

TOWN OF ROCKLAND FINANCE COMMITTEE MINUTES

March 12, 2025

Committee Members Present: Chairman John Pumphrey, Secretary Katherine Dussault, Bill Principe, Linda Sternfelt

Committee Members Absent: Bob MacDonald, Bill Stuart

Other attendees: Doug Lapp, Town Administrator, Scott Curtis, Town Accountant, Fire Chief Scott Duffey, Chairman of Community Preservation Committee Steve O'Donnell, Historical Commission members Pam Ryan, Jim Paul, Doug Becker and Peter Dow.

The meeting took place in the Lower Conference Room at Town Hall, and was called to order at 7:02 PM.

Ms. Ryan reviewed the Historical Commission budget for FY2026. Their budget includes office supplies, historic display and exhibit requirements and archive materials for preservation purposes. It also includes preservation supplies for preserving headstones. The total budget request is for \$1,575. The Commission also has an article for a microfiche machine in the amount of \$2,200. This will be funded by the CPA and will be used to scan copies of older newspapers from the Boston Public Library that the Commission currently does not have copies of.

Mr. O'Donnell discussed the Community Preservation Committee articles. The first is for the repair of Bicentennial Track. The Committee needs \$9,850 to complete the final studies for the project, and \$3 million to re-do the track. This will be voted at the next CPC meeting. The Committee will make a large downpayment and will fund the remainder of the project with a ten year bond that will be paid by future estimated CPA receipts. The estimated interest rate is in the 4-5% range at present. This will come out of the CPA General fund.

The second article is for an emergency generator for Garden Terrace, a Town-owned senior housing project. This will eliminate the need to move the seniors to the Senior Center in the event that heat and electricity are out. The final vote for this project will be taken at the CPC's next meeting. The project will cost \$100K.

The third article is for \$16,500 to restore headstones at the Beal Family Cemetery. The Town of Rockland is working on a waiver from the Plymouth County Registry of Deeds to allow the CPC to do work on private property, as there is confusion about who owns the cemetery. The \$16,500 cost will restore the headstones, map and document them and install a gate and signage. This will also be voted on at the next CPC meeting.

Chief Duffey presented the Fire Department budget request for FY2026. Negotiations are ongoing with the firefighters union, whose salaries are determined by contract except for the Executive Assistant. The Chief and Deputy Chief will negotiate their contracts once the union contract negotiations are complete. The department is one short of full staff now. The Chief is requesting additional hours for the Executive Assistant in FY2026 (from 35 to 40 hours per week), due to need. Cost of college credits is contractual and reflects additional education of the firefighters.

The Fire Department has an article for \$200K for Fire Alarm bucket truck. The existing vehicle is a 2001 truck that was bought used and is becoming harder to maintain.

The second article is for Radio System Replacement in the amount of \$300K. The existing radios are getting old, and the Department has already replaced many of their parts.

The third article is for a \$2 million ladder truck replacement. The existing ladder truck is old and there is a very long lead time to order a new truck. This will be funded with a capital outlay expenditure for one year should this be approved by Town Meeting. It will result in an average household's taxes being increased by \$300 for one year.

The fourth article is for \$250K to demolish the Lincoln School and clean up the hazardous material inside it. This needs to be done whether the fire station article passes or not, as the building is vacant and abandoned and is a danger to the neighborhood.

The Department is also looking for a Federal grant for FEMA Training in Elevator and Incident Management. There is a 5% match requirement by FEMA that must be funded by the Town.

Emergency Management budget increased slightly due to the request for a stipend or salary of \$7K for an emergency management director to free up the Chief or Deputy. This position would also be responsible for grant management.

Emergency Management has an article for \$30K to update its Hazard Mitigation Plan. This plan, which expired in August of 2024, needs to be active in order for the Department to obtain grants.

The Dispatching Budget will increase in FY2026 as there are no longer incentive grants available to the Town for this purpose. Centralized dispatch has improved Rockland's safety, as the Chief reports that the centralized dispatch station is always staffed.

The Committee then reviewed the requested Town Budgets that were finalized. The following budgets were voted on as presented. Ms. Sternfelt made the motions to approve, Mr. Principe seconded the motions:

<u>Department Number</u>	<u>Department Name</u>	<u>Total Department Budget</u>	<u>Approval Status</u>
131	Finance Committee	\$202,000	Unanimous
135	Accountant	\$240,994.03	Unanimous
141	Assessors	\$216,720.90	Unanimous
142	Revaluation	\$60,000	Unanimous
151	Legal Services	\$210,000	Unanimous
152	Personnel	\$163,515.72	Unanimous
162	Town Meeting/ Elections	\$50,000	Unanimous
163	Registrar of Voters	\$21,000	Unanimous
171	Conservation Comm.	\$5,225	Unanimous
175	Planning Board	\$5,225	Unanimous
176	Zoning Board	\$6,675	Unanimous
179	Land Use	\$151,094.53	Unanimous
192	Town Hall	\$98,103.40	Unanimous

<u>Department Number</u>	<u>Department Name</u>	<u>Total Department Budget</u>	<u>Approval Status</u>
195	Town Reports	\$5,000	Unanimous
196	Utilities Gen Govt	\$450,668.10	Unanimous
199	Audit	\$58,195	Unanimous
205	Dispatching	\$408,023	Unanimous
210	Police	\$4,750,417.44	Unanimous
220	Fire	\$4,916,155	Unanimous
241	Building Dept.	\$249,282.71	Unanimous
242	Gas Inspector	\$7,683.90	Unanimous
243	Plumbing Inspector	\$12,543.64	Unanimous
244	Weights/Measures	\$6,090	Unanimous
245	Wiring Inspector	\$37,725	Unanimous
291	Emergency Management	\$22,000	Unanimous
293	Traffic Control	\$25,000	Unanimous
295	Street Lights	\$30,000	Unanimous
301	South Shore Vo Tech	\$1,593,675	Unanimous
421	Highway	\$1,372,234.90	Unanimous
423	Snow & Ice	\$150,000	Unanimous
433	Waste Colln/Disposal	\$1,787,760.08	Unanimous
481	Cemetery	\$120,836	Unanimous
490	Storm Water	\$275,749.60	Unanimous
510	Board of Health	\$150,221.91	Unanimous
522	Public Health Nurse	\$53,900	Unanimous
541	Council on Aging	\$321,013.73	Unanimous
542	Recreation Dept	\$278,180.72	Unanimous
543	Veterans Services	\$398,392.50	Unanimous
545	McKinley Building	\$191,646.47	Unanimous
610	Library	\$726,107.02	Unanimous
650	Park Department	\$448,155.29	Unanimous
691	Historical Comm	\$1,575	Unanimous
692	Celebrations	\$10,900	Unanimous
710	Principal on Maturing Debt	\$3,900,000	Unanimous
711	Maturing Int Debt	\$1,862,996.30	Unanimous
820	State Assessments	\$4,064,859	Unanimous
830	County Assessments	\$57,520	Unanimous
911	Retirement Contribs	\$6,017,810.75	Unanimous
913	Unemployment Ins	\$25,000	Unanimous
914	Group Insurance	\$9,093,873.21	Unanimous
916	Medicare	\$610,000	Unanimous
945	Liability Insurance	\$1,511,647.97	Unanimous

Mr. Principe voted to approve the budget for Department #155, Data Processing, in the amount of \$702,017.90. Ms. Dussault seconded the motion. All approved except for Ms. Sternfelt, who abstained.

There being no further business to come before the Committee, Ms. Sternfelt made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Mr. Principe seconded the motion. Approval to adjourn was unanimous. The meeting adjourned at 8:54 PM.

The next Finance Committee meeting will take place on Wednesday, March 19th at 7:00 PM in the Lower Conference Room at Town Hall.

Respectfully submitted by Linda Sternfelt, Finance Committee Member