



# Town of Middlefield

## Finance Committee

02/14/23 Meeting

### **In Attendance:**

Joseph Kearns, Chair

Gita Jozsef

Stephen Harris, Secretary

Adair Laurel-Cafarella

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

The meeting was called to order at 6:07 pm.

### **Reviewed FY24 Police Department requests:**

Met with Police Chief Jenny Dion to review Police Department budget requests. Requested \$21K for Police Chief. \$15K Operating Expense request down from \$28,800 in 2023. Officer Compensation request increased to \$25K from \$18K to add more hours to weekly patrol/Bridge Academy plus 5% increase. Officer Training and Cruiser Maintenance remained the same.

Requests were approved unanimously.

Adair also asked if the Police have a continued service contract after the town paid training. Jenny will follow up.

### **Reviewed FY24 Fire Department budget requests:**

Met with Fire Chief Ron Radwich to review Fire Dept budget requests, which remained unchanged from previous year. He detailed how they maintain a lid on costs through volunteer labor, careful maintenance, and other measures.

Requests were approved unanimously.

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

Minutes from previous meeting 2/7/23 were approved as written.

### **Discussed state population discrepancies:**

Gita presented town population printout she received from Town Clerk, which shows a population count of 422, as opposed to the DLS figure of 385 reported by the Selectboard, a decline of 149 from the 2022 state figure of 534 – indicating a serious undercount which affects eligibility for state aid, etc. The Selectboard also reported that according to the state, median income per capita rose \$9,130 from \$17,257 in 2022 to \$26,387 in 2023, an incredible 53% increase which disqualifies our town from various aid programs. Gita will invite town clerk to

our next meeting to discuss how we can address these discrepancies and how the state calculates town population and household incomes.

**Burgeoning town administration costs:**

Adair reported that at their Feb 10 meeting, he understood the Selectboard talked of raising the salary offering for the part-time town administrator to \$80,000 (we pay half) from \$60,000 we approved at STM. The town had previously paid Duane \$17K for 18 hours of work, which Duane considered adequate to do the job, and at 18 hours full time benefits did not kick in.

By Adair's understanding, the Selectboard is looking for:

- \$20,000 for 20 hours by the administrative assistant
- \$3,400 (17% retirement for administrative assistant)
- \$40,000 (1/2 salary) for 20 hours by new TA 3-year position
- \$6,800 (17% retirement for TA)
- \$10,000 (1/2 health care)

The estimated total would be \$80,200, an increase of \$63,200, or approximately \$190 per household.

**Next meeting:**

The next meeting was scheduled for Thursday 2/23 at 6 pm.

**Adjournment:**

Meeting was adjourned at 7:46 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

