

Town of Northbridge
Finance Committee Meeting Minutes
March 1, 2023 at 6:30PM

Committee Members in Attendance: Plato Adams, Jim Barron, David Graham, Steve Gogolinski, Sean Ferry, and Chris Thompson

Finance Committee Member not in Attendance: Chris Pilla

Town of Northbridge Administration and Department Managers in Attendance:

Adam Gaudette, Town Manager, Town of Northbridge, MA
David White, Fire Chief, Town of Northbridge, MA
Anthony Genga, Deputy Fire Chief, Town of Northbridge, MA
Jamie Luchini, Interim DPW Director, Town of Northbridge, MA

Other: Taxpayer(s) in Attendance:

Barry Gallant, Taxpayer, Town of Northbridge

Finance Committee Meeting

The meeting was called to order by Plato Adams of the Finance Committee at 6:32 PM

Fire / Ambulance Emergency Management, DPW, Water and Sewer Budgets:

Fire / Ambulance Department Budget:

Budget #1 shows a level-funded budget with the current manpower. This budget is an increase of \$14,311.23 over FY 23's budget due to cost increases and Union contractual obligations.

Budget #2 shows the addition of 6 firefighters. This budget shows an increase of \$170,176.42. This scenario would add 6 firefighters and cut the current overtime budget by \$16,688.30. This budget would allow for the current daytime workforce of 7 to increase to 10 making the department compliant with NFPA 1720 which was recommended in the goal study that was conducted for the fire department this past year.

This scenario would bring the department into compliance with NFPA 1720, but also cut the overtime budget by not having to cover every open shift with overtime like it is currently. The current manpower does not allow any flexibility and must be covered Firefighter for Firefighter, to lawfully operate both ambulances.

Of the 6 positions, 2 would be daytime positions Monday through Friday, and 4 positions would be divided between the work groups working 24-hour shifts. This would allow for 10 responders during the day from 7 AM to 5 PM when at full staffing. The call firefighters are unavailable during the day as they are away at their full-time jobs. At night the shifts would drop to 5, an Officer, 3 Firefighter/Paramedics, and 1 Firefighter/EMT. The night shift would be supplemented by the call firefighters who respond from home to the fire station and then respond to the incident in the fire apparatus.

The first daytime position would be a Captain in charge of Emergency Medical Services. This position is very much needed to file all the proper paperwork (MATRIS with the state and the affiliate hospitals. He would also oversee licensing of our ambulances and ordering medical supplies, emergency drugs, and maintenance of the ambulances and equipment. This position would also perform quality assurance with the service and file reports with our affiliate doctors on a monthly basis. Currently, this position is filled by a line officer who is on shift. Because they do not have enough time to complete the necessary paperwork on a daily basis it falls months behind.

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Budget #3 shows the addition of 2 daytime positions, EMS Officer, and Fire Training Officer. This budget shows an increase of \$43,674. This budget would add 2 firefighters and cut the overtime budget by \$33,859. This budget would increase our daytime manpower to 9 when at full staff. The savings in overtime is gained by not having to cover the daytime positions with overtime.

The daytime positions would be a Captain in charge of Emergency Medical Services. This position is very much needed, to file all the proper paperwork (MATRIS with the state and the affiliate hospitals. He would also oversee licensing of our ambulances and ordering medical supplies, emergency drugs, and maintenance of the ambulances and equipment. This position would also perform quality assurance with the service and file reports with our affiliate doctors on a monthly basis. Currently, this position is filled by a line officer who is on shift. Because they do not have enough time to complete the necessary paperwork on a daily basis it falls months behind.

Emergency Management Department Budget:

The proposed Emergency Management Department budget is level funded.

DPW Department Budget

Last year's total is not accurate under FY 2023 annual expenses. The total of \$548,995, as showed on the cover sheet is the accurate total. This proposed budget shows a total of \$533,471. This is a decrease of \$15,524.

Water / Sewer Department Budgets

The overall water budget has decreased by \$235.37. This is a result of the Debt Services Interest going down \$1,050 and Salaries increasing 2% or \$814.63.

The overall sewer budget is up \$84,466.00. This is a result of escalating costs of supplies, mainly chemicals, and previously signed contractual increases in sludge hauling.

Pine Grove Cemetery Budget

The overall budget is up \$960.20 from FY 23's budget due to an increase in the Temporary Positions category.

Overall Town Budget

Currently, based on available projections, additional revenues in the amount of \$1,049,642.96 are available to the Town.

Currently, Free Cash totaled \$400,000; a reduction of \$500,000 from the last fiscal year.

Additional Budget Requests totaled \$953,451 as follows:

BVT	(\$ 36,015)
Trade School Increase	\$ 50,000
Retirement System	\$ 75,960
Insurance Liab / Workers Comp	\$ 47,824
NPS Budget	\$576,421
General Govt Budgets	\$239,261

TOTAL ADDITIONAL COSTS \$953,451

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Additional funds available totaled \$161,491.96 with the estimated costs applied as follows:

Chapter 70 to NPS	\$ 60,720
Line 23 Landfill Analysis	\$ 1,700
Line 43 Wage Reserves	\$ 99,071.96

Net Balance	\$ 0.00
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Approval of Previous Finance Committee Meeting Minutes

A motion to approve previous Finance Committee Meeting Minutes of October 5, 2022, was made by Steve Gogolinski, seconded by Jim Barron and unanimously approved. David Graham abstained from voting on the approval of the October 5, 2022 Finance Committee Meeting Minutes.

A motion to approve previous Finance Committee Meeting Minutes of October 17, 2022 was made by Steve Gogolinski, seconded by Sean Ferry and unanimously approved.

A motion to approve previous Finance Committee Meeting Minutes of February 15, 2023, was made by Chris Thompson, seconded by Steve Gogolinski and unanimously approved. Jim Barron abstained from voting on the approval of the February 15, 2023 Finance Committee Meeting Minutes.

Adjournment

Since no further business was to be transacted, a motion to adjourn the Finance Committee Meeting at 8:50PM was made by Steve Gogolinski, seconded by Chris Thompson and unanimously approved.

Respectfully Submitted,

/s/ James P. Barron, Clerk, Town of Northbridge Finance Committee

