



**Finance Committee  
Regular Meeting  
03/04/24**

I. Call to Order

PRESENT: Zosack, Marden, Gustison, Luoma, Ackerman, Bender, Tingle

ABSENT: Bevilacqua, Davis (Excused)

II. Minutes Approval

A. Minutes from 2/20

1. Motion to accept meeting minutes from February 20th, 2024

<b>RESULT:</b>	<b>APPROVED [6 TO 0]</b>
<b>MOVER:</b>	Thomas Ackerman
<b>SECONDER:</b>	Mike Marden
<b>AYES:</b>	Zosack, Marden, Gustison, Ackerman, Bender, Tingle
<b>ABSTAIN:</b>	Luoma
<b>ABSENT:</b>	Bevilacqua
<b>EXCUSED:</b>	Davis

B. Minutes from 2/27

1. Motion to accept meeting minutes from February 27th, 2024

<b>RESULT:</b>	<b>APPROVED [6 TO 0]</b>
<b>MOVER:</b>	Thomas Ackerman
<b>SECONDER:</b>	David Luoma
<b>AYES:</b>	Zosack, Gustison, Luoma, Ackerman, Bender, Tingle
<b>ABSTAIN:</b>	Marden
<b>ABSENT:</b>	Bevilacqua
<b>EXCUSED:</b>	Davis

III. New Business

A. Board of Health

No representative.

B. Town Clerk, Registrar, Census

Gwen Sabbagh, Town Clerk

Salary- requesting an increase of 5 hours a week for office staff, this would be someone who is currently volunteering in the office. They are paid out of the election budget during elections which pays \$22/hr. The roles of the Town Clerk has changed drastically over the years. Early Voting in person, mail in voting and central tabulation, open meeting laws, creating and implements procedures for all Board and Commissions, public records/records access officers and creating and maintaining lists of all public records requests- a large number of public records request are related to elections. The primary election this week only saw 39 people in person for early voting, while the office received about 900 mail in ballots.

The location of this meeting is wheelchair accessible and reasonable accommodations will be provided to persons with disabilities requiring assistance. If you need a reasonable accommodation, please contact the Town of Merrimac’s ADA Coordinator, Robert Sinibaldi, at least two business days in advance of the meeting: [commissioner@townofmerrimac.com](mailto:commissioner@townofmerrimac.com) or 978-346-0525.

Free Cash Requests- looking to move the General By-Laws onto a platform called General Code to make them more accessible and up to date as they have not been updated since 2016. Also requesting a high speed printer for \$13,264.52 to print the election ballots, right now we are using labels which are very time consuming. It would need a dedicated laptop and the annual cost would be \$1,824.

### C. Planning Board

Sandy Venner, Chairperson. Denise McClure, Town Planner

Salary- cost of living increase for Administrative Assistant.

Expenses- no changes. The majority of expenses incurred are related to filings which are paid from the developers escrow account.

### D. Police, Animal Control, Parking Clerk

Eric Shears, Police Chief

Salary- increase contractual for cost of living and step increases. Also asking for two additional full time patrolmen in the salaries position, which if fully staff would decrease the reserves budget. Currently have 8 full time officers. Due to the new academy requirements from the state there is essentially no ability to hire part time police officers anymore. Different options of hiring one full time for a full year and start the next full time halfway through the year staggering them not only for the budget but it is easier for on-boarding a new officer with field training.

## IV. Proposed By-Law Change

Has been submitted to the Select Board by Bob Bender who has spoken to the Town Moderator about the changes. Members have concerns about where the by-law change is coming from and the language regarding the wording. The existing by-law says elected and appointed officials in town can not serve on the Finance Committee. The proposed by-law calls out certain positions by name instead of broadly including all of them. The wording also includes the moderator being the sole appointing authority, which is a lot of power for an elected position with a one year term. The Finance Committee would like those appointments to be made in conjunction with recommendations from the committee, not just solely the moderator. The first change regarding when appointments are made the Committee was in agreement with. Chairperson will let the Select Board know that the Finance Committee will be reviewing the proposed changes and will discuss further at the next meeting.

## V. Reserve Fund Transfers

1. Motion to approve reserve fund transfer of \$1,005.42 to be transferred to Selectmen Postage & Mailing for Whittier Postcard Mailing

<b>RESULT:</b>	<b>APPROVED [UNANIMOUS]</b>
<b>MOVER:</b>	Thomas Ackerman
<b>SECONDER:</b>	Mike Marden
<b>AYES:</b>	Zosack, Marden, Gustison, Luoma, Ackerman, Bender, Tingle
<b>ABSENT:</b>	Bevilacqua
<b>EXCUSED:</b>	Davis

2. Motion to approve reserve fund transfer of \$1,298.04 to be transferred to Census Postage and Mailing for Whittier Postcard Mailing

<b>RESULT:</b>	<b>APPROVED [UNANIMOUS]</b>
<b>MOVER:</b>	Thomas Ackerman
<b>SECONDER:</b>	Rob Gustison
<b>AYES:</b>	Zosack, Marden, Gustison, Luoma, Ackerman, Bender, Tingle
<b>ABSENT:</b>	Bevilacqua
<b>EXCUSED:</b>	Davis

VI. Capital Planning Requests

About \$475,000 to spend and approximately \$5 million requested. Priorities #2 and #3 for all departments were not funded. The following was voted in favor to fund by the Capital Planning Committee:

Administrative Police Cruiser- Police	Free Cash- All in agreement	\$	60,000
Command Vehicle- Fire	Free Cash- Max \$90k	\$	90,000
Roadway Compressor- Highway	Free Cash- w/ Water&Sewer	\$	10,000
Park and Rec Garage Repairs- Highway	Reduce to \$20k for Material	\$	20,000
Outside Building, Window, Façade Repairs- COA	Free Cash	\$	20,000
Adult Area HVAC- Library	Free Cash- Meeting Room	\$	138,500
Town wide sidewalk improvements - Commission on Disabilities	Free Cash	\$	45,000
Replace Classroom Asbestos tiles - Donaghue School	Free Cash	\$	35,000
DPW Complex Feasibility Study	Free Cash	\$	50,000
	<b>TOTAL:</b>	<b>\$</b>	<b>468,500</b>

VII. Adjourn

1. Motion to Adjourn at 7:36

<b>RESULT:</b>	<b>APPROVED [UNANIMOUS]</b>
<b>MOVER:</b>	Rob Gustison
<b>SECONDER:</b>	David Luoma
<b>AYES:</b>	Zosack, Marden, Gustison, Luoma, Ackerman, Bender, Tingle
<b>ABSENT:</b>	Bevilacqua
<b>EXCUSED:</b>	Davis