

**Town of Deerfield
Finance Committee
Minutes of the Meeting of March 15, 2023
REVISED**

Attending: Mark Brennan, James Cambias (secretary), Julie Chalfant (chair), John Paresky, Allison van der Velden (via Zoom).

Joint meeting with Deerfield Select Board/Board of Health

Also Present: Tim Hilchey (via Zoom), Brenda Hill, Trevor McDaniel, Carolyn Shores Ness (via Zoom)

Ms. Chalfant called the meeting to order at 5:32 p.m., in the Deerfield Town Offices.

Mr. Paresky moved to approve the Minutes of the March 7 meeting, seconded by Mark Brennan. The motion passed 3-0-2.

Ms. Chalfant brought up the topic of re-scheduling the Annual Town Meeting due to delays in the State government budget process. This may not be possible, so the Committee will add meetings to finish the budget process before the Annual Town Meeting.

Mr. Cambias moved to recommend the sum of \$88,369 for the Board of Health payroll (budget account 512-5110). Mr. Paresky seconded the motion. This represents a 9.73% reduction from fiscal year 2023. The budget reduces one 30-hour Public Health Agent position because the demand for services didn't meet last year's estimates.
The motion passed, 5-0-0.

Mr. Paresky moved to recommend the sum of \$14,975 for Board of Health expenses (account 512-5400). Mr. Brennan seconded the motion. This is an increase of \$1000 over last year for additional supplies.
The motion passed, 5-0-0.

Mr. Paresky moved to recommend the sum of \$339,584 for Select Board Staff salaries (account 122-5110). Mr. Cambias seconded the motion. This would add a 63,935 staff position for planner/grant writer. Ms. Hill noted that we're already spending \$45,000 for contract services for that job. Mr. Paresky asked if it could be done part time. Ms. Hill said she and Ms. Warren had considered it at a 30-hour position.

Mr. Cambias moved to amend the motion by reducing the account budget by 30,000 to \$309,584, and recommend that the new coordinator position be half-time.

Discussion followed. Ms. Hill suggested eliminating the Assistant Town Accountant position and having the Assistant Town Clerk take on some of that work. This would permit making planner a 30-hour position. Also discussion about starting with a contract employee before making this a staff line.

~~Mr. Paresky called the question on Mr. Cambias's amendment. The amendment failed to pass, 2-3-0.~~

Ms. Chalfant moved to amend the original motion to \$317,956. Dr. van der Velden seconded. Ms. Hill suggested this be accomplished by cutting the new position to 30 hours a week, ~~eliminate~~ reducing overtime for the Administrative Assistant to the Select Board, and reducing hours for part time support. The amendment passed, 4-1-0.

~~Ms. Chalfant called the question on the amended motion, recommending the sum of \$317,956. The~~ **amended** motion passed 4-0-0, Mr. Brennan having left the meeting.

Mr. Cambias moved to recommend the sum of \$12,250 for Select Board and administrator expenses (account 122-5400). Mr. Cambias withdrew the motion on request of Ms. Ness.

Dr. van der Velden moved to recommend the sum of \$96,000 for legal expenses (account 151-5300). Mr. Cambias seconded the motion. The main increase is litigation expense, going from \$4000 to \$25,000. The motion passed, 3-0-1.

Mr. Paresky moved to recommend the sum of \$750 for the Personnel Board (account 152-5400). Mr. Cambias seconded the motion. No discussion. The motion passed unanimously.

Mr. Paresky moved to recommend the sum of \$5000 for Information Technology hardware (account 155-5400). Dr. van der Velden seconded the motion. This is level funding since 2021. The motion passed unanimously.

Dr. van der Velden moved to recommend the sum of \$4000 for Public Education and Government (PEG) Access Capital (account 155-5800). Mr. Paresky seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Mr. Paresky moved to recommend the sum of \$260,375 for Contracted Services (account 159-5410). Mr. Cambias seconded the motion. This represents a 21.44 percent reduction from last year. **However, that reduction results from transferred services for grant writing and last year's one-time expense for Leary Lot engineering.**

The motion passed unanimously after brief discussion.

Mr. Cambias moved to recommend the sum of \$2000 for the Conservation Commission (account 171-5400). Mr. Paresky seconded the motion. The increase reflects actual expenditures for ~~last year~~ 2023. The motion passed unanimously.

Mr. Paresky moved to recommend the sum of \$250 for the Open Space Committee (account 172-5400). Dr. van der Velden seconded the motion. This represents level funding. No discussion. The motion passed unanimously.

Mr. Paresky moved to recommend the sum of \$2000 for the Planning Board (account 175-5400). Mr. Cambias seconded the motion. This represents level funding from last year. The motion passed unanimously.

Mr. Paresky moved to recommend the sum of \$1000 for the Zoning Board of Appeals (account 176-5400). Dr. van der Velden seconded the motion. This represents level funding since 2018. The motion passed unanimously.

Mr. Cambias moved to recommend the sum of \$100 for the Agriculture Commission (account 179-5400). Mr. Paresky seconded the motion. No discussion. The motion passed unanimously.

Mr. Paresky moved to recommend the sum of \$1000 for the Energy Committee (account 182-5400). Dr. van der Velden seconded the motion. Minimal discussion. The motion passed unanimously.

Dr. van der Velden having left the meeting, no further business could be conducted. The Committee adjourned by unanimous consent at 7:30 p.m.

Next meeting will be Monday, March 20.