

Town of Weston
Finance Committee Meeting Minutes
Thursday, March 14, 2019

A meeting of the Finance Committee of the Town of Weston, which was duly called and posted in compliance with the laws of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, was held on Thursday, March 14, 2019 at the Weston Town Hall. There being a quorum present, the meeting was called to order at 7:00 PM.

Present for the meeting were:

Finance Committee: Lisa Reitano (Chair), Gerard Jansen, James Jarrett, John McDonald, Karen Meslin, Ellen Richstone, John Sallay, Bharath Venkataraman, and James Philipkosky

Also Present: Susan Kelley (Finance Director), Zoe Pierce (Treasurer/Collector), Steve Larocque (Town Center Planning Committee Chair), Harvey Boshart (Town Center Planning Committee/Board of Selectman Representative), Michael Harrity, Keith Johnson (Town Center Planning Committee/Finance Committee Representative), Bob Froh (resident)

1. James Philipkosky was appointed to serve as Secretary pro tempore and charged with keeping the minutes.
2. The minutes of the meetings of February 28, 2019 and March 7, 2019 were unanimously approved.
3. There were no resident comments.
4. Steve Larocque, Michael Harrity, Harvey Boshart and Keith Johnson (collectively, "TCPC") presented and discussed details of the March 2019 Special Town Meeting Articles re: Town Center Master Plan & Burying of Utilities (collectively, the "Project"). Total costs are projected to be \$19,010,241 comprised of \$10,899,162 for the Master Plan (Article 1) and \$8,111,079 for Undergrounding of Utilities (Article 2).
5. The Finance Committee and TCPC devoted several hours to reviewing the details of the proposed project and its costs. The Finance Committee commended the TCPC for all the time and effort they had spent on this project. The Finance Committee also takes comfort in the fact that all 5 of the bids came within a similar range and believes the bids to be fair and accurate. It is believed that the Town has the financial capability to undertake this project without adversely affecting its credit rating.

6. However, the Finance Committee believes the Town should have been given 3 options to vote on at Town Meeting:
 - i) A Basic or Level Service option, addressing roadway, drainage, sidewalks, to bring Weston into compliance with ADA requirements and address other deficiencies, estimated at \$6.5M (range \$3m-7M)
 - ii) Amenities including the Terrace, Parks and redesigned parking lots., estimated at \$4.5M (range \$4-8) and/or
 - iii) Burying Utility Lines. (\$8M)

7. The first two are rough numbers as there isn't a clear consensus on what constitutes a basic plan. For example, should certain traffic calming measures be included in the basic plan or with the amenities? In addition, it is important to note that the Amenities and the Utility options are optional and independent of each other from an implementation view. For example, should the Town proceed with some version of road repair under a Basic Plan, the Town could bury the utilities without creating the Terrace & Parks. However the bids were not done this way so we cannot vote on these separate options. Burying of utility lines included an estimate from Eversource of \$2,870,000 which generated much discussion.

8. The Finance Committee voted on the 2 Articles outlined above. Each of Article 1 and 2 received a majority vote of No Position, and much discussion ensued on how our position would be explained. In addition to the concerns noted above, the Finance Committee is concerned about the large number of projects we have had in the recent past as well as the potential for future ones, and believes it is important to distinguish between required projects such as replacing the DPW building, the Police Station or the Field School versus discretionary ones.

9. Susan Kelley noted that the Board of Selectman has decided to set the income limit of \$86,240 and keep the rate at 4% for property tax deferral purposes.

10. The Finance Committee reviewed and commented on the draft 2019 Annual Town Meeting REPORT OF THE FINANCE COMMITTEE.

A motion to adjourn was made, duly seconded and the meeting adjourned at 9:46 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

James Philipkosky