

Town of Williamsburg

Finance Committee Minutes

Held at Town Hall

23 March 2023

Finance Committee Members Present: Paul Wetzel, Julia Peters, Eric Cerreta, Richard Kisloski, Melissa Zawadzki, Gordon Allen, Lisa Sheehy, Charles Dudek (arrived 6:35)

Finance Committee Members Absent: Gil Loud

Select Board Members Present: Denise Banister, William Sayre

Town Administrator, Nick Caccamo

Town Collector, Sharon Strzegowski

Police Chief, Denise Wickland

The meeting was called to order by P. Wetzel at 6:05 p.m.

Chief Wickland reported on the staffing situation for the Police Department. Current staffing of the Department consists of a Chief, Sergeant, and six officers, most that are part time. The part time officer training academy was ended by the State and new State officer certification require 200 hours of training. This is very difficult to satisfy if a part time officer has a full-time job. Chief Wickland believes that the extensive training requirement will be the end of part time officers in Massachusetts. She believes that small town departments such as Williamsburg will be adversely affected, and the cost of policing will increase.

There are not many strong incentives to work as a police officer in Williamsburg. Officer pay is low, \$25/hour (the Chief feels that it should be increased to \$30/hour). Officers work by themselves and there is a long response time if backup help is needed. In such a small department there are no advancement opportunities or educational incentives. Faced with these disincentives and a large training requirement, many part time police officers will retire or leave the force.

The Town of Williamsburg does not have police coverage from midnight to 8:00 am each day. Some months Chief Wickland has trouble covering all other shifts. It has also been difficult to hire reliable and trustworthy people. The FY 24 request is \$285,611 up \$10,168 from FY23 budget. This includes a \$2,000 increase in the chief salary and a \$8,168 increase in the officer salary line.

Chief Wickland estimated that a new cruiser would cost ~\$60,000. She has not requested bids yet. G. Allen asked whether regionalization of police services was a possibility in the future. Chief Wickland said yes, although no action or discussions have taken place yet.

The Committee also heard from the Town Collector, Sharon Strzegowski. Collector Strzegowski requested a \$5,410 salary increase (negotiated when she was hired) and a \$8,008 increase for the annual cost of computer software. Collector Strzegowski said that the new software is a great improvement and can be used by the Treasurer and Water and Sewer department collections.

N. Caccamo confirmed that the FY24 regional school assessment for Williamsburg was \$1,690,092 an increase of \$159,260 (9.42%) over last year. It was noted that the following factors contribute to the annual assessment figure: number of students enrolled, number of students with heightened needs, number of low-income families, students for whom English is not their first language, and the wealth of the Town, both income and property values.

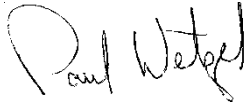
The local school preliminary assessment was reported as \$2,406,767 an increase of \$57,686 over last year.

Minutes from the meeting held 9 March 2023 were reviewed. E. Cerreta moved to approve the minutes; R. Kisloski seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

The next Finance Committee meeting will be held 30 March 2023 at 6:00 at the Town offices.

There being no further business before the Committee, R. Kisloski moved to adjourn the meeting; the motion was seconded by C. Dudek. The motion passed unanimously, and the meeting was adjourned at 7:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Paul Wetzel". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, looped initial "P".

Paul R. Wetzel