



**Finance Committee
Regular Meeting
02/02/21**

- I. Call to Order
 - 1. Roll Call
- II. Minutes Approval
 - 1. Finance Committee - Regular Meeting - Jan 12, 2021 7:00 PM

RESULT: ACCEPTED [UNANIMOUS]
MOVER: Mike Marden
SECONDER: Rob Gustison
AYES: Archibald, Marden, Gustison, Luoma, Manni
ABSENT: Zosack, Donaghue

- 2. Finance Committee - Regular Meeting - Jan 19, 2021 7:00 PM

RESULT: ACCEPTED [UNANIMOUS]
MOVER: Mike Marden
SECONDER: Rob Gustison
AYES: Archibald, Marden, Gustison, Luoma, Manni
ABSENT: Zosack, Donaghue

- 3. Finance Committee - Regular Meeting - Jan 26, 2021 7:00 PM

RESULT: ACCEPTED [UNANIMOUS]
MOVER: Mike Marden
SECONDER: Rob Gustison
AYES: Archibald, Marden, Gustison, Luoma, Manni
ABSENT: Zosack, Donaghue

- III. Appointments
 - A. Planning Board

Sandy Venner, Chairperson Planning Board

Salary cost of living increase and Expenses, no changes.

A few years ago a larger increase was needed for attorney's and engineering. The Planning Board uses Land Attorney Pam Brown, depending on what comes in for projects will depend on how much is used each year. The applicant pays for the majority of the fee's for engineering for review.

- B. Council on Aging

Brienne Walsh, Director

Salary cost of living increases. Currently all positions are fully staffed at the level they are expected to be at. There is money built in with the current budget for a change in title for the Administrative Assistant.

Expenses level funded except for the line item increase of \$200 to increase postage. Most COVID expenses have been nutritionally focused, at this time we are not expecting any unforeseen expenses when it comes to that. The Senior Center has been reworked so that all offices are now socially distanced and staff can remain safe while working in the building. Like all departments the COA is tracking COVID expenses separately and have been cutting back on spending in other areas in the event FEMA does not cover all of it.

Capital Expenses anticipated would be for a vehicle for transportation and food delivery. CARES had been covering a rental expense for a vehicle but that funding has run out. To purchase that vehicle we would use the state procurement and meet Green Communities standards. A grant was received through MassDOT for a new 14 passenger handicap accessible van as well. The additional funds not covered through the grant are covered by community match, the van is not expected until late summer/early fall.

C. Nurse

Eileen Stepanian, Town Nurse

Currently everything is remote, no in-person visits or visitations. Over the next 5 years the hope is to revitalize the position prior to retirement to entice the next generator of Public Health Nurses. The home base of the Nurse is at the Council on Aging/Senior Center. Her expertise and background throughout the pandemic has been invaluable, having that perspective and information has been an incredible resource. Involvement with the Board of Health has decreased in the climate of the existing Board.

Salary cost of living increase, no increase just the hours are back in that line item. Expenses are level funded.

D. Veteran's

Kevin Hunt, Veterans

Salary increased to \$21,646.78 which is the shared percent.

Expenses which are most of the budget is paid out to Veterans with Chapter 115 payments which is a State program. Veterans Service Benefits projection is now flattening and going to decrease. Barring unforeseen medical bills or movement of Veterans to Merrimac who meet the financial criteria we could move to reduce the budget by \$5,000. The fund is used primarily for shelter, medical and then cash.

E. Fire & Emergency Management

Larry Fisher, Fire Chief

Fire, Ambulance & Emergency Management

Salary currently showing a \$45,000 increase, which the Chief will work to reduce prior to voting. The Department is moving in a direction to realign the budget to our true operating expense line items and staffing. On-Call Departments nationwide are struggling, after last years process we have hired an Assistant Chief from reallocating funds from a retired member. The primary purpose to hire a full time Assistant Chief/Paramedic at the present time was COVID. We have hired three new additional full time Firefighter/EMT's. We are anticipating one more new hire this year. We continue to apply for SAFER Grants to offset these costs. Through FEMA's reimbursement model a temporary position is funded, if it is not covered there are funds in the budget to cover this. Just as in the last few budget cycles we continue to move money from each line item to allocate it properly.

Capital Planning items for this fiscal year is a new ladder truck for \$1.2 million. A new rooftop heater is also needed for \$65,000. Building maintenance of \$25,000 for a new floor, masonry and painting. After that the focus is new trucks, building maintenance and an incident vehicle.