

LYNNFIELD FINANCE COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

MONDAY, JANUARY 29, 2024

VIA ZOOM

Present: Chris Mattia, Tom Kayola, Stephen Riley, Gene Covino,
Sarah Kelley, Chris Caprio, Brian Moreira,
Julie Mitchell, Alexis Leahy, Nick Connors,
Joe Gallagher

Guests: Ken MacNulty

Notification of Upcoming Meetings

Monday, January 29, 2024, 7:00 p.m., via Zoom
Tuesday, February 13, 2024, 7:00 p.m., 630 Salem Street
Thursday, February 29, 2024, 7:00, p.m., Merritt Center
Friday, March 1, 2024, 8:30 a.m., via Zoom

Chairman Mattia called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

Subcommittee Updates

The Public Safety Subcommittee updated FinCom on their meeting with Fire Chief Davis and Police Chief Secatore.

(Fire) Chief Davis informed the Subcommittee he is presently on budget for FY '24, but his current challenge is staffing associated with the present call model continuing to be under stress (overall staffing issues through attrition and current public safety hiring environment).

Chief Davis informed the Fire Subcommittee four full-time career firefighters would be ideal, although a phased-in approach would be reasonable over the next several years.

The Subcommittee and Chief Davis addressed the EMS Enterprise Account (70 percent of calls being ambulance runs) as being in good stead, along with Chief Davis' continued success rate of applying for and receiving eligible grants. FinCom discussed in-sourcing versus outsourcing EMS.

The Subcommittee stated their opinion is the Fire Department is well-managed from a fiscal responsibility standpoint, and the need is for a delicate balance between career and call

firefighters presently. However, Chief Davis believes this approach may not be sustainable in the future, citing a recent issue in a surrounding community due to some of the same staffing issues.

FinCom reviewed the current Fire Department fleet, which will be addressed in the Fire Department's capital budget requests.

(Police) Police Chief Secatore informed the Public Safety Subcommittee of the continuing issue of overtime hours needed to staff his department.

Chief Secatore will be requesting one new officer to alleviate the ongoing issue of zero redundancy in the department, which sometimes leads to some forced overtime.

FinCom addressed change in the staffing environment in not only public safety, but an overall problem in retaining and hiring staff in the municipal employment universe.

FinCom discussed whether a new hire will offset the LPD's overtime budget, adding more data/forecasting will be requested to evaluate this issue from a financial perspective.

The Subcommittee informed FinCom of the Chief's proposed capital request consisting of two cruisers and a generator (remote radio sites), with potential use of ARPA funding.

The Subcommittee updated FinCom on the Public Safety Building Project's progress, citing requests are being made by the contractor to try to renegotiate some costs.

FinCom will be scheduling department head presentations in the near future.

Chairman Mattia informed FinCom DPW Director Tomasz and John Scenna (Strategic Planning Committee) are working on a town-wide deferred maintenance capital plan.

FinCom discussed the benefit of having a continuing five-year Capital Planning Committee to illustrate the Town's priorities (planned replacement) in the future.

FinCom summarized the library community forums leading to a new design concept, adding the Library Building Committee is in the process of rerunning the numbers to establish the new design cost. The plan is to certify and submit signatures in early February to be on the path for a March 18 special town meeting, if both FinCom and Planning Board recommend it to move forward to put it back on the Spring Town Meeting warrant.

FinCom will invite the Library Building Committee to present their updated design and figures in a timely manner to accommodate the stringent time line, adding to be eligible for the current awarded grant, some specifications (25,000 square feet) must continue to be adhered to.

FinCom again will seek to establish what the Town plans to use the current library building for if the new library project passes its current hurdles, adding scheduling maintenance plans and costs for the current library in the event the library project does not pass and in time to be presented at the October town meeting.

FinCom discussed necessary steps that should be taken for it to provide the Town with the best financial recommendations based on the best data and receiving it in a timely manner whenever requested.

Chairman Mattia informed FinCom TA Dolan will be presenting explanations of the ARPA funding expenditures in the near future.

Chairman Mattia informed FinCom the School Committee Chair will be meeting with TA Dolan and is expected to have their initial budget draft in the next two weeks.

FinCom requested and will formally request prior and current detailed school budget spreadsheets, data points, and forecasting information, adding the absence of this information in a usable format makes it impossible for FinCom to present a comprehensive recommendation at Town Meeting.

FinCom discussed possible remedial actions to help combat this issue going forward.

Chairman Mattia informed FinCom he was advised of a potential citizen's petition to form a traffic advisory committee. FinCom will invite the citizen to present at a future meeting.

Minutes

Gene made a motion to approve the minutes of December 13, 2023 as written. Nick seconded the motion.

Roll Call: Chris Mattia, Tom Kayola Steve Riley, Gene Covino, Sarah Kelley, Brian Moreira, Alexis Leahy, Nick Connors, Joe Gallagher voted in favor.

Gene made a motion to approve the minutes of January 11, 2024 as written. Nick seconded the motion.

Roll Call: Chris Mattia, Tom Kayola, Gene Covino, Sarah Kelley, Brian Moreira, Alexis Leahy, Nick Connors, Joe Gallagher voted in favor.

Adjournment

Nick made a motion to adjourn. Steve seconded the motion.

Roll Call: Chris Mattia, Tom Kayola, Steve Riley, Gene Covino, Sarah Kelley, Chris Caprio, Brian Moreira, Julie Mitchell, Alexis Leahy, Nick Connors, Joe Gallagher voted in favor.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:25 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Debbi Mallett, FinCom secretary