

**Town of Deerfield  
Finance Committee**

**Minutes of the Meeting of February 5, 2024**

**Members Present:** Beth Brown, James Cambias (secretary), Julie Chalfant, Margaret Nartowicz, John Paresky, David Sharp.

**Also Present:** Tim Hilchey, Brenda Hill, Sarah Kimball, Kayce Warren.

**Documents Presented:** various town department FY 2025 budget requests including Treasurer/Collector Salaries (account 145-5110), Treasurer/Collector Expenses (account 145-5410), Veterans District Assessment (account 543-5400), Veterans Benefits (account 543-5410), Maturing Debt (account 710-5900), Interest on Maturing Debt (account 751-5900), Interest on Temporary Loans (account 752-5900), Franklin Regional Retirement (account 911-5400), Workers Compensation (account 912-5400), Unemployment Insurance (account 913-5400), Group Insurance Town (account 914-5400), Group Insurance School (account 914-5410), and Medicare Insurance (account 916-5400).

Debt Schedule as of 2/5/24.

Revenue Detail printed 2/5/2024.

Ms. Chalfant called the meeting to order at 5:03 p.m. at the Town Offices on Conway Street.

Mr. Cambias moved to accept the amended Minutes of the January 29 meeting. Ms. Brown seconded the motion. Mr. Paresky asked if making corrections via email is allowed, or if they should be done in the meeting. Mr. Paresky also submitted a correction, that the vote margin on the Veterans Day budget was 5-0-1 rather than unanimous. The motion to accept the Minutes conditional on correction being made passed 5-0-1.

Ms. Chalfant wanted to clarify that in her discussion of town tax bills in the previous meeting, "average" in this context is the mean, not the median.

Mr. Cambias moved to recommend the sum of \$163,003 for Treasurer Collector Salaries (account 145-5110). Mr. Paresky seconded the motion. This represents step increases to the two full-time positions based on years in service. The motion passed, 6-0-0.

Ms. Brown moved to recommend the sum of \$39,775 for Treasurer/Collector Expense (account 145-5410). Ms. Nartowicz seconded the motion. Most of the increase is postage. The Collector has instituted payment plans for outstanding taxes. Julie asked if the actuarial service cost could be billed half each year to

avoid the two-year cycle. Ms. Nartowicz asked about sale of property. The motion passed, 6-0-0.

Mr. Paresky moved to recommend the sum of \$15,505 for Veterans District Assessment (account 543-5400). Ms. Brown seconded the motion. Minimal discussion. The motion passed, 6-0-0.

Mr. Paresky moved to recommend the sum of \$22,000 for Veterans Benefits. Ms. Nartowicz seconded the motion. The state covers 3/4 of this cost, so the town is paying for only a quarter. Ms. Nartowicz raised concern about new veterans moving to town before the next budget and how we would cover that expense. The motion passed, 6-0-0.

Ms. Nartowicz moved to recommend the sum of \$401,679 for Maturing Debt. Ms. Brown seconded the motion. Ms. Hill suggested accelerating the paying down of notes for the Wastewater Treatment Plant construction, using funds in the Enterprise fund, as a way to reduce costs in future. She is working with the Library Director to avoid borrowing for library construction in FY2024. She volunteered to prepare some scenarios for WWTP paydown.

Mr. Cambias moved to table the motion until Ms. Hill can do that. Ms. Nartowicz seconded the motion. The motion to table passed, 6-0-0.

Ms. Brown moved to recommend the sum of \$205,704 for Interest on Maturing Debt (account 751-5900). Ms. Nartowicz seconded the motion. Minimal discussion. The motion passed, 6-0-0.

Ms. Brown moved to recommend the sum of \$5000 for Interest on Temporary Loans (account 752-5900). Mr. Cambias seconded the motion. We had to pay this amount last year as back interest on an abatement to Verizon as a result of a court settlement, and Ms. Hill wants to budget some money in case of something similar this year. Paresky asked if she knows of anything. The motion passed, 6-0-0.

Mr. Paresky moved to recommend the sum of \$646,145 for Franklin Regional Retirement (account 911-5400). Ms. Nartowicz seconded the motion. This is an increase of less than 1 percent, and is a mandatory contribution. The motion passed, 6-0-0.

Mr. Paresky moved to recommend the sum of \$51,370 for Workers Compensation (account 912-5400). Ms. Brown seconded the motion. There was some discussion of how this correlates with staffing. The motion passed, 6-0-0.

Ms. Brown moved to recommend the sum of \$20,000 for Unemployment Insurance (account 913-5400). Mr. Paresky seconded the motion. This is reduced from last year because of a reduction in overhead. Hill did note this is difficult to anticipate. The motion passed, 6-0-0.

Ms. Brown moved to recommend the sum of \$409,825 for Group Insurance — Town (account 914-5400). Mr. Paresky seconded. This is based on an 8 percent increase in the insurance rate, plus some new employees added to the group, making for a 21.2 percent increase over last year. Mr. Paresky asked if any of this is negotiable, but apparently not. The motion passed, 5-1-0.

Ms. Brown moved to recommend the sum of \$781,385 for Group Insurance — School (account 914-5410). As with the Town insurance, rates are up and 6 people were added to the plan. This created a 19.71 percent increase. The motion passed, 6-0-0.

Mr. Paresky moved to recommend the sum of \$120,089 for Medicare Insurance (account 916-5400). Ms. Brown seconded. This was calculated by just multiplying rates by number of staff. The motion passed, 6-0-0.

Mr. Cambias presented information about the definition of a quorum and a majority for the committee.

Ms. Chalfant asked for any questions for the next meeting.

Ms. Nartowicz moved to adjourn. Ms. Brown seconded the motion. The meeting adjourned at 6:23 p.m.