



Finance Committee
Regular Meeting
02/07/22

- I. Call to Order
 - 1. Roll Call
- II. Town Clerk/Registrar/Census

Gwen Lay, Town Clerk

Town Clerk expenses increase under training under the Town Clerks Association for two new staff members, Assistant Town Clerk and office help.

Elections expense large increase, this fiscal year has two additional- State Primary last week in August/first week of September and election in November, along with the regular local election. Last year there was only one election. Postage increase due to increase rates, the State has not determined if mail in voting will be a regular occurrence.

Registrar no increases.

Vital Statistics regular increases.

III. Board of Health

Christine Berube, Chairperson Board of Health

Salary increase of 5 hours a week for the Health Agent due to increase workload based on potential animal ordinances that will require additional inspections and enforcement, and additional by-laws moving forward with the Planning Board. Additional 5 hours also for the Admin also for the potential new animal ordinances and processing more applications. Next year there should be discussion for succession planning as the Agent gets closer to retirement, it is not a field that there are many people to fill positions.

IV. Police/Animal Control/Parking Clerk

Eric Shears, Police Chief

Salary increase of \$101,146. Negotiated 42 hour work week for staff. With Police Reform there are constant updates- Training standards are set separately than certification standards, and regulations for investigations and compliance. On the horizon to remain certified there is a Bridge Academy for 200 hours of training, this year there are three officers that need to do this. This to establish equal level of training for part time and full time. FY23 will not need any officers in training, FY24 will have four. There is a push for body cameras and cruiser cameras, there are grants for these expenses.

Expense increase of \$4,106, based on actual' s. Advertising and legal the Media Relations cost has gone up about \$600. Communications \$1,897 based on internet and phone increases. Software and Licensing increase of \$372, Custodial decrease based on previous year. Uniform cost based on 9 full time officer contract price plus part time 12 officers at \$250 per year. Dues, Membership, and Licenses increase due to MA Chiefs Association increase, as well as Country Pond Firing Range has increased by \$700 last year and there is anticipated increase for this year as well. Committee would like to see if there is an option for an in-town range to be built.

V. Planning Board

Sandy Venner, Chairperson Planning Board and Linda Ralph, Administrative Assistant

Salary increase for admin per cost of living increase. The spending in previous years are not accurately reflected as the prior admin was not submitting for all the allotted hours. After 6 months in this position, the budget is in line for the hours needed in currently.

Expense increase for a Planning Consultant, which would be a contract, non-staff position. Merrimac is the only town in Essex County without a Planning Consultant. The position is incredibly flexible for their use with other Boards and Commissions in Town. To start, with very complex projects with subdivisions that come into Town they would arrange and manage the project through various boards. This would not take the place of any technical review through the Town's engineering consultant which is paid for through the escrow account for the project. The Town's current consultant, Denise McClure would be willing to step into the role.

VI. Special Articles

There is \$809,363 available in Free Cash this year. So far that is \$635,000 in Capital Planning Items and \$208,000 Other Items. Police, Fire, COA, Town Clerk, Highway/Parks & Rec, Donaghue School and Commission on Disabilities have all put in requests. The Capital Planning Committee will meet on 2/22/22 and 2/23/22.

Free Cash

Total Available	\$	809,363
Capital Requests	\$	(2,304,300)
Balance for Other Requests	\$	(1,494,937)

Water Retained Earnings

Total Available	\$	246,637
Capital Requests	\$	(245,000)
Balance for Other Requests	\$	1,637

Wastewater Retained Earnings

Total Available	\$	310,756
Capital Requests	\$	(210,000)
Balance for Other Requests	\$	100,756

Other Funding	\$	(87,279)
----------------------	-----------	-----------------

Total Recommended Requests	\$	(2,846,579)
-----------------------------------	-----------	--------------------

Stabilization Balance	\$	1,019,698
Ambulance Stabilization	\$	311,448
Capital Stabilization	\$	635
<hr/>		
Total Stabilization as of 12/31/2021	\$	1,331,781
<hr/>		