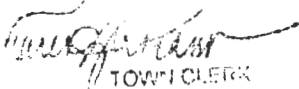


**Board of Finance Public Hearing  
FY 24/25 Budget  
March 20, 2024 6:30 PM  
Stafford Community Center  
In person and Zoom**

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TOWN CLERK

The Public Hearing for the FY 24/25 budget was called to order at 6:30 PM by Board of Finance Chairman Steven Geryk. Present were Board of Finance members Anthony Armelin, Harold Blake Hatch, Matthew McKenney (via zoom), Tony Pellegrino (via zoom), and David Walsh. Also present were alternate members Robert Proulx, Conrado Ulloa, and Shelley West.

Approximate attendance was 80 residents in person and 24 residents on Zoom.

First Selectmen William Morrison began the public hearing with a detailed review of the FY 24/25 proposed Board of Selectmen's budget, highlighting that most departments came in with lesser or equal budget than the current year. The \$16,579,589 total budget includes the General Government budget of \$12,977,376, Debt Service budget of \$3,015,033, and Stafford Public Library budget of \$587,180. The budget was approved at the March 6, 2024 Board of Selectmen's meeting, representing a 9.14% overall increase.

Specific budget Increases include:

Early voting laws created an increase in the Registrar of Voting, partially offset by a \$10,500 grant from the State.

Reorganization of the Building and Zoning office, including the Fire Marshal, to provide the public better customer service and increased revenue.

Facilities – Increase due to maintenance to solar fields and various repairs for town buildings.

Fixed Charges increased 2.33% due to higher costs for workers compensation and general liability insurances.

Transfer Station – purchasing a new roll-off container \$20,000

DPW - \$850,000 for paving

The Summer Recreation program will received \$66,000 in ARPA funding.

Transfer Out – Auditors recommended establishing a “CIP” capital improvement plan for emergencies and projects \$50,000/year.

Superintendent of Schools Steve Moccio, along with Board of Education Chairperson Sara Kelly presented the Board of Education budget. The FY24/24 proposed budget of \$31,420,855 is an increase of 3.86%, or \$1,167,992. Of that 3.86% increase, 3.06% is contractual.

Following the budget presentations, the hearing was open to questions from the audience and zoom attendees.

Questions and comments from the attendees included Excess Cost/Special Education funding and Board of Education budget reductions made prior to the Board's approval. Many residents spoke in favor of retaining the paving line item in the General Highway's budget, citing the poor condition of roads and the past history of the town reducing this budget, leaving minimal funds to make needed repairs.

Two questions via Zoom were directed to the Board of Education:

Concerning the cost of transportation, have you considered owning their own busses?

Does the Board of Education have to approve line item transfers in their budget?

The Public Hearing adjourned at 8 PM.

Respectfully submitted:



Erin D. Milnes  
Recording Secretary

**Note: Handouts and further budget explanations are found online under the "Packets" category for the Public Hearing - March 20, 2024**