

Town of Rockland Finance Committee
Meeting February 26, 2025 at 7pm ET - Town Hall, Upper Conference Room

Present: Chairman John Pumphrey, Vice Chairman Linda Sternfelt, Secretary Katherine Dussault, William Stuart, Robert MacDonald, William Principe

Additional guests: Douglas Lapp - Town Administrator, Scott Curtis - Town Accountant, Nicholas Zeoli - Police Chief, Thomas Hickey - Superintendent South Shore Tech

Meeting Notes: Review of FY2026 budgets.

Police Department: Reviewed "Police" requested fiscal year 2026 budget document

- Notable changes/areas of focus: The salary increases for the chief, 3%, and deputy chief, 4.86%, are contractual requirements. The salary increases reflected for union members are due to step increases. All union salaries may be adjusted overall based on the union negotiations. Decreases in salaries for lieutenants and superior officers are due to filling those positions with less tenured officers. The longevity decreased - 13.42%. Holiday pay increased 1.06%, education incentive increased .95%, and clothing allowance 2.46%. The insurance reimbursement increased 100% from \$2,500 to \$5k. This is due to the contract requirements for the chief and deputy chief. Station maintenance also increased 13.64% from \$110k to \$125k. Maintenance includes electrical, landscaping, security updates, and a service agreement for the new HVAC system. Overall retention is good and a new female officer is expected to join the department. There are 3 articles proposed: Replace the emergency generator for \$60,708, replace lockers for \$124,032, and purchase two new cruisers for \$140,722. The generator will be submitted for state grant funding through the fire department and the cruiser cost will be offset by \$35,965 with the last of the marijuana host funding.

South Shore Vocational Technical School: Reviewed "FY26 Budget Presentation" and "Fiscal Year June 30, 2026 Budget Booklet" documents

- Notable changes/areas of focus: The total assessment increased 4.4% for the operating and capital budgets. There is also a 1.98% increase for debt service. The first year short term debt is proposed to be paid by the stabilization fund and will show as an offset revenue source. The Chapter 70 aid is projected to increase \$51,648 but reflects a lower inflation factor so the impact is less. Rockland enrollment is +1 student increase from 2024 with an assessment decrease of -\$39,644 for FY26. The assessment is \$1,593,675 for FY26. It is expected Rockland enrollment will decrease by around 10 students for FY28. The town of Marshfield is filling their allocated seats. The transportation reimbursement rate from the Governor is projected at 90%, up from the previous 80%. There is an effort to move staff off of the federal Perkins grant to avoid keeping their salaries associated with the grant for more than three years. The new approved building is expected to open in FY29.

Other Documents/Discussion - "FY26 Capital & Other Free Cash/Enterprise Fund Requests"

- An updated estimated breakdown of FY26 was provided for review. The select board is meeting next Tuesday. An email sent to Dr. Cron requested the school department prepare a more detailed budget for the Finance Committee review.

Meeting Actions: The meeting was called to order by John Pumphrey at 7:04pm. The meeting minutes for February 12 had a motion by William Stuart, seconded by Linda Sternfelt, with unanimous approval excluding Robert MacDonald and William Principe who abstained due to their absence. The meeting was adjourned with a motion by William Stuart, seconded by Linda Sternfelt, with unanimous approval at 9:06pm.

Next Meeting Date: The next meeting date is March 5, 2025.