



Town of Middlefield

Finance Committee

11/21/23 Meeting

In attendance:

Joe Kearns, Chair
Adair Laurel-Cafarella
Gita Jozsef
Stephen Harris, Secretary
Jonathan Freiermuth

Also attending:

Sean Curran
Ken Murray

Quorum, call to order:

The meeting was called to order at 5 pm.

Review minutes from previous meeting:

Minutes from previous meeting on 11/07/23 were approved as read.

Work on 3/10-year capital plan:

No new updates. Plan was given to Anne Gobi, the MA director of rural affairs.

2025 budget & ATM warrant:

Budget request forms are being handed out.

Any other business:

Investigating apparent \$7,500 bill for 5-years' worth of advance \$1,500 broker's fees for handling the Post Office account.

The town had over \$1.4M in various cash accounts as of June 2022 (not 2023). These currently earn either no interest or less than 1% interest for the \$592K in accounts currently held by the Adams Community Bank. The town needs to investigate achieving a higher return working with MMDT, the entity administered by the Massachusetts State Treasurer to pool the cash and short-term bond portfolios of municipalities and other entities to achieve economies of scale.

We need to confirm that all town vehicles are currently insured, especially the two police cruisers and Highway's F350 truck, which are not in the current listing.

The town received a \$9,998 grant for police laptops and tasers.

It was agreed that there was no compelling reason to broadcast Finance meetings via Zoom.

It was agreed that a compelling case could be made for buying a new cardboard compactor for ~\$37K, or a used one for ~\$17K, especially in light of soaring trucking costs. This could be done following the transfer station study so we'd know where to place the compactor.

Repair of transfer station stairs will come to ~\$800.

Waiting to sign new contract for ambulance service.

Middlefield's single tax rate increased to \$19.84, close to our preliminary estimate.

Agreed that in the future the town should not automatically raise the 1st and 2nd tax bills prior to approval of a tax increase.

The town is in dire need of a new plow truck, at a cost of ~\$150K.

Chapter 90 monies may increase by 60%, which would be a boon to rural communities.

Town hall plumbing has been fixed. Three heating controllers and a valve are not working.

A number of complaints were aired re the new town website including poor design, absence of historical information, and the inability of the Finance Committee and other entities to post meetings, minutes, and web page updates.

Next meeting:

The next meeting will be on December 5th at 5 pm.

Adjournment:

Meeting was adjourned at 6:40 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

