

Board of Finance  
Regular Meeting  
March 20, 2024  
Special Meeting  
Stafford Community Center

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1. Chairman Steve Geryk called the meeting to order at 8:30 PM.
2. Present were members Anthony Armelin, Blake Hatch, Matt McKenney (remote), and David Walsh. Member Anthony Pellegrino, who was observing remotely, requested Alternate Robert Proulx, be seated for him. Upon motion of Mr. McKenney and seconded by David Walsh, the Board unanimously approved seating Alternate Robert Proulx for Tony Pellegrino. A quorum was established.

Also present was Alternate Board Members Shelley West, and Conrado Ulloa, Director of Finance John Lund, First Selectman Bill Morrison, and Board of Education Chairman Sara Kelley, Superintendent Steve Moccio, and Selectmen Rick Hartenstein.

3. Upon motion of Mr. McKenney and seconded by Mr. Walsh, the Board unanimously approved the minutes from the March 13, 2024, meeting.
4. Chairman Geryk then turned the Board's attention to discussion and possible action on the proposed FY 24 -25 budgets. Distributed at the meeting were several illustrations of possible recommendations to both the Selectmen's proposed budget and the Board of Education's proposed budget. Mr. Geryk noted that these were a follow-up from the last meeting to help frame the discussion for the Board as to where possible cuts could be made to achieve a mil rate increase that would most likely pass. The floor was open for discussion.
5. The Board agreed that despite the level of transparency regarding potential mil rate calculations, and time and efforts put into the proposed budgets, the mil rate would remain too high to pass at referendum. Additionally, the Board also agreed that most of the proposed budget requests were necessary. Discussion turned to potential scenarios to lower the mil rate.

Mr. Hatch motioned the BOE and Selectmen's budget be accepted as presented and the corresponding mil rate for FY 24-25 of 39.31, an increase of 2.55 mils, be recommended for approval. A second was requested of the members by Chairman Geryk. No second was offered and the motion to accept failed.

Based on the illustrations provided, as well as commentary and feedback during the previously held public hearing, a consensus the Selectmen's budget be cut by \$300,000 and the BOE's budget by \$335,000. Solutions for alternate funding sources to achieve those

cuts were discussed. For the Selectmen's budget, it was discussed that ARPA funds could be one solution. In the case of the BOE's budget it could be from the Capital Improvement Fund. During the budget proposal made by Superintendent Moccio, a combination of revenue improvements and cost savings would result in an additional reduction of \$125,000 to the budget.

A motion was made by Mr. McKenney and seconded by Mr. Walsh that the Board, with the aforementioned cuts, approve a mill rate of 38.59, an increase of 1.83 mils. The floor was open for discussion at which time further clarification was asked of where the alternative funding solutions were to come from. The alternatives were then again discussed prompting the original motion to fail and an amendment to be offered.

The original motion was amended through a new motion by Mr. Armelin that more specifically the Board recommend the mil rate of 38.59 and increase of 1.83 mils, whereby the BOE's budget would be cut by a total of \$335,000, which included a reduction to their capital spending budget by \$210,000 to be offset by the release of \$210,000 in the Capital Improvement Fund, and the aforementioned \$125,000 BOE savings, and the Selectmen's budget be cut by \$300,000 to be offset to the full extent possible of remaining ARPA funds. This motion was seconded by Mr. Hatch. Further discussion was called for and the Board voted unanimously to approve the motion.

6. Upon motion of Mr. Armelin and seconded by Mr. Hatch, the Board unanimously approved to adjourn at 9:30PM.

Respectfully Submitted,



John T Lund

Recording Secretary