



# Town of Middlefield

## Finance Committee

01/24/23 Meeting

### **In Attendance:**

Joseph Kearns, Chair

Gita Jozsef

Stephen Harris, Secretary

Adair Laurel-Cafarella

**Also in attendance:** Doreen Black

### **Quorum, call to order:**

The meeting was called to order at 6:05 pm.

### **Review minutes from previous meeting:**

Minutes from previous meeting of 8/31/22 were approved as written.

### **FC responsibilities:**

Gita pointed out that the Finance Committee is an independently elected body with distinct budgetary responsibilities apart from those of the Selectboard.

### **Gateway warrant article:**

Gita will draft Gateway warrant article as soon as numbers are available.

### **FY24 budget requests:**

Adair provided copies of FY24 budget requests he had prepared for distribution.

### **FY24 budget preparation:**

Voted to adopt the following FY24 budget preparation procedures:

1. Collect and review budget requests from the various departments as they come in.
2. Follow up, when deemed necessary, with those who fail to submit requests.
3. Conduct in person review of requests from critical departments at regularly scheduled meetings.
4. Draft Gateway warrant articles as soon as numbers are available.
5. Compile a draft warrant, including any new articles received from the Selectboard.
6. Submit draft warrant to the Selectboard, together with copies of all budget requests.

Adair and Gita will contact various critical departments.

**Selectboard 1 stop grant requests:**

Adair reported that the Selectboard had submitted ~\$2.4M in 1 stop grant requests:

- \$922,747 senior center (less generator & elevator)
- \$688,060 town hall floors & shelving for library
- \$450,000 police garage
- \$167,000 outer exterior work on town hall (window caulking etc.)
- \$137,000 town hall handicapped ramp repair

These figures appeared excessive to members of the committee. Adair also noted that the Selectboard is talking about taking out a \$1M loan.

Adair pointed out several apparently undocumented movements of funds among various accounts, pointing to the need for stricter controls. We need to see paperwork on monies expended. Adair will follow up with Bev re how this occurred.

Adair questioned why the Middlefield transfer station has a recycling rate of 24.0%, while five comparable towns have recycling rates of 30% or more. Would a per bag fee encourage more recycling?

Adair also questioned how, according to the DLS, Middlefield's population dropped from 527-534 in 2020-2022, to 385 in 2023, and that average household income is \$81,000 according to Curt. Steve will follow up with DLS.

**Adjournment:**

Meeting was adjourned at 7:40 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

