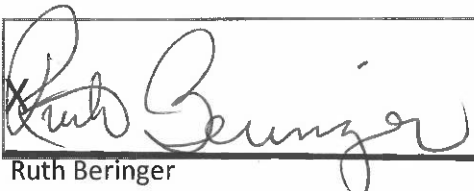
Kristin Kustigian *Abstain-not present*

X 

Kristen Lemire

X 

Mike Jacobs

X 

Ruth Beringer

X