

**Town of Deerfield
Finance Committee**

Minutes of the Meeting for January 22, 2024

Hybrid Meeting (Zoom component suspended due to malicious interference).

Attending: Beth Brown, Mark Brennan, James Cambias (*secretary*), Julie Chalfant (*chair*), John Paresky, David Sharp

Also Present: Brenda Hill, Trevor McDaniel, Kayce Warren

Documents Presented: "Tax Levy Calculations, Revenue Detail" printed 1/22/24, "FY2025 Budget — Expense Detail" (version 1/22/24), Community Comparison Spreadsheet by Julie Chalfant

Ms. Chalfant called the meeting to order at 5:08 p.m. on January 22, 2024 in the Deerfield Town Offices building.

Mr. Cambias not having sent out the Minutes of the October 23 meeting yet, approval of the Minutes was postponed until next meeting.

Ms. Chalfant presented the schedule of meetings and topics to be discussed through March 18.

Mr. Sharp asked if those present were all the members. Ms. Chalfant said there is a vacancy and encouraged members to look for recruits.

Mr. Paresky asked a question about quorum and voting rules. The secretary volunteered to find out.

Ms. Hill reported on budgets still missing: Select Board staff, contract services, K-9 officer, Board of Health budgets, veterans assessment, FRCOG contribution, schools. OPEB will be ready next week.

Ms. Hill reported on tax levy calculations for FY 2025, including uncertainty about new growth figures. The "cherry sheet" from the State and County has not arrived yet so she has used last year's numbers.

Mr. McDaniel mentioned that the Governor's office is considering allowing towns to increase meal and room tax. Mr. Paresky asked if there is an admission tax for events, but apparently there is not.

Figures for payments in lieu of taxes (PILOT) does not include anything from Deerfield Academy yet.

Several members asked questions asked about town-owned land and whether it might be possible to sell it. Ms. Hill said that a list of tracts to put on the market will be ready after the start of FY2025, to avoid selling close to the property tax collection date.

Ms. Brown had to leave.

Ms. Chalfant has prepared comparisons of Deerfield taxes to other towns in the region, based on Division of Local Services data (Mass Department of Revenue). Members expressed some concern that Deerfield seems to be above the median for both state and county.

Ms. Warren reported that the state has provided \$1.58 million for emergency road repair, to offset some of the extraordinary expenses from last summer.

Mr. Brennan moved to adjourn. Mr. Cambias seconded the motion. The motion to adjourn passed 5-0-0, and the meeting adjourned at 6:27 p.m.