

FINANCE COMMITTEE

Town of Becket
557 Main Street
Becket, MA 01223

Meeting Minutes for March 9, 2023

PRESENT:

Finance Committee (FC): Ron DeFoe (RD); Ann Spadafora (AS); Chuck Garman (CG);
Town Administrator: Kathe Warden (KW)
Absent: Mark Karlberg (MK)
In Person Guests: Bill Elovirta (WE – Select Board), Chris Swindlehurst (CS - Select Board), Jeff
Piedmont
By phone: Dan Parnell (DP)

AS called meeting to order at 3:07 PM

AGENDA:

1. Meeting minutes

- a. Approve minutes February 1, 2023 FC meeting
 - i. Motion by CG to accept minutes as written, seconded by AS; AS – aye, CG – aye, DP – aye, approved with RD abstaining as not present at the February meeting

2. TA Update/Budget Discussion

- a. Free Cash available is \$965,197. KW presented \$784,326.05 of items proposed to be paid from this account. DP reminded our policy is 50% of free cash goes to the Stabilization Fund. KW will revisit this request and we need to evaluate the requested items
- b. As a first budget cut, salaries have been increased 10%. We are losing a new police officer to Southwick after only 90 days. While this is a bitter pill to swallow, current conditions likely necessitate a move to keep our valuable personnel. FC recommends we make the increase in line with the Albany, NY CPI
- c. Fire Chief requested a substantial increase in firefighter stipend. FC recommends increasing the individual stipend from \$700/yr to \$1,000/yr
- d. Otis has requested to put the shared police chief on a 3 yr contract. This may require a Town Charter revision (currently states police chief is appointed annually)
- e. DP questioned where we are on Demolitions. KW will check with BOH and Building Inspector
- f. Vocation Transport remains a challenge
- g. FC recommended Winter Roads 2024 budget be adjusted to 2022 actual plus 5% inflation
- h. DP requested we calculate a projected tax rate to make sure we aren't up against Proposition 2-1/2 levy limit
- i. Upcoming large capital requests are large highway truck for \$350k and (starting discussion on) Public Safety Building (Fire, Ambulance, Highway and possibly Police) for perhaps \$15M
- j. Joint FC/SB Meeting at 6 PM on April 5

3. Follow up after Open Meeting for Discussion of Room Tax

- a. Still currently planned to be on the Warrant
- b. Rather than designate this income for roads, we will propose designating these monies for general revenue

4. Tax recap schedule

- a. No update at this time

5. Any other business

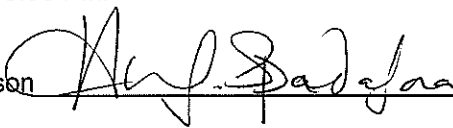
- a. None

6. Adjourn meeting

- a. CG moved to adjourn meeting at 5:28 PM; Seconded by RD; AS – aye, CG – aye, DP – aye, RD – aye

Next meetings: Thursday March 30, 2023 at 3:00 PM and Wednesday April 5, 2023 at 5:30 PM. Joint FC/SB meeting Wednesday April 5, 2023 at 6:00 PM.

Respectfully Submitted by Ron DeFoe
Approved by Ann Spadafora, Vice Chairperson

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Ann Spadafora", written over a horizontal line.

4-5-23