

**Minutes
Lincoln Finance Committee**

**Virtual Meeting Pursuant to Governor Baker's March 12, 2020
Order Suspending Certain Provisions of the Open Meeting Law**

ANNUAL BUDGET HEARING

**February 28, 2023
7:30 pm ET**

Finance Committee Member Attendees: Andrew Payne (Chair), Paul Blanchfield (Vice-Chair), Gina Halsted, Fuat Koro, Nancy Marshall, Rich Rosenbaum, Ellen Meyer Shorb.

Others present: Colleen Wilkins (Town Finance Director), Michelle Barnes (Chair, Water Commission), Darin LaFalam (Water Superintendent), Jim Hutchinson (Town Select), Dr. Becky McFall (LPS Superintendent), Susan Taylor (LPS School Committee), John MacLachlan (LPS School Committee)

Introduction

The meeting (via Zoom) was called to order at 7:32pm and it was noted the meeting was being held in accordance with Governor Baker's Order Suspending Certain Provisions of the Open Meeting Law and that the meeting was being recorded. Members introduced themselves and the agenda was reviewed.

Andrew Payne noted the meeting was being recorded.

Water Department Presentation

Michelle Barnes gave a presentation on the FY24 water department budget. She summarized ongoing evaluations & considerations for possibly joining MWRA, and presented the status of ongoing capital projects. Darin LaFalam highlighted the benefit of the ARPA funding (totaling about \$1.3m for the water department), which enabled having (only) a 2.5% budget increase. Ms. Barnes showed comparisons of water rates with nearby towns and comparable small towns, and summarized the capital requests expected at Town meeting. Department challenges include: regulatory challenges, and finding a replacement strategy for aging water mains.

Several committee members then asked questions. Mr. LaFalam emphasized the challenges are industry wide, and are not unique to Lincoln.

Lincoln School Budget Update

Becky McFall presented a revised FY24 budget request that was lower than the budget the Committee has previously deliberated and recommended. (This budget had previously been approved by the School Committee). Mr. Payne noted that the revised budget is about \$194k lower than originally requested, and Mr. Blanchfield confirmed that amount.

MOTION: Mr. Payne moved: relative to the budget that the Finance Committee approved at the previous meeting, that we reduce the amount for the school budget by \$194,103, and we increase our Stabilization Fund contribution by a corresponding amount.

The motion was seconded by Rich Rosenbaum, and passed unanimously by roll call vote.

Town Meeting Presentation

Next, Mr. Payne gave a slide presentation presenting the proposed FY24 budget, noting that the recording would be available for residents to review before town meeting. He then invited feedback from the Committee.

Mr. Blanchfield suggests emphasizing that the \$194k change in the school budget is from a preferred item request. Fuat Koro suggested making it clear if the \$194k is embedded in the budget slide table or not. Mr. Blanchfield noted that the guidance language in the presentation was not exactly the guidance we gave, with respect to the language regarding inflation. Mr. Rosenbaum noted the correct ARPA allocation amount. Mr. Blanchfield noted that the town budget was inclusive of preferred items. Mr. Koro suggested highlighting the school budget in percentage terms.

Nancy Marshall asked about embedded assumptions for COLA for ongoing negotiations with the teacher's union.

Liaison Updates

For the school building project, the Committee discussed an upcoming warrant article that would expand the authorization of a previous town meeting warrant article to allow the proceeds from the sale of the modular classrooms to be used for broader school building-related expenses, instead of just field restoration.

Ellen Meyer Shorb gave an update on the community center project.

Review & Approve Past Minutes

The Committee reviewed proposed edits for the draft minutes for the January 23, 2022 meeting. Mr. Rosenbaum moved to adopt the minutes as amended. Gina Halsted seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously by roll call vote.

The Committee then reviewed proposed edits for the draft minutes for the February 2, 2022 meeting. Mr. Blanchfield moved to adopt the minutes as amended. Ms. Marshall seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously by roll call vote from the five members present at that meeting (Payne, Blanchfield, Halsted, Marshall, Rosenbaum).

Closing

There being no other business, Ms. Marshall made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Ms. Shorb seconded. The motion passed unanimously by roll call vote and the meeting adjourned at 9:33 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Andrew Payne

Video recording of the meeting: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2sZseejkAy0>