

Holland Finance Board
27 Sturbridge Road, Holland, MA 01521
Holland Town Hall – Community Room
Meeting Minutes for Thursday, February 16, 2023
Virtual and Physical Meeting of the Board and Guests

Meeting Attendance –

Members in person: Andrew Harhay, Cara Bogacz and Paul Tortolani.

Members attending remotely: Robbin Lauzon.

Member Absent: Karen Peret..

Guests in person: Clelland Johnson and Ernie Fancy – Select Board; Stacy Stout – Town Administrator; Cynthia Poirier – Board of Assessors Chair, Priscilla Clowes – Principal Assessor, Bryan Haughey – Police Chief. Edwin Ward – Police Sergeant, Gary Wilson – Animal Control Officer.

Open Meeting –

The Chair called to order at 6:00 pm.

1. Approval of 2/2/23 and 2/9/23 meeting minutes, if available:

The 2/9/23 minutes were unanimously approved, by roll count vote. The 2/2/23 minutes were not available for this meeting.

2. Review of the Board of Assessors FY24 Budget request:

Cynthia and Priscilla provided the attendees with the BOA request. That board had a special meeting yesterday to review proposals just received from various service providers. In the line item for Assessors Stipend, Cynthia proposed doubling the line – from the current \$3,900 to a requested amount of \$7,800. The request was that each member's stipend be increased by \$300 and that \$3,000/year be provided to Cynthia for the technical/administrative assistance and analysis she provides as a working chairperson. Cynthia and Priscilla noted that they will issue the contract for revaluation and cyclic inspections, including the data entry, to a different service provider than previously used, which will provide a significant savings. A 5% increase was requested for the Principal Assessor. The overall requested budget for FY24 was \$98,447, up 18% from the \$83,421 budget allocated for FY23.

3. Review of the Police Department and Animal Control budget requests:

Chief Haughey submitted a FY24 department budget of \$247,692, up 2.7% from the FY23 total. The Chief noted that the operational assessment he submitted to the Finance Board and the Select Board focused on two issues that he thought were negatively impacting the department. He felt that Police Station facility itself was very substandard relative to functionality, basic amenities and environmental factors. He felt that the working conditions had an impact on his ability to retain personnel and hire new officers; the wages provided to part-time officers has lagged behind those in other departments in the region and the available population of candidates are generally trying to go to the towns offering the highest wages. Andy indicated that the Select Board is working towards hiring a qualified

contractor to perform a compensation study comparing wages in Holland to other regional towns; the Chief thought that such a study for all municipal positions would be of great value to the Town.

4. Highway budget and Reserve Fund transfer request:

The Highway Surveyor was not able to attend this meeting and will be rescheduled for our next meeting. The original transfer request for \$31,241.17. Based on discussions with the accountant, the amount voted on was for the amount of \$15,542.02. That was the amount thought necessary by the accountant, as some Highway invoices were apparently not originally charged to the correct accounts. Cara made the motion to approved the transfer request in the amount of \$15,542.02 and Robbin seconded; the motion was unanimously approved by a roll call vote.

5. Budget Development Activities:

Andy asked if his proposed suggestion on where all Town budget line accounts should be placed in terms of the standard DLS municipal budget categories, e.g., General Government, Public Safety, Culture & Recreation, etc. The suggestion was made for the purpose of assuring that our line-item amounts were consistently assigned each year to the same categories, for the purpose of the charts created by the Finance Board. The members thought that the proposed classifications were appropriate.

5. Expenditure Report:

There were no comments or questions on the FY23 expenditure report.

6. Select Board Updates:

Clelland did not have an update, as the Select Board has not met since our 2/9/23 joint meeting.

7. Roundtable comments:

There were no addition comments by members or guests.

8. Next meeting: February 23, 2023

Adjournment:

Cara made the motion to close the meeting and Paul seconded; unanimously approved by roll call vote. Andy closed the meeting at 8:17 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Andrew Harhay, Chair