



Town of Middlefield Finance Committee

09/06/24 Meeting (draft)

In attendance:

Adair Laurel-Cafarella Gita Jozsef Ken Murray
Karri Trask Stephen Harris, Secretary

Also attending:

Tamarin Laurel-Paine Donald Trask

Quorum, call to order:

The meeting was called to order at 5:13 pm.

Review minutes from previous meeting:

Minutes from previous meeting on 08/20/24 were approved as written.

Accounting Issues & VADAR transition:

Our town accountant announced that she is retiring from her position effective October 15. Now that she has access into the Springbrook computer, she plans to close out FY2024 and have the new accountant work on getting the FY25 budget up to the current status.

The Selectboard has advertised for a temporary "Accounting Consultant" – whose job would end on October 31 – who would, among several duties, construct the VADAR chart of accounts. As yet, there is no posting on the website for a replacement accountant.

The Town Administrator continues to hamper the Finance Committee's ability to carry out its mandate as the town's official fiscal watchdog by not fulfilling our repeated requests for a read-only password to the VADAR accounts.

The town is possibly losing \$50,000 per year by failing to move the remaining funds out of low yielding accounts.

The committee has yet to receive an explanation as to why the town renewed its insurance coverage with MIIA rather than pay VFIS \$2,361 less for coverage the volunteer fire dept requested.

Highway Department:

Current priorities are lower Chipman Road, lower Clark Wright Road, and River Road. Paving Reservoir Road is a secondary priority.

There is a \$12,907 Chapter 90 accounting deficit (not due to overall lack of funds).

Town Hall floor replacement:

The two main offices & library are done, the hallway is being finished, and work on the auditorium is to begin.

Any other business:

The \$832K funding request, submitted by Sen. Markey to stabilize the Senior Center, was apparently not approved.

Preliminary discussions were held on the five-year capital plan & list of ways to lower taxes, the latest versions of which can be downloaded from the [FC Minutes page](#) on the town website.

Concern was expressed that neither the Finance Committee nor citizens in general (via town meetings) have input into how state grants, revolving funds, and Chapter 90 funds are allocated.

Concern was expressed that scarce transfer station funds which could have secured a cost-saving paper compactor, a more accessible recycling bin, and other improvements, were instead diverted to a costly wetlands survey to prepare for an unrelated major construction project.

Next meeting:

The next meeting will be at the Senior Center on September 17th at 5 pm.

Adjournment:

Meeting was adjourned at 6:55 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

